

DEAR TITUS...

A 3 WEEK SERIES IN THE BOOK OF TITUS

Connect group questions

Titus 2 – Dear Titus... teach what is good

Who have been the most influential teachers in your life? What made them different?

SELF CONTROL IS GOOD

Read Titus 2:1-10

1. Do you consider yourself self-controlled? In what ways do you need to pray for more self-control?
2. The concepts of self-control and submission are as counter-cultural today as they were in 1st C Crete. Where do we see the opposite values displayed? How can we be distinctly Christian for the sake of the gospel?
3. Verses 5, 8, 10 share the expression 'so that'. What do each explain will be the result of godly living?

SHARING LIFE IS GOOD

Read Titus 2:1-10

4. If you are older, are you discipling someone younger? Are you modelling wise, godly values?
5. If you are younger, do you respect your elders? Are you being discipled by an older man or woman in our church? Sometimes these relationships develop organically but sometimes they need some thought and prayer.
6. How does Paul's view of the elderly fit with society's view? How should we respond as Christians?
7. Paul is encouraging cross-generational church family life. What can you do to avoid age and stage related cliques developing? How do imagine that effort will bless the church?

GRACE TEACHES US TO DO GOOD

Read Titus 2:11-15

8. In one sense we live with verse 11 in our past and verse 13 in our future. We live by the grace that has appeared while we wait for future glory. How do the ideas of grace and glory help you live when life is difficult?
9. Who do you know that models a grace-filled life, who is eager to do good for the sake of the gospel? How can you learn from their example?
10. The grace of God saves in verse 11 and teaches in verse 12. How does this grace help us to avoid:
 - a. legalism – 'I need to be good'
 - b. licence – 'I can do what I like'
11. How might you live differently this week 'so that' (vv 5, 8, 10) others can see God's glory?

Teach what is good

Introduction

I wonder whether those of us here who are parents have learned the hard way that our children learn and repeat the things we do much more than the things we say.

We all do our best, and try to use the right principles when we raise our children but the reality is that sometimes our own words and actions don't always match up.

We might say 'no, sugar's bad for you' when we sneak another square of chocolate from the family block.

We might say 'if you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all' when we know we gossip or complain about others behind their backs.

We often realise, a bit too late, that we've passed on things that we didn't mean to teach.

Expressions, or gestures or mannerisms or attitudes

We might think that we didn't teach out teenagers to roll their eyes, but they probably learnt it somewhere.

And the reverse can be true too. Thankfully.

Often we learn most effectively from someone else's example.

If you are just joining us today, we're in the middle of a short series on the apostle Paul's letter to Titus, his true son in the faith.

In Chapter 1, Paul has given Titus the responsibility of appointing elders who love what is good in order to counteract the dangerous effects of those who are leading people astray with false teaching, people who are incapable of good.

And so as we come to Chapter 2, these elders who love what is good are told to teach what is good,

To 'teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine' so that the people of God will live godly lives in the present age, waiting for the hope of Jesus' return, being transformed by grace and eager to do what is good.

Outline

1. Teach what is good
 - a. in community context
 - b. sound doctrine content
 - c. to protect the word reason

2. For grace & glory eager to do what is good

1. Teach what is good (vv1-10)

This passage follows logically from Titus 1 where he is warning against the dangers of false teaching, against rebellious people and their empty talk, who have lead whole households away from the truth.

The truth of the gospel must be protected from damage and it is us, the people of God, then in Crete, now in Noosa who have the responsibility of living it out faithfully and making the gospel attractive to others.

So Paul instructs Titus to teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine

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a. In the context of community.

And there are four groups of people he is thinking about: older men, older and younger women, younger men and slaves & masters.

Paul is affirming the idea of **church community**, of cross generational fellowship.

Remember a household was often the basis of a church.

It was the way the early churches formed and met. Everyone was in together – all ages and stages.

Acts 2 reminds us that church was communal.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The early Christians did life together: eating, drinking, praying, hearing the word taught, growing and learning from each other.

And for us part of that happens at church on Sunday, in our Connect Groups mid week, but there's so much potential for relationships to develop and flourish less formally.

Perhaps you meet a Christian friend for coffee or golf or cards during the week. Is it purely social, catching up on each other's news or is it an opportunity to encourage each other from the Bible, to be vulnerable and to really share your life, to pray for each other?

Meeting with another Christian regularly, especially someone at a different lifestage to yourself is a wonderful way of growing, learning and being encouraged.

And this is exactly what Paul is doing by writing this letter to Titus. He's mentoring him, nurturing his faith.

One element that seems crucial to these types of relationships is **respect**, especially of elders.

Our culture and society idolises youth and beauty – not that there's anything wrong with being young and beautiful but they are often more highly prized than age and experience.

And we know we have a problem when words like 'ageism' and 'elder abuse' are part of our vocabulary, when the elderly are sometimes viewed as an inconvenience.

Paul is encouraging the older men to be worthy of respect. It is their responsibility and it needs to be earned. Younger women are to show respect by being subject to their husbands in a mutually loving marriage, Young men who often have reputations for being irresponsible, are to be self-controlled and And slaves will respect their masters and not talk back to them.

One of the things I love about church is that I have friends I respect who are older and younger than I am.

So the context of teaching what is good is in community. But what is the sound doctrine that Paul is talking about?

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b. We need to teach sound doctrine

You probably noticed that verses 1-10 describe some problems among the believers the older men seemed to be lacking respectability, the older women had a reputation for drinking too much wine, the younger women seemed to be unsettled and lacking contentment, the young men were struggling with self-control, slaves were not trustworthy and failing to please their masters.

It wasn't good for them personally and it wasn't good for the gospel.

And underlying all this is one idea.

What doesn't come naturally because of our sinful, human nature, needs to be taught.

We need to teach what is good.

The word that is used in verse 3 (**kalodidaskalous**) means teaching informally by word and example.

Not the word you'd use for classroom teaching.

Titus was to appoint elders who *love what is good*, and the faithful Christian community should be marked by believers who *teach each other what is good*.

So that they will live differently to the false teachers, so that their faith in action will make the gospel attractive.

Paul tells Titus in v 7 that he personally is to set the young men **an example by doing what is good**.

Like a good and wise parent, we teach by example.

More by what we do than what we say.

And this means we constantly have to check that our lifestyle, our behaviour, really reflect the gospel values and truths.

It means we need *self-control*.

Did you notice that 'self-control' appears four times in this passage?

The older men need to be self-controlled, the younger women need to be self-controlled, the younger men need to be self-controlled.

It's the word that Paul uses in 2 Timothy 1:7 to mean sound-mindedness.

It's a word that pushes back against our culture which promotes self everything:

Self-determination, self-expression, self-direction, self-fulfillment.

In its mildest form, lack of self-control might look like laziness, carelessness but in its most extreme form it can be cause of domestic violence, of addictions, of relationship breakdown.

When we see someone living without self-control, it is disappointing, frustrating worrying.

But when we see someone living with self-control, it is attractive, admirable, and aspirational.

So we're being challenged to be teachers, by practising self-control and setting a good example.

But you don't have to have all the answers.

Paul is speaking to older men and women who aren't perfect, who need to work on being temperate and faithful, on not gossiping and drinking too much wine.

Verse 4 says 'then', when you have been changed by sound doctrine, when you develop self-control, *then* you can teach the younger men and women.

If you are older, are you teaching someone at church, at work, in your family, in a club that you belong to?

It doesn't have to be formal and weird. It just starts with a conversation and is fuelled by a genuine love and interest in the other.

And if you're younger, do you have someone you respect that you go to for advice? Perhaps someone apart from your parents?

Sometimes that other, older person can be a huge blessing as you navigate the transition to adulthood.

I'm guessing that many of us have had to cope with life's challenges: worries, parenting, grief, looking after elderly parents, sickness.

Those experiences refine us and grow us in wisdom. Don't keep those things to yourself! Teach them. Model them.

c. And the reason *why* we need to teach what is good is

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c. So that

Look with me at v 4-5

Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, **so that** no one will malign the word of God.

verses 7-8

'Set them an example by doing what is good...**so that** those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us'

and verses 9-10

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything...**so that** in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.

The reason we need to teach what is good is **so that** the gospel will be adorned not despised

To protect and promote the word of God

The false teachers have taught a fake version of Christianity that has lead people away from Jesus, away from grace towards legalism.

Paul is encouraging Titus to rescue the gospel from this threat by appointing elders who love what is good and

to teach the church family how to live so well that the gospel will be not only restored to its proper position,

seen and believed as the truth but lived out by believers in such a way that it is not only convincing but attractive.

This was Titus' mission. This is our mission.

How are we living the truth of the gospel, the sound doctrine so that others might see its beauty?

Perhaps verses 7-8 can help us:

We can set an example in our church family by practising hospitality, by working hard on your marriage, by parenting thoughtfully, by learning new skills needed for a ministry.

We can set an example just by showing up week-by-week, prioritising church and bible study, never treating them as optional, or something you do if there's time to spare.

Of course you may be thinking, but I'm not perfect, and my marriage isn't perfect and my kids are certainly not perfect. Well, if that's you, welcome to my club!

But in those moments of weakness and vulnerability, the example we set of repentance, forgiveness, and grace speaks more loudly and clearly than if we'd baked for a hundred morning teas.

And when it comes to teaching the gospel, again you might be thinking but I'm not like Mark. I can't teach the gospel.

But anyone who has watched children grow up knows that they copy what we do not what we say.

We teach the gospel by the choices we make, the priorities we hold, the decisions we make.

The key in verse 7 is to teach with integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech.

If your words and actions are consistent with the gospel, they have integrity. If this is how you teach the gospel, you can't go too far wrong.

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2. (We do all this) For Grace & Glory

Verse 11 begins with 'for'.

It ties everything from verses 2-10 to 11-14.

Listen to what I've said in verses 2-10 for, because of what comes next.

We teach what is good, model what is good to make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive **because**,

The grace of God has appeared and we need to live godly lives while we wait for the appearing of glory.

We have grace, we look forward to glory.

So let's spend a few minutes thinking about these two ideas.

The grace of God has appeared.

It is accomplished. It's in the past tense. It's our current reality.

We have received the free, undeserved gift of God's forgiveness and mercy.

Christians call it grace.

Grace appeared in fulfilment of God's promise to save a people to himself, to solve the problem of our sin, when Jesus became our redeemer.

Grace is an invitation that God extends to all people everywhere.

And God's grace is our teacher. Jesus is our perfect example.

Verse 12 says that grace teaches us **two things**, one thing to put off, one to put on.

a. it teaches us to say No.

Lots of us have problems saying 'no'.

It's hard to say no to our children at the supermarket when they want sweets, it's hard to say no in family situations, it's hard to say no to your boss at work.

We know we should but it's often just easier to give in, isn't it?

And this is even harder.

We're told to say **no**, to put off, ungodliness and worldly passions because Christ 'gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness'. (v 14)

We're told to say **no**, I'm not living like everyone else, doing whatever feels good, cutting corners, giving into temptation and materialism.

And secondly,

b. **it teaches us to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.**

See how Paul is emphasising 'self-control'?

And again there's a link to verse 14

Jesus Christ gave himself...to purify for himself a people that are his very own.

Put on godly living through self-control.

This is how we are to live in this present age.

We live in the 'now but not yet', the time between Jesus first and second comings.

And how do we keep going now? How do we motivate ourselves to live godly, self-controlled, counter-cultural lives when everyone else seems to do whatever feels good?

We have hope.

Hope that's not just wishful thinking but hope that's guaranteed.

Hope that Jesus will fulfil his last promise, that he will return.

We live in the 'present age' (v 12), with verse 11 behind us and verse 13 ahead of us.

And when he does we will see the glory of God, which is Jesus.

For believers the glory of God will mark the beginning of eternal life with God.

But for those in the darkness, for those lead astray by false teaching, this moment of glory will be a point of no return, a moment in which God's glory will mean death.

Throughout the Old Testament, God's glory was a threat.

When Moses asked to see God's face in Exodus 33, God only allowed him to see his back. We can't face God without having received grace.

Which is why we need to play our part and love what is good, teach what is good and to be eager to do good for the sake of the gospel, to adorn the gospel, to share the gospel.

Jesus is our perfect example

1 Peter 2:21-25

²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

²²“He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”^[a]

²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

We have received grace and we have new identities in Christ.

This grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and yes to self-control.

We’ll be eager to do what is good because we have hope in the glory to come.

We will live in godly fellowship now as we model the gospel of grace to each other and to outsiders because God offers salvation to all.

These were Pauls’ words to Titus.

These are God’s words to us. Teach what is good.

Let’s pray