

# The Titus Edge



Scriptural Principles for Developing Maturity  
Among Older Women From Paul's Letter to Titus

Ricki Lee Brooks

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## Study Guide Three

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## WHAT IS THE TITUS EDGE

July 4, 1776. The Declaration of Independence.

December 7, 1941. Pearl Harbor.

September 11, 2001. Terrorism.

These are dates that pushed American citizens to the cutting edge. They were dates destined for history — dates that called both men and women to get beyond themselves for the well-being of others and the world. They are dates that will always provide motivation to live life on the edge so that others may experience freedom.

In fact, this may very well be the call upon American citizens no matter which century they live: fighting for and maintaining the political, economic, and societal freedom of men and women, boys and girls across the globe. It is a destiny that calls freedom-loving people to walk a fine line. It is a mission that places liberty-minded people at the edge of adventure.

The same should be said for Christians since they too are engaged in an epic struggle. It is a struggle larger even than the American dream. It is a war against the “*spiritual forces of evil*” (Ephesians 6:12). It is not fought with physical force, but with Christ-like love. It is not fought from the safety of our earthly lifestyle, but from the cutting edge of spiritual transformation. It is this cutting edge that we need to be moving toward.

One of Webster’s definitions for the word edge is “the line where an object or area begins...” A mom teaching her child to walk is on the cutting edge. Mother Theresa was always on the cutting edge. The USA Women’s Soccer Team that won both the Olympic Games and the World Cup is on the cutting edge. Ladies climbing the corporate ladder usually are on the cutting edge. An older woman mentoring a younger woman is on the cutting edge.

When the Apostle Paul and Titus proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ on the Island of Crete they too served on the cutting edge. Theirs was a longing to initiate the beginning of great things for God. So, too, could a willingness to get busy for Jesus on our part be described in terms of the cutting edge. “The Titus Edge” is a nudge in that direction.

“The Titus Edge” is simply a series of study-guides based upon the Apostle Paul’s letter to Titus. The overall impact of this letter was designed to help Titus as he set about the task of equipping the Church on the Island of Crete. Within the letter is a perfect methodology for working the Great Commission of proclaiming the gospel and making disciples for the Lord Jesus.

This method begins with the development of mature and capable leadership — issues addressed by Paul in the first chapter of the letter to Titus and the subject matter of Study-guide #1 in the “The Titus Edge.” The method further includes the development of maturity among the entire church — i.e. older men and women, younger men and women, and servants. These issues are addressed by Paul in the second chapter of his letter to Titus and are the subject matter of Study-guides 2-6 of “The Titus Edge.” These two areas of discipleship ensure that the church is growing in its commitment to and love for the Lord.

The culmination of discipleship within the context of the church arises when believers begin to

reproduce their faith in others. When believers begin to impact those around them with the gospel of Jesus Christ, when they begin to allow God to use them in evangelistic efforts, then a cycle of ministry known as the Great Commission has been enacted. This really is nothing more than following our Lord Jesus' instructions given in Matthew 28:18-20: "*Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'*" Amen."

The cycle of this ministry can easily be charted:

GO > MAKE DISCIPLES > BAPTIZE > TEACH > GO

Paul helped Titus with this endeavor when, in chapter three of his letter, he told him what to teach the Cretan Church concerning their part in impacting their surrounding culture. The Christ-like maturity discussed in Titus chapters one and two was meant to produce grown-up citizens of the Kingdom of God who could and would be ambassadors for their King in the midst of a "*foolish, disobedient, deceived*" world. Strategies for accountability and evangelism, then, are found in Titus 2:11 - 3:11 and are the subject of Study-guides 7 and 8.

The Apostle Paul and those who served with him certainly were on the cutting edge of the Great Commission. His letter to Titus reveals much of the what, how, and why of this process. We, too, should desire to be on the cutting edge of the Great Commission. "The Titus Edge" is a small attempt to move us toward that edge.

### **FORMAT FOR THIS STUDY**

This particular study-guide interprets Paul's instructions for older women into principles beneficial for practical Christian discipleship. The passage under consideration —2:3,4a — has been outlined to articulate the main thought and the supportive ideas. The outline consists of both the biblical text (NKJV) and the principles. It would seem prudent, then, to read Paul's letter to Titus over and over. By doing this one will see the connection of our brief passage to the whole of the letter. Be encouraged to read the letter often, carefully, and prayerfully.

Next spend time in the outline studies. Contemplate carefully the principles and accompanying commentary. Your emphasis here will be upon learning the intent of the apostle, the meaning of words and phrases, and the principles inherent in his words

Upon completion of your study and discussion of major outline segments your attention will be shifted to an **IMPLICATIONS** section. This portion of each section is nothing more than an encouragement and exhortation segment designed to stimulate you toward attitudinal and behavioral appropriation of the truth contained in the **PRINCIPLES** and **OUTLINE** section.

### **PURPOSE FOR STUDY GUIDE THREE**

The Apostle Paul instructed Titus that older women, as well as older men, younger men, younger women, and servants, were to be taught "*things which are proper for sound doctrine*" (Titus 2:1). These "things" were not, as one might guess, deep theological constructions concerning what we believe, but rather they were traits of Christian living that go hand in hand with "*sound doctrine.*" We should assume then that theology alone will not overcome a world of darkness, but theology plus proper living will combine to explode the

message of the gospel throughout any culture.

Thus, it is our purpose to look carefully at the Christian character traits the Apostle Paul outlined and asked Titus to deliver to older women. Assuming that each Christian woman desires to be the very best witness possible for her Lord Jesus, it seems reasonable that we study what Paul deemed necessary for older women.

However, our target involves far more than simple head knowledge. The whole point of Paul's instructions for Titus is not mental assent, but behavioral and attitudinal change. True wisdom does not end with knowledge gained, but with knowledge lived. Our second purpose, then, is to find practical ways through which we might cultivate "*things which are proper for sound doctrine*" in the furrows of our lives.

## INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul spent the bulk of his opening teaching section — 1:5-16 — dealing with the necessity for solid, mature leaders (*elders, bishops [overseers]*). This was necessary for producing a beautiful, working church on the Island of Crete. When he moved into his next teaching section — 2:1-10 — he dealt with the necessity of producing beautiful, working members within the church. We see then a natural progression for ministry:

The Island of Crete (which needed the gospel)  
The Church (which needed direction)  
The Elders (who needed to be men of godliness)  
The Members (who needed teaching and leadership).

To these members the Apostle Paul, through Titus and, presumably, the Elders, desired to impart truth that would lead to godliness in their personal and relational lives. It was important that they lead lives of inspiration not desperation. In this way they could "*adorn the doctrine of God our Savior*" (2:10). In other words, their practice of godliness would evidence their comprehension of doctrine.

The second group Paul addressed in this section was that of the "*older women*" (2:3). The term translated "*older women*" refers to ladies separated by some generally accepted age gap from the younger women. The exact age is unknown, but we can presume from the context that Paul has in mind those women who have lived long enough to bear and raise children. They are not without life's experience. These ladies, by way of Titus, from Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, were about to receive instruction on the normal Christian life — which is characterized by godliness, by Christ-likeness.

We might ask ourselves the question, "Well, what does a young man like Titus have to offer these older women in the way of wisdom?" The answer is "Nothing, in and of himself." However, Titus had not been instructed to wax eloquent on his personal opinions. He had been asked to teach them specific truth — truth delivered from God through His apostle, Paul.

This situation beckons us to consider the historical setting in which Titus labored. The Church of Crete was yet young. New believers were being added to the fold. The Church was beginning to have an impact upon its surrounding society. As is the case everywhere, the older women who had been won out of their pagan surroundings were in actual need of character transformation. Like today, some of those women would bring many problems into their

Christian lives, while others would be relatively free from besetting problems. But, when we reckon with the fact that the Cretan culture was home to a religious smorgasbord, temple prostitution, mercenary soldiers, and any number of other vices, we can readily see that every Christian on the Island of Crete needed to see themselves as a new person in Christ; and that new person in Christ needed to exhibit certain characteristics of godliness. For Titus, the younger man, to teach the older women such things was not only possible, but essential. So...

**Theme: If we want to foster maturity and godliness among older women we must teach and learn a Christ-like lifestyle.**

*“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine...the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things — that they admonish the young women...”*

Comment: The phrase *“things which are proper for sound doctrine”* deserves our attention for a few moments. The meaning of *“sound doctrine”* is healthy, accurate, correct Christian truth. It is the true truth of God’s word in contrast to the false teachings of the deceptive teachers (1:9-16).

The phrase *“things which are proper”* refers to the specific qualities addressed in verses two through ten. These are simply the logical manifestations of the truth harbored in the souls of born-again believers. With reference to *“older women,”* Paul had five things in mind which, when taken together, speak of character shaped after the image of Jesus Christ:

*“reverent in behavior,  
not slanderers,  
not given to much wine,  
teachers of good things”*  
and able to *“admonish the young women.”*

## **IMPLICATIONS:**

1. With an attempt toward personal evaluation, please answer the following questions.

As an older woman...

are you new to the Lord or have you been a Christian for quite some time?

do you recognize a need for deeper godliness, for deeper holiness?

do you recognize a need for concentrated, Bible-centered growth?

If you recognize the need for greater maturity and godliness, are you willing to work for it?

2. Moving on to an attempt toward interpersonal evaluation, consider the following questions.

Are you willing to hear a truly honest evaluation of your Christian lifestyle from another person?

If you responded by saying “Yes” are you willing to ask another woman — a leader among women — for such an evaluation? Will you do it?

If you responded by saying “No”, to the first question, ask yourself why.

3. Now consider a step that will move everyone in the right direction. If you have decided to follow through on the suggestions in #2, perhaps the following will help:

- A. Think about and pray about who you might ask for an honest appraisal of your present spiritual condition. Yes, this is a very difficult prospect, but it may prove exceptionally worthwhile.
- B. Take the initiative. Go to a person you have decided upon and make the request. Ask for a few hours of her time during which the two of you can pray together, study the Bible and reflect upon your Christian character.
- C. When you get together with this woman of God, look up most of these passages:  

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; 3:1-24	1 Corinthians 7:1-40
Ruth 1:1-22	Ephesians 5:15-33
Proverbs 3:58; 31:1-31	Colossians 3:1 — 4:1
Luke 10:38-42	1 Timothy 5:3-16
Romans 16:1-3	1 Peter 2:11 — 3:17
- D. Try not to be defensive. You are asking for honesty, so consider your sister’s concerns and suggestions.
- E. Finally, if the first lady you ask cannot meet with you, do not give up. Try again. She is not the only one available.

**A personal note:** *If you have decided to follow the above suggestions, let me commend you. This is not an easy assignment. Our world goes on everyday with a message contrary to all the above. In fact, the world would have us follow a path paved with our own selfish intentions. However, the child of God needs to follow a different course — a course followed first by Jesus. Do you recall what the Apostle Paul said of Jesus in Philippians 2:6-8? Listen carefully as you read his words:*

“who (Jesus), being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

*Jesus was humble. Now that’s an understatement! But what we missed, by reading only verses six through eight, was Paul’s application. In verse five Paul said,*

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

*The humility demonstrated by Jesus Christ upon the cross remains the same humility that should be manifest in his followers. If you decide to “count the cost” of discipleship and thereby give yourself to deep, committed growth in the Lord, then, again, let me commend you. Remember, the Lord Jesus will carry you every inch of the way.*

## PRINCIPLES and OUTLINE

### I. A Christ-like lifestyle includes a desire to live according to our Christian beliefs.

*“the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior”*

Comment: The word “reverent” means “that which is appropriate to a godly character.” God desires that older women display godliness in the way they carry themselves. This must include both word and deed.

The word “likewise” draws our attention to 2:2, in which Paul addressed the lifestyle of older men. Just as the older men were to be Christ-like, so too were the older women. Notice, however, that there is no real contrast between the men and the women. Instead, Paul contrasts the character of both the Christian man and Christian woman with the false teachers referred to in Titus chapter one. Unlike the false teachers, who “*profess to know God, but in works...deny Him,*” the Christian must consistently live in accordance to her beliefs.

### IMPLICATIONS:

#### 1. Ask yourself some tough questions:

- Does my husband see me living out the truths I talk about?
- Do my children see me living out the truths I talk about?
- Do my friends, neighbors, co-workers, and other acquaintances see me living out the truths I talk about?

Could I do better? If so, what are some areas that need immediate attention?

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

#### 2. Now what about those strengths? What are some areas of your life that you are pleased with?

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

How about stopping for several minutes in order to give thanks to God for the great things He is doing in your life. Remember, praise Him and exalt Him, for He alone is worthy to receive honor.

## II. A Christ-like lifestyle includes the ability to rise above the temptation to gossip.

*“not slanderers”*

Comment: The word “slanderers” refers to a gossip, to one who gives false accusations. In fact, the word used here is *diabolos*, the same word used of Satan, the devil, who is the “accuser of the brethren.” We all know that no one has completely escaped from the grip of this severe temptation. It is so very easy to revert to this sin when the heaviness of another’s actions and attitudes falls within our range of knowledge that we often do not even realize we are involved with slanderous gossip. Yet, the Bible is filled with warnings and instructions concerning the use of our tongues. If our speech runs out of control we often run over the dignity of another. However, if we control our speech we hold up the dignity of others.

### IMPLICATIONS:

1. Do you remember that childhood saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me?” Well, now we know it is not true. In fact, words can be next to lethal. So consider the following:

*It is Tuesday morning. Mary calls. She would like to pass along a prayer request concerning George and Martha. It seems they are experiencing some difficulties in their marriage.*

*You don’t know George and Martha very well. Sure you’ve met them in church on a few Sunday mornings. And once you were dinner guests together with them and the Smith’s at Mary’s home. But, really, apart from these few meetings, you know very little about them. Of course, Mary knows this, too.*

*Mary says, “Isn’t it just too bad? I mean who would have ever guessed it?”*

*You respond, “Well, I don’t know them very well. I am sure they will both try to do what is right. Thank you for allowing me to pray for them. I’ll keep them on my heart.*

*“But listen,” says Mary, “let me tell you just what’s wrong so that you will be able to pray more informatively and specifically...”*

What will you say next?

Do you listen to the details?

Is it necessary to “pray informatively and specifically?”

How does the fact that God is all-knowing play into this picture?

What might you say to bring this discussion to a close?

2. Do you possess a mental checklist that you utilize before you share information concerning another?

For example, do you ever ask yourself any of these questions:

Is what I am about to say concerning \_\_\_\_\_ in their best interest?

Is it absolutely necessary that \_\_\_\_\_ know what I am about to say concerning \_\_\_\_\_?

Would the Lord Jesus be truly pleased with what I am about to say concerning \_\_\_\_\_?

Will what I am about to say do \_\_\_\_\_ any good or will it just simply diminish him or her in the mind of my listener?

What would \_\_\_\_\_ think or feel if he or she knew I had said something about him or her to another person?

It may be helpful to use this kind of exercise in the future. Sometimes, even with all the best intentions, we spill too many of the beans.

**III. A Christ-like lifestyle includes being free from the need for alcohol.**

*“not given to much wine”*

Comment: Though wine was not absolutely forbidden, it was greatly cautioned against. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul contrasted being filled with the Spirit to being drunk with wine (Ephesians 5:18). In that context Paul directs the Christian to make a wise choice: be not controlled by an intoxicant, but be controlled by the Spirit of God. The same is true in his instructions to the older women of Crete through Titus. And the same is true for every Christian woman in every age and every culture. A Christ-like lifestyle and a need for alcohol do not equate.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

Do you have a need for alcohol or other intoxicants?

Yes or No

If not, move on ahead to the next section.

If so, do you think you should get some help? Who might you turn to? Can you talk with your husband? Can you call a good friend, a relative? Can you call your pastor? What about another woman in your church?

If so, will you stop now to pray? It is a certain assumption that you have done so already and, perhaps, not a few times; but do not let that stop you from doing so again...and again and again. Be encouraged and exhorted — God is not deaf, nor is He sleeping. He is very much interested in the anguish of your soul. Never stop crying out to Him.

If so, will you take some time to write down how you feel? Dig deep into your emotions and thoughts. Ask yourself some tough questions. Force yourself to consider the pain and the consequences of your situation. You may discover some ammunition to use in your struggle to let go of that which keeps you in bondage.

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**IV. A Christ-like lifestyle includes a willingness to share what we know about the Christian way.**

*“teachers of good things”*

Comment: This instruction to share know-how concerning the good and kind dimensions of the Christian life counterbalances Paul’s instructions earlier in verse three when he said the older women should *“be reverent in behavior.”* You will recall that the meaning there is to live in accordance to one’s beliefs. In the present phrase, Paul moves this one step further: since the older woman is to be living these truths out in her life, she should also choose to share how she does so with others. The verbal content wrapped up in *“good things”* is the normal godly life. It is the full sum of the what, why, and how of a Christ-like lifestyle.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

1. How about beginning with the question, “Am I ready to teach others how to live a godly life?”

We might make this a bit more specific:

- Does my life reflect the lifestyle Paul is advocating for in this passage from Titus?
- Am I presently living in accordance to biblical truth?
- Is gossip, or any other destructive habit, present in my life?
- Am I seeing victory over addictive habits such as alcohol?
- Do others see Christ in me and, therefore, come to me for assistance with their own walk with God?

If your answer has been “No,” for most of the above then consider re-reading the THEME and its IMPLICATIONS found on pages 6 and 7. Are you seeking to accomplish some of the suggestions found there? If so, be encouraged. Keep it up. The process is just as important as the final product. If not, why? What is holding you back?

If your answer was “Yes,” to most of the above questions then consider the following segment.

2. Below you will find three more questions. The first is designed to cause reflection. It is intended to help you grapple with whether or not you are fulfilling some kind of teaching role in which another or others are learning from your wisdom. The second and third are more specific. They are intended to help you inventory your present and potential ministries in this area. Take the time to write down your thoughts in all three cases.

- A. Am I presently at the disposal of others so that they can learn something of what I know concerning a Christ-like lifestyle for women?

B. Who is presently finding benefit in what I have to share concerning a Christ-like lifestyle for women?

My daughters?

Other relatives?

Friends?

Fellow church members?

Unbelievers?

\_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_?

C. Who could be receiving help concerning a Christ-like lifestyle for women if I took the time to build a relationship with her?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**V. A Christ-like lifestyle includes a willingness to help the younger women.**

*“that they admonish the young women”*

Comment: The instructions found in the phrase *“teachers of good things”* find their bulls-eye in that group of women who have not yet experienced much of life. These young women are those who are not married, those just married, and those with young children. Their situation in life was not always too favorable since in the first century wives were often objects of usefulness. They were often used for the purposes of maintaining households and propagating off-spring. Add to this the multiplied vice found on the Island of Crete and you have a plethora of obstacles that these young women faced.

The word *“admonish”* is best rendered “to train”. It involves the process of coming along side the younger women and taking time to teach them through word and deed. The word literally means to “make sound-minded.” This is a ministry singularly designed for the older women. Who else could better relate to the younger women? Who else has the unique benefit and perspective of seeing biblical truth lived and applied in the specific circumstances and feelings known only to women? No one. Sure, the pastors and elders may be able to draw truth from Scripture that applies directly to the younger women, but it will best be heard when offered by someone who has been there. This is not a matter of absolute methodology, but one of wisdom; one that the Christian community has benefited from for centuries and one that should be utilized even more. Call it the “Titus Woman Ministry.”

Note: For commentary on the list of items Paul gives the older women to teach the younger women see “The Titus Edge: Study Guide Number Four; Scriptural Principles For Developing Maturity Among Younger Women From Paul’s Letter To Titus.”

**IMPLICATIONS:**

1. Have you considered the powerful and wonderful results that might come about through a “Titus Woman Ministry?” Can you see what a tremendous help this would be to your church, your pastor, your women’s director, and to the young women?
2. How might you go about getting such a ministry off the ground? Do you believe organization would help? Should it be left to “naturally” occurring relationships between older and younger women? Are there more young women in your church and community than you could help by yourself? Who might be able to assist you in such a ministry? Would it help to talk with your church’s leadership?
3. Perhaps your church already has an established ministry in this area. How do you see yourself fitting in?
4. How about it? What will you do

## Summary

**Theme: If we want to foster maturity and godliness among older women we must teach and learn a Christ-like lifestyle.**

*“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine...”*

**I. A Christ-like lifestyle includes a desire to live according to our Christian beliefs.**

*“...the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior”*

**II. A Christlike lifestyle includes the ability to rise above the temptation to gossip.**

*“not slanderers”*

**III. A Christlike lifestyle includes being free from the need for alcohol.**

*“not given to much wine”*

**IV. A Christlike lifestyle includes a willingness to share what we know about the Christian way.**

*“teachers of good things”*

**V. A Christlike lifestyle includes a willingness to help the younger women.**

*“that they admonish the young women”*

## CONCLUSION

It is with a sincere hope that this small study has proved useful in your pursuit of holiness that we draw to a close. It goes without saying that there remains much more to learn about the Christian life. Paul’s instructions for older women given to Titus just begin to scratch the surface. Hopefully, then, this small study will spur the reader on to a greater reading and study of the Bible concerning godliness in the lives of women.

Serving with you,

Ricki Lee Brooks