

The Titus Edge



Scriptural Principles for Developing Maturity
Among Younger Men From Paul's Letter to Titus

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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.

You see, one of Webster's definitions for the word edge is "the line where an object or area begins..." We use a straight edge to mark boundaries. The "point man" in an infantry squad walks on the edge of combat. The first man in space was on the edge of the human frontier. A scientist on the verge of a great medical breakthrough is said to be on the cutting edge of technology. Breaking the 3:50 mile would put us on the cutting edge of world competition. Climbing the corporate ladder usually means being on the edge of leadership development. When the Apostle Paul and Titus proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ on the Island of Crete they served the Lord 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 section-by-section study of 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 One 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 Two through Six of The Titus Edge. These two areas of discipleship

ensure that the church is growing in its commitment to and love for the Lord Jesus.

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 godliness and 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 Seven and Eight of The Titus Edge.

FORMAT FOR THIS STUDY

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 the edge.

You will get the most out of it if you understand how it works. This study interprets Paul's instructions to Titus into principles beneficial to the development of the church. This particular study guide interprets Paul's instructions for younger men into principles beneficial for practical Christian discipleship. The passage under consideration — 2:1,6-8 — 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 will be necessary, then, to be diligent in your reading of Paul's Letter to Titus: read it from opening to closing; read it often; read it carefully; read it contextually; and read it prayerfully.

Next study the outline as presented in each section of The Titus Edge. Consider carefully the principles and the accompanying commentary. Upon completion of your study and contemplation of major outline sections your attention will be shifted to an IMPLICATIONS segment. 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 THIS STUDY GUIDE

The Apostle Paul instructed Titus that younger men, as well as older men, older women, 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 systematic theology alone will not combat a world of darkness. However, systematic theology plus proper living combine to explode the message of the gospel throughout any culture.

Thus, it is our purpose to look carefully at those Christian character traits the Apostle Paul outlined for Titus. Assuming that each Christian man desires to be the very best witness possible for his Lord Jesus, it seems reasonable that we study what Paul deemed necessary for younger men.

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 and dedication to biblical truth.

The fourth group Paul addressed in this section was that of the "*younger men*" (2:6-8). The term translated "*younger men*" refers to men separated by some generally accepted age gap from the older men. The exact age is unknown, but we can presume from the context that Paul has in mind those men who were roughly about the same age as Titus and would not be in the position of being called an elder, either by age or stature. These young men, 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 and Christ-likeness.

It is interesting that Paul tells Titus *"to be a pattern of good works."* In other words, as he went about the business of teaching the young men, he needed to be sure that he gave them no reason to disregard what he taught on account of the way he behaved. This remains a wise method of instruction for Christian men today. For this work of discipleship looms far greater than just simply some interchange of ideas or opinions. Titus had not been instructed to wax eloquent on his personal opinions. Instead, he had been asked to teach specific truths, which were to be mediated through both word and lifestyle — truths 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 younger men who had been won out of their pagan surroundings were in actual need of character transformation. Like today, some of those men 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. When we add to all this some of the traits peculiar to young men (i.e. a penchant for speaking one's mind, the freedom to gather and speak in the market place, access to education, needing to follow something, and wanting to advocate for something, etc.) we can easily see the necessity for Titus to teach the younger men some fundamental qualities necessary for becoming a dynamite witness for Jesus. The importance of this process is simple: the younger men were to impact their society just as much as any of the elders or other church members. The place for them to begin was with their lifestyle, their scriptural understanding, and with their speech. Hence...

Theme: If we want to foster maturity and godliness among younger men we must teach them Christ-like lifestyles.

"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine...likewise exhort the young men..." (2:1,6)

Comment: The two-word phrase *"sound doctrine"* refers to healthy, correct, accurate apostolic truth. The *"sound doctrine"* of the church is true truth as opposed to the false teachings of deceptive teachers (1:9-16). The phrase *"the things which are proper"* refers to the specific qualities to be 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 younger men Paul instructed Titus to *"exhort"* them in several areas. His desire was to see Titus encouraging the young men to live godly, Christ-like lives. The word *"exhort"* might best be understood by contrasting it to a stronger term found in 1:13 — *"rebuke."* In the case of the false teachers mentioned in chapter one, the man of God must be willing to embark upon the firm ministry of confrontation; but when teaching another brother in

the way of holiness we set our ourselves to the task of encouragement and exhortation. The areas Paul had in mind for Titus to teach the younger men, when taken together, reflect character shaped after Jesus Christ.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Let's begin with a personal evaluation. Answer the following questions:

As a younger man, are you relatively new to the Lord Jesus?

As a younger man, have you been a Christian for a long time?

If you have been a Christian for a long time, have you possibly neglected to concentrate on Bible-centered growth?

In either case, whether new to the Lord or not, do you recognize a need for further growth and maturity?

If you recognize a need for further growth and maturity, are you willing to work at it?

2. Let's move on to an interpersonal evaluation. Are you willing to hear a truly honest appraisal of your Christian lifestyle from another person?

Yes or No

If you responded by saying, "Yes," are you willing to ask your pastor or another church leader for such an evaluation? Will you do it?

If you responded by saying, "No," why?

3. Now let's consider a step that will move us each 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 someone 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.

Caution: Be careful in your selection. Ask around. Make sure the person you select is mature enough to handle a situation like this.

B. Take the initiative. Go to a person you have decided upon and make the request. Ask for a few hours of his time during which the two of you can spend time in prayer, Bible study, and reflection upon your Christian character.

- C. When you get together with this man, look up most of the following passages:
Matthew 5:3-16, 27-30; Mark 1:40,41; Romans 12:9-21; Galatians 5:16-26;
Ephesians 5:25-33; Philippians 3:3-11; and Hebrews 10:19-25.
- D. Try not to be defensive. You are asking for honesty, so consider your brother's concerns and suggestions.
- E. Finally, if the first fellow you ask cannot meet with you, do not give up. Try again. He is not the only one available.

A Personal Note:

If you have decided to follow the above suggestions, let me commend you. You and I know that this is no easy assignment. We live in a world that crushes the man who would admit to his inadequacies. We cannot help but feel compelled to follow hard after the big screen image of the rugged individualist. And, to a certain degree, this is not all bad. Men must be men, not wimps. Yet, time and again, God's word draws out the weaknesses of great men in history. This never diminishes them, but, to the contrary, it increases their impact upon those they touch.

There was, of course, Adam, who hated to admit his guilt, so he blamed Eve. There was King David who poured his heart out before God when he recognized his sinfulness and smallness. And then there was Peter who denied his Lord not once, but three times. But, if these fail to impress our modern world, perhaps we should consider Jesus.

Jesus lived his life authentically. When he wept, he demonstrated strength and character, not weakness. As he lived in complete dependence upon his Father in heaven, he demonstrated commitment, not weakness. Yet, the world would have us mock such traits. Jesus, however, was not encumbered by the standards of this world. Do you remember his heart-wrenching words as he contemplated his impending death: to his disciples he said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death;" and to his Father he said, "Abba (Daddy), Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." Read the account in Mark 14. Will anyone say this is a weak man speaking?

Jesus could have avoided this. He is not like you and I. He is the Lord of creation. He is God. Yet, he humbled himself, even unto death. If the Lord of glory would condescend to live among the weak, should not we? So, again let me commend you if you have decided to humble yourself.

I. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes learning how to be free from the flesh.

"to be sober-minded"

Comment: *"Sober-minded"* can also be verbalized with *"self-controlled"* (as in the NIV) or with *"sensible"* (as in the NASB). The problem, of course, is that each of these English translations offers us a somewhat distinctive nuance. So what exactly is the meaning?

The word underlying these English translations is combined from two words: the first meaning to save or safe, the second meaning the mind. Taken together we get the simple meaning safe-mindedness. It refers to the ability to utilize our mind in the process of self-government. The outcome is self-discipline. It is the Christian's ability to override the passions of the flesh, to place truth and holiness before *"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"* (1 John 2:16).

One can see, then, that each of the three English translations — NKJV, NIV, NASB — correctly render the original; but together they really do justice to the meaning. Consider definitions for each of these terms:

Sober-minded: "characterized by temperance, moderation, or seriousness".

Self-controlled: "restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires".

Sensible: "having or containing good sense or reason".

Clearly, the younger man of God is being asked to live as Jesus lived, not in bondage to the flesh, but in control of the flesh.

IMPLICATIONS

1. It is all fine and well to talk about being free from the flesh; it is another thing to succeed at it. So, it would not be wrong for us to ask the question "HOW?" when we approach this issue. Fortunately, we are not left to ourselves as we attempt to fight the flesh. In fact, unlike the lost, the Christian has received every resource needed in his or her struggle to be in control of the flesh. Primary of which is God himself. Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul: *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin"* (Romans 7:24,25).

The apostle was just like you and I in his struggle for holiness. However, in Romans 6,7, and 8, he revealed his method of success in this struggle. Essentially, what one learns in this great passage of scripture is that the Christian is no longer the same person as he or she was before salvation. Before we were saved the best we could do was to simply exercise will-power; but upon salvation everything changed — we passed from old life to new life. Through Jesus Christ we are no longer slaves to sin, but to God. In our former state we were bound to sin. There was nothing we could do about it. Before Christ, it was our character to sin. However, once we received him as our Lord and Savior, we were given the opportunity and potential for

holiness. But again, "HOW?"

Consider the truths Paul gives us:

First: we are dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:1-14). The lost are alive to sin and dead to God. This tells us one thing — before being saved there was no chance to free ourselves from the flesh, now there is every chance.

Second: therefore, we can now choose to present ourselves to God in holiness rather than to sin (Romans 6:11-23). The bondage is now broken, the prison door is opened wide. Our responsibility is to walk free.

Third: but, we still carry the scars of the chains. The shadow of sin still lingers in our body. The new man or woman in Christ stands outside the prison walls, but his or her body still feels the terrible burden of that time spent in bondage. Although, we choose to be free — and we are — we still feel the effects of sin enslavement (Romans 7).

Fourth: however, we are not alone. We did not escape that terrible bondage through any effort of our own and we do not now stand alone as we attempt to live as free people. In our effort to rid ourselves of the effects of sin's enslavement we will be gently helped along the way by God himself (Romans 8). Notice that as a Christian you have the Spirit of God within you (8:9), you have Christ within you (8:10), and you have the promise of God that he will accomplish his complete work in you (8:28-30).

2. How then do we appropriate all of this? Is it enough to simply know these things? No, but knowing them is part of the solution. Is it enough to choose to be different than we used to be? No, but choosing to be different is also part of the solution. What then is the rest of the solution? The rest of the solution — and the key — is complete dependence upon God. Call this a commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, call this being led by the Holy Spirit, or call this offering yourself a living sacrifice to God the Father — the Bible uses all three — the outcome is the same, total dependence. We might look at the process like this:

Knowing the truth
+ Choosing to do the truth
+ Depending upon God for the strength to do the truth
Doing the truth

The question everyone struggles with, of course, is "how do I depend upon God?" The answer might best be answered first in the negative and then in the positive. By the phrase "depend upon God" we do not mean the Christian can depend upon some shining experience. The Bible does not teach us that maturity comes to the Christian in a moment. Likewise, it cannot fully be explained by the phrase "let go and let God" since nowhere in the Bible does God tell us not to be a part of our own spiritual growth. Each of these false concepts of spirituality give themselves over to an unhealthy mindset in which spiritual growth is divorced from the will and thinking of the believer. Such is not biblical.

Jesus said, *"If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free"* (John 8:31,32). And to the disciples, as he instructed on the Great Commission, he said, *"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"* (Matthew 28:19,20). Likewise, he said of the Holy Spirit, *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you"* (John 16:13,14).

James said, *"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does"* (James 1:21-25).

Peter said, *"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious"* (1 Peter 2:1-3).

John said, *"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in Him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him"* (1 John 2:3-5).

The point is that spiritual growth — positive in the sense of becoming more like Jesus and negative in the sense that we rid ourselves of sin — is not an instant happening, but a process over time. As we steep ourselves in the word of God, we learn more of what the Lord would have of us; as we steep ourselves in the word of God, we learn more about our Lord and his love for us; and as we steep ourselves in the word of God, we fall more in love with our Lord — and from love comes obedience, and from obedience comes maturity. This process of knowing the truth is exactly what Paul is doing both in his letter to Titus and his letter to the Romans. Our study of Titus and Romans 6 - 8 bears this out.

The second reason we know that spirituality is not an instant experience is on account of the many admonitions to constantly give ourselves over to God found in the Bible. For example Paul, in Romans 6:13, says, *"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."* When Paul said, *"present yourselves to God,"* he used a form of the verb *"present"* that expressed his strong desire to see his readers give themselves into the control of God. The implication is simple: believers must choose to give themselves completely to God for the purpose of righteousness.

While delivering his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, in teaching on the problem of worrying, said,

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). The verb *"seek"* is in the present aspect. We are to keep right on seeking the *"kingdom of God and his righteousness."* Again, we see the function of our will: we have a choice to make.

The third reason we know that spirituality is not an instant experience is because we are instructed from God's word to constantly give ourselves into the leading of the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 5:18, Paul said, *"be filled with the Spirit."* Once again, we see the present tense condition of this command. The application here is that we are to keep on being filled with the Spirit. This can especially be seen when one notices the contrast that exists in this verse: *"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit."* The contrast is quite vivid. Paul is saying, "when you are drunk, you are under the control of the intoxicant ("dissipation" implies both lack of control and squandering), but when you are *"filled with the Spirit"* you are under the control of God. The question remains, "which will we choose moment to moment?" (See also Romans 8:14 and Galatians 5:16.)

Thus, we see once again, that being free from the flesh is a process in which God and we team up. By knowing the truth of the Bible, by choosing to live in that truth, and by depending upon God for success we gain the victory.

3. Now since so many people ask the "How" question regarding this idea of depending fully upon God, let's spend just a little more time with it. Remember, you have instant access to him through prayer. When facing temptation, we must instantly go to him for help. We must cultivate this habit. Too often we fail to give ourselves to diligent prayer. Too often we ignore God when in the heat of battle. And too often we depend more upon ourselves for fighting the flesh than we do upon God. Think about it. Think about how you respond to life. Are you constantly vigilant about sin issues? Do you make an effort to pray specifically and consistently about issues in your life? If you answered yes, what does specifically and consistently mean to you? Daily? Weekly? If so, this is good, but not good enough. If God is available to us at all times, it only makes sense that we ask for his help all the time. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, *"pray without ceasing."* This is a key to becoming fully dependent on God. Living in his presence, remaining aware of him, and cultivating a running conversation with him is the only way we can seize the opportunity of his openness.

II. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes a willingness to surrender themselves to doing only good things.

"in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works"

Comment: This phrase is both singular and introductory in meaning. As an introduction, it serves as a general statement of a Christ-like lifestyle to which the rest of verse seven and all of verse eight become the specifics. As to its singular meaning, the phrase exhorts Titus himself to be meticulous in his daily walk with God. In all that Titus did, he needed to demonstrate Christian fruitfulness. In doing so, he would provide the young Christian men of Crete a proper role model to imitate.

The Apostle Paul never seemed reluctant to ask of Christians that they follow Christ-like examples; in fact, he chose this method for himself and others on more than one occasion (cf. Philippians 3:17; 2 Timothy 2:2). We may assume, then, that in so far as a man follows hard after Jesus Christ, he is to that extent able to help others in their spiritual growth. Therefore, surrendering ourselves to doing only that which seems good in the eyes of God comes not as an option, but rather a must do matter.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Have you asked yourself lately whether or not you could actually lead a brother simply by example? Perhaps some of the following questions will help you to determine whether or not others might consider you a Christian role model?

How do people view you in general? Do they believe you are a man of integrity?

What about those closest to you: your wife, your children, your parents, your siblings, your best friends, your co-workers? Do these folk ever have reason to believe that your walk and your talk don't add up?

What about your neighbors and community? Do they see you running red lights and stop signs? Are they concerned that your residence is decreasing the value of theirs?

What about your business transactions? Are your bills paid on time? Is your home and workshop free of articles that belong at your place of employment? Do you sometimes catch yourself saying, "Well, everyone does it; besides it's expected?" Is Uncle Sam getting his fare share or is it possible that from time to time you've said, "What the IRS doesn't know won't hurt them?"

What about the church? Can people count on you to do as you say? Do you follow through with ministry obligations? Have you pledged anything and then failed to come through?

Well, you get the picture. Now let's not get this wrong. None of us are perfect. That's a known fact. Yet, we are capable of possessing fine, upstanding reputations. The big question that should come from all the above questions is "What is the normal pattern of our lives?" Are we

men to whom others can turn to for an example or are we just fooling ourselves as well as others?

2. In the spaces below list areas of your life that you believe could stand some improvement.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If your slate is clean, praise the Lord and keep on keeping on. If your slate has one or more items, take them to God in prayer.

III. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes practicing the sound doctrine that they preach.

"in doctrine showing integrity"

Comment: This writer once heard Dr. Joe Aldrich, of Multnomah School of the Bible, say that "our orthopraxy must be as strong as our orthodoxy." He meant that just believing properly would not fully meet a standard that would be accepted and believed by others. Instead, if we desire to impact the lives of others, we must assure ourselves that we walk the talk. This is the probable meaning of Paul's words here.

The phrase literally is, *"in the teaching (doctrine), uncorruptness."* A possible meaning could be that Paul meant for Titus' doctrinal teaching to be free from error or heresy. However, two factors weigh against this interpretation and in favor of the former. First, Paul dealt convincingly with error and heresy in the first chapter. Second, and more important, the immediate context surrounding this phrase leans us toward understanding that Paul desired of Titus not to allow his life to detract from the truth of the gospel. The context of 2:1-10 clearly deals with godly lifestyles that give testimony to the truth concerning our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. In 2:1, Paul said, *"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine."* These *"things"* are the characteristics of Christ-like lifestyles found in verses 2-10. In 2:5, Paul said the young women should *"be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."* Again, lifestyle that protects the word of God is being considered. And, in 2:10, Paul said, *"...showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."* Here, again, we see godly behavior that showcases the doctrine we believe.

When we not only speak the truth, but also live the truth with *"integrity"* we place ourselves above reproach. Living this way frees us from accusations of hypocrisy and charlatanism. Not a bad way to live, huh?

IMPLICATIONS

Have you ever taken a "Doctrinal Lifestyle Inventory?"

No, such a test does not really exist (at least not that I am aware of). But we could come up with one of our own, if we set our minds to it. And it might prove useful. For example, how would you rate yourself on the following question?

"If I taught another person that the Holy Spirit helps Christians to overcome sin, would that person disregard this truth on account of my lifestyle?"

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Low (failing) (succeeding) High

What about this next question?

"If I told someone that Jesus Christ is my only hope would they be skeptical on account of my lifestyle?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Low (failing) (succeeding) High

Well, you get the picture. It would not be hard to create our own Doctrinal Lifestyle Inventory?
So how about giving it a try?

IV. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes learning that a serious character leads to the privilege of speaking.

"reverence"

Comment: In a similar application to the previous phrase, Paul also included this second specific way that Titus should follow in order to assure that the truth he teaches hits a listening audience. The term *"reverence"* has also been translated with the English words "gravity" and "seriousness". It means to be dignified. In the present context, the word of God advocates for a dignified, serious character that demonstrates to others that what we have to say comes from commitment and sincerity, not emptiness and vanity.

We must be careful not to confuse this genuine quality of Christian maturity with a sour-pussed, pietistic, straight-faced, expressionless counterfeit. A reverent, dignified, and serious demeanor does not exclude joy, happiness, and openness in the life of a mature Christian man. Instead, it demonstrates a commitment and unfailing loyalty to God that is made evident by our true desire to serve Him and to obey His word. People want to hear what men of this caliber have to say. They listen, because the speaker has earned their respect.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Does God regularly hear you telling Him how thankful you are for His word and for all that He has done for you? This is an important question. It's important, because it can serve as a measuring gauge of our seriousness and reverence concerning what we hold dear. If we're regularly talking to God about His grace in our lives, about the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, about the awesome implications of His word in our lives, and about other areas of our lives, than it's a fairly safe bet this tendency spills over into the rest of our lives. When this happens people notice how important this life with God is to us.

So, again, how often do you find yourself talking to God about these life-changing events?

Your response:

2. If you are pleased with what you discovered by answering the last question, then keep on praising Him and keep on keeping on.

However, if you are somewhat dismayed by what you discovered in the last segment, then prepare to do your homework. Below, write out a list of things that you should be talking to God about from time to time. The list has been started for you, so how about filling in some of the blanks.

salvation

the Bible

family

Now make a habit of talking with our Savior about these things and others like them.

V. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes learning that holiness also leads to the privilege of speaking.

"incorruptibility"

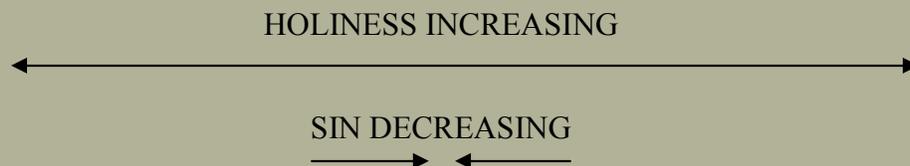
Comment: *"Incorruptibility"* has to do with being genuine, real, and authentic. In reference to a man of God, it means that his character is without pretense, without a cloak of falsehood. A man of this caliber lives a holy life.

Once again, the context informs us that Paul desires this of Titus so that Titus will not disqualify himself as a teacher, an elder, a missionary/pastor. The same must be asked of today's Christian men.

IMPLICATIONS

1. The pursuit of holiness sometimes follows a path leading to nowhere, because we confuse ourselves with the wrong directions. Holiness is not a vice-grip like lock upon rules and regulations. It is not a holier-than-thou lifestyle. Instead, it has all the hallmarks of Christ-likeness. Holiness wells up from character, not conduct (right conduct results from right character). It is the gentle disposition of a heart grown very fond of God, which then leads to a transformation from the inside out.

2. When one looks back over his Christian life, whether he has been a Christian a month or 50 years, he should be able to see some positive change all along the way. We might visualize the process like this:



Is this true of your life? Can you actually say that the pursuit of holiness remains a top-notch priority on your "to-do" list?

Your response:

How about others? Do you suppose they would be in agreement with your assessment?

Your response:

If there remain some areas in your life that need serious attention, don't let them slip by.

VI. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes the ability to formulate an accurate presentation of doctrinal truth.

"sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you"

Comment: The word "*sound*" means healthy and whole. "*Speech*" has reference to what Titus must teach. Titus needed to make sure that he not only corroborated his teaching with a Christ-like lifestyle, but that he also articulated the truth of the gospel and God's word in a precise, clear, and understandable fashion. The manner of his teaching remained of utmost importance. A sloppy job would not do.

Two things occur as a result of our ability to articulate doctrinal truths accurately. First, we free ourselves from legitimate condemnation. Paul mentioned, "*sound speech that cannot be condemned.*" When we speak the truth with clarity neither it nor we can be legitimately chastised. Second, when our teaching is precise and accurate, those who stand in opposition to it will find themselves embarrassed red. We should never be caught without a defense of the gospel. If we succeed, then "*that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say.*"

Now be careful. This is not a license to beat people up with the Bible. Remember this: we're not talking about arguments! Paul concerned himself with proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and the full counsel of God, but he never concerned himself with "looking good" by coming out on top of an argument. In fact, later in his letter to Titus, he said, "*...avoid foolish disputes.*" An accurate presentation of doctrinal truth is not the same as theological needle threading!

IMPLICATIONS

1. We have seen in earlier sections that doctrine without a Christ-like lifestyle will fall on deaf ears. Here we see that doctrine is just as important as our lifestyle. We often hear people saying, "don't bother me with theology, I just want to live for Jesus," but they fail to recognize that what we believe shapes how we live. For example, if a person rejects the authority of the Bible you can well expect his or her lifestyle will vary greatly from a person who remains faithful to God's word. Or, if a person rejects the literal return of our Lord Jesus to receive His church, he or she will fail to reap the huge dividends of that truth as a motivational force for holiness and accomplishing the work of evangelism. Men of God cannot afford such weakness in their armor.

2. What then can we do about this? We might begin by asking ourselves some doctrinal questions?

For instance:

"Could I accurately teach the doctrine of..."

...justification by faith
...atonement
...regeneration
...sanctification
...biblical leadership
...original sin."

Of course, this list could go on, but you get the picture. None of us can ever afford to rest upon what we now know. Paul instructed another young preacher/missionary, Timothy, to "*be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15). Can we allow this exhortation to pass us by?

3. If you are interested in pursuing this, let me suggest some titles:

Chafer, L.S. Systematic Theology. Abridged Edition, John F. Walvoord, Editor. Victor Books: Wheaton, Illinois; 1988, 2 vols.

Henry, C.F.H., Editor. Basic Christian Doctrines. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1971.

McDowell, J. Evidence That Demands A Verdict. Here's Life Publishers, Inc.; San Bernardino, Ca., 1972, 1979.

Thiessen, H.C. Lectures In Systematic Theology. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, Michigan; Revised Edition, 1979.

SUMMARY

Theme: If we want to foster maturity and godliness among younger men we must teach them Christ-like lifestyles.

"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine...likewise exhort the young men..." (2:1,6)

I. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes learning how to be free from the flesh.

"to be sober-minded"

II. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes a willingness to surrender themselves to doing only good things.

"in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works"

III. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes practicing the sound doctrine that they preach.

"in doctrine showing integrity"

IV. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes learning that a serious character leads to the privilege of speaking.

"reverence"

V. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes learning that holiness also leads to the privilege of speaking.

"incorruptibility"

VI. A Christ-like lifestyle for younger men includes the ability to formulate an accurate presentation of doctrinal truth.

"sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you"

CONCLUSION

It is with the sincere hope that this small study has proved helpful in your development of holiness that we draw to a close. It goes without saying that there remains much more to learn about the Christian life for young men. Paul's instructions to Titus only begin to scratch the surface. Hopefully, then, you will be motivated toward a greater reading and study of your Bible.

Serving with you,

Ricki Lee Brooks