

## Lesson 2: Healthy Teaching *Titus 2*

### Hook



**Main Point: We advance the Gospel by living godly lives in Christian community together.**

The Hawaii Space Exploration Analog and Simulation (or HI-SEAS) project is a NASA funded social experiment that simulates life on Mars. The simulation habitat is a dome located in Hawaii, and in 2016, was home to six volunteers. These men and women spent 365 days isolated in tight quarters, sharing only 1,200 square feet of usable floor space.<sup>1</sup> The team enjoyed amenities such as composting toilets, freeze-dried meat and limited medical supplies. The “astronauts” simulated the Mars experience, wearing spacesuits outdoors, foregoing communication with their family and friends. The experience is designed to help scientists learn what makes an effective crew.

HI-SEAS principal investigator reflected on the goal of the experiment: “This is about crew cohesion and performance, so how do we keep a crew cohesive? How do we select a crew and train a crew so that they can be resilient?”<sup>2</sup>

***Have you ever lived in tight quarters with friends? Did you thrive in the environment?***

***What characteristics do you think might be necessary for a HI-SEAS astronaut to be successful in the social experiment?***

***What characteristics are necessary for believers to thrive in Christian community?***

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<sup>1</sup> [http://hi-seas.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Hi-SEAS-MediaKit\\_12Sept2017.pdf](http://hi-seas.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Hi-SEAS-MediaKit_12Sept2017.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/08/nasa-mars-hi-seas-hawaii-human-mission-space-science/>

## Lesson 2: Healthy Teaching *Titus 2*

### Book

**Main Point:** We advance the Gospel by living godly lives in Christian community together.

**Text Summary:** This chapter is all about how to live in Christian community. Paul gives Titus instructions on how different groups within the church should behave and relate to one another. He then ends the chapter with the theological basis for Christian behavior. God has redeemed us through Jesus Christ, to be His people. Therefore, in this present age, He is purifying us to prepare us for the age to come, when we will live together with Him in His perfect Kingdom forever.

### Titus 2:1–10 [Read]

**Sub-Point 1:** Our churches must reflect Christ both in the way we live and the way we love one another.

***Why do you think Paul gives separate instructions to older men versus younger men and older women versus younger women?***

***How does it help our churches when the older folks mentor the younger folks?***

***Why should our behavior be exemplary to the outside world?***

Paul includes instructions for every age and stage of life. By covering older and younger, male and female, and slaves, Paul is giving instructions to *everyone* in the Cretan church—every age, sex and social position. Van Oosterzee observed, “No condition and no period of life is to remain unaffected by the sanctifying influence of the Gospel.”<sup>3</sup> As long as we live on this earth, we will never get to the point where we have learned it all and no longer need to study the Scriptures, examine our lives and hearts, and be changed by the Holy Spirit. No matter how old we are, we’re never finished with sanctification.

***v. 1: “But as for you ...”***

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<sup>3</sup> J. J. Van Oosterzee, *The Epistle of Paul to Titus, Lange’s Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 15.

At the end of chapter 1, Paul had addressed false teachers in the church. He now opens chapter 2 with “But as for you...” as an intentional contrast. Titus, and the elders he would appoint to lead the church, should not be like those false teachers, but should teach sound doctrine. This “you” is singular—Paul is holding Titus personally responsible for being sure the Cretan church knows sound doctrine.

**vv. 2–10: “urge them to ... so that...”**

Paul defines the sections very clearly by the group he is addressing. It’s like an ancient bullet-point list. Though there is really only one occurrence of the verb “urge” or “exhort” (v. 6), Bullinger writes that because of this structure and the repeated use of the infinitive “are to be,” the command “urge them to” is understood for every one of these groups.<sup>4</sup> Paul is telling Titus to “urge” (v. 6) or exhort not just the younger men in verse 6, but all of these groups to live the way they “are to be” (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9). Everyone in the church is to be exhorted to live the way Christians ought to live.

“So that” is used four times in this section (vv. 4, 5, 8, 10), reiterating the purpose for paying such close attention to our behavior:

- So that younger women will be trained how to live (v. 4)
- So that the Word of God may not be reviled (v. 5)
- So that an opponent may be put to shame (v. 8)
- So that they may adorn the doctrine of God (v. 10)

Paul isn’t commanding certain behavior just to try to control them or lord his authority over them. There is a purpose, beyond the fact that it is good for our own spiritual lives. Our Christian behavior sets an example for others—both in the church and out of the church. For spiritually mature believers, our lives are to be a witness to who Jesus is, a reflection of His character.

This behavior isn’t something we manufacture on our own or just work harder to try to do. For the believer who is walking closely with Jesus day by day, it will come naturally. If the Holy Spirit is dwelling and working in us, our behavior will reflect the fruit of the Spirit. Sound doctrine will result in godly behavior.<sup>5</sup>

**v. 2: Older Men**

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<sup>4</sup> E.W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 110.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1992), 296.

\* note: “older” is not explicitly defined, but culturally speaking, it was most likely the time in life when the children are grown and building their own families—grandparent age.<sup>6</sup>

- Sober-minded – The Greek word literally means “sobriety,” in contrast to drunkenness. But Paul could also be using the term figuratively, meaning “clarity of mind” and “good judgment” in general.<sup>7</sup> *Sober* doesn’t mean they have to be serious all the time, but wise and clear-headed.
- Dignified – Literally meaning “worthy of respect” as far as his behavior. This word and *godliness* (1:1) are used predominantly in the Pastoral Epistles and most often together, showing the close relationship between maturity and godliness.<sup>8</sup>
- Self-controlled – This word is actually repeated for all of the other groups as well. It is also one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23), so something that the Spirit grows in us as we abide in Him.
- Sound in faith, love and steadfastness – Paul uses the same word here that he does to describe doctrine—*sound*. Sound doctrine should lead to a sound lifestyle. Here, Paul takes the early Christian triad of “faith, hope and love,” but substitutes “steadfastness” for “hope.” Older men are closer to the age to come, so they don’t need hope for the future as much as they need endurance to run the race to the end. Paul wants older believers to finish well. To be able to say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).<sup>9</sup>

### **v. 3: Older Women**

- Likewise – Likewise implies that all of the things Paul had just said about older men should also be applied to older women
- Reverent in behavior – Just like the older men – dignified, not silly or frivolous. This word is a compound word from the word for “temple” and the word “appropriate for.”<sup>10</sup> So older women should live *at all times* as if they were in the temple, in the presence of God Himself. As should we all.

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1992), 299.

<sup>7</sup> P.J. Budd, “Drunken,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids: Regency, 1967), 514.

<sup>8</sup> W. Foerster, “Dynamai,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 7* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 168-169.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, Baker: 1984), 185-186.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1992), 299.

- Slanderers –The word for *devil* comes from the Greek word for *slanderer*.<sup>11</sup> Slander is the work of the devil, the father of lies (John 8:44), not of God. A loose tongue is something that is dangerous for all Christians (James 3).
- Slaves to too much wine –The ESV has the best translation here; others only say “addicted.” But the word literally means “slave.” This word is an intentional contrast to Paul’s self-description in Titus 1:1. We are to be servants of God, not slaves to sin.
- Teach what is good, and so train the younger women – Christian community gives older men and women a great purpose—to mentor the younger believers in their midst.

#### ***vv. 4–5: Younger Women***

Note: About half of the instructions to younger women relate to their family responsibilities and half to personal piety. It would be very affirming to young single women or young married women with no children to see that this list is not just about being a wife and mother.

- Love their husband and children – This phrase was used often in Greek culture, among pagans and Jews alike, to describe the characteristics of a desirable woman, one who would make a good wife.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Christian women who lived this way would be a positive witness to the world outside of the Church as well.
- Self-controlled – Again, as for all other believers.
- Pure – This may have been referring to sexual purity—fidelity in marriage and purity in singleness. But it could also just mean personal piety in general.
- Working at home – This assumes that, in their culture, women’s primary responsibilities were in the home versus the public sphere. This isn’t making a comment about whether women should work outside the home or not, it is simply Paul’s saying that women should be productive in their work.<sup>13</sup>
- Kind – The word for *kind* literally means “good,” and it is the most general of all Greek words for *goodness*. It doesn’t have any specific slant to it; it just means “generally good.”<sup>14</sup>
- Submissive to their own husbands – The ESV has the best translation. Others omit the word *own*, and people have therefore used it as a defense for the inferiority of women to men. But this submission was in the context specifically of an individual marriage—each wife’s being submissive to *her own* husband as the head of their household.<sup>15</sup> No statement of

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<sup>11</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles, Black’s New Testament Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 240.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1992), 300.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 141.

<sup>14</sup> Strong’s 18

<sup>15</sup> E.G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1958), 182.

submission in Scripture implies inferiority of women to men, but a difference in roles within the context of the family.

### **vv. 6–8: Younger Men**

**v. 6 “Likewise ... self-control”** – Again, this use of *likewise* would mean that Titus is to exhort the young men in the same way that he has all of the other groups before them. Not that every specific exhortation fits them, but that all of these qualities Paul had emphasized with the others all boil down to self-control.

**v. 7: “Show yourself”** – The specifics of the exhortations to the younger men are given in the context of Titus’s personal example to them, as well as his words (v. 7–8).

- In all respects
- Good Works – Good works don’t save us; we were saved *in order to* do good works (Ephesians 2:10). In 1 Timothy, Paul says that having a reputation for good works in the community will draw outsiders to the Church (1 Timothy 2:10; 5:10; 6:18).

**v. 7: “And in your teaching”** – Both Titus’s lifestyle and his teaching would be examples to the young men in Crete. Teaching sound doctrine is one the primary purposes of the Church.

- Integrity – This word literally means “incorruptibility” or “indestructibility,” and therefore is used figuratively to mean “immortality.” It’s about teaching that is indestructible or incorruptible, meaning no one can tear it down. Paul is challenging Titus to present the Gospel so well that the enemies of the Church cannot challenge it.
- Dignity – The same word as above, describing how the older men ought to be. But here it is describing not just Titus’s character, but his teaching. His teaching should be “worthy of respect” to outsiders. So even if they don’t agree with you, they respect the quality of your argument.
- Sound speech – This is most likely not referring to *what* Titus says, but *how* he says it. That he is well-spoken, logical and persuasive in his teaching.<sup>16</sup>

### **vv. 9–10: Slaves**

*\* Slaves were addressed last, as their own category, because it was assumed that the above groups were all referring to free people.*

It can seem conflicting that Paul would encourage slaves to be submissive to their masters when in Galatians, he declared that “there is neither slave nor free ... for you are all one in

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1992), 304-305.

Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Paul is not endorsing slavery, nor is God endorsing slavery. The Bible does not sanction slavery as a God-ordained institution. There is no slavery in the kingdom of God. But Paul is explaining to Christians how to live as citizens of the kingdom in the reality of *this* world.

In 1 Corinthians 7:17–24, Paul commanded believers to remain in whatever condition they were when they were called to follow Jesus. If they were circumcised, stay that way. Uncircumcised, stay that way. Regarding slavery, he said, if you were a bondservant when you were called, don’t be concerned about it. If you have an opportunity to be free, take it, but don’t worry if you have to stay a bondservant. You are still free in Christ, even if you are a slave (1 Corinthians 7:21–22). Just as God told the Israelites who were in exile in Babylon, their call wasn’t to try to escape exile, but to learn how to live faithfully *in* exile.

In their writings, both Paul and Peter encouraged Christian slaves to serve their masters obediently, whether or not the master was a Christian (Ephesians 6:5–8; Colossians 3:22–25; 1 Timothy 6:1–2; 1 Peter 2:18–25). Paul even commanded the runaway slave Onesimus to return to his master, Philemon. But he also commanded Philemon to treat Onesimus as a brother. This is consistent with the Old Testament attitude toward slavery. “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves” (Leviticus 25:39–43). They were to treat them as hired workers, not slaves, *and* release them in the year of Jubilee. Because all of Israel were family, they were to treat each other as brothers, no matter their economic status.

Longenecker writes, “Rather than engaging in a head-on confrontation with slavery, Paul sought to elevate the quality of personal relationships within the existing structures of society. His insistence on mutual acceptance among Christians, while disparaged by some, was in reality an explosive concept which ultimately could have its full impact only in the abolition of the institution of slavery.”<sup>17</sup> Instead of overtly attacking the institution, the Gospel would change the world by changing the hearts of believers in the world.

- Submissive in all things – This is the general command under which the other, more detailed exhortations fall. It is assumed that this “in all things” excludes demands that are contrary to God’s law.<sup>18</sup>
- Well-pleasing – This is the only time this is used of pleasing another person. Every other time, it is used to speak of pleasing God. So it means in relation to someone who has authority over you, seek to please your earthly master as you would please God.

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<sup>17</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *New Testament Social Ethics for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 56-60.

<sup>18</sup> Walter Lock, *Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1924), 142.

- Not argumentative, not pilfering – Paul mentions two examples (arguing and stealing) of behavior that was common among slaves at the time.
- But showing all good faith – They were to show that they could be trusted. All of this was so that they would “adorn the Gospel,” i.e., make it even more attractive. Lea and Griffin write, “Surely the Gospel’s transforming power in the lives of those who have every reason to be bitter would stand out clearer and brighter than in those who lived in freedom and dignity unknown to slaves... Against the bleak hopelessness of this system of bondage, the Christian slave’s devotion to the Gospel and resulting godly attitudes and actions serve to make attractive in an unparalleled way the ultimate freedom that is only realized in Christ.”<sup>19</sup>

All of our behavior as Christians is a reflection on the Gospel. We can either make the Gospel more attractive (v. 10) or make it reviled (v. 5) by our behavior. We could summarize all of these characteristics above by saying that Paul calls believers to lives of dignity, reverence, self-control and purity. We can either help advance the Gospel through the way we live or we can become a hindrance to it.

***Which of these qualities listed above do you struggle with? How and why?***

***Why is it so hard to be self-controlled?***

***If self-control is a fruit of the Spirit, and we have the Spirit living inside us, how can we access that self-control? Practically speaking, what do we do to get self-control?***

***Is it fair for people to judge Christianity by our behavior? Why or why not?***

**Titus 2:11–14 [Read]**

**Sub-Point 2:** God has redeemed us in Christ to be His people. While we live on this earth, in this present age, He is purifying us, to prepare us for the age to come, when we will live together with Him in His perfect kingdom forever.

***What kind of lives are we to live in the present age?***

***Why? What will it prepare us for?***

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1992), 308



### **What is our “blessed hope”?**

These verses are packed with theologically rich language, but they all point to one main idea—the theological basis for this Christian behavior Paul had spent the first half of the chapter commanding. In theologically rich passages such as these, it can be helpful to break the sentence down into parts and see how those parts relate to each other:

#### **vv. 11–14 (in the same order, just broken into bullet points):**

The grace of God has appeared

- Bringing salvation for all people
- Training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions
- And (training us) to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age

Waiting for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ

- Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness
- And (who gave himself for us) to purify for himself a people for his own possession, who are zealous for good works

Broken down this way, this passage clearly shows us the two-part coming of Jesus:

1. “the grace of God has appeared” (v. 11–12) when Jesus came the first time.
2. But we are still “waiting for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of Christ” (v. 13–14); the return of Jesus.

Scholars call this the “already/not yet” of the kingdom of God. That the kingdom has *already* come *in part*, but *not yet* in its *fullness*. The kingdom has come on a spiritual level. When Jesus came the first time, He conquered death and redeemed us from sin, “bringing salvation to all people” (v. 11). Jesus reigns in the hearts and minds of believers. But when Jesus comes again – “the appearing of the glory of ... Jesus Christ” – the kingdom will come in all its fullness. In the age to come, all evil will be destroyed; the whole earth will be made new and we will live with God on the throne in a physical kingdom—new heavens and new earth. Our bodies will be made new; there will be no sin, no evil, no crying, no pain. But for now, we live between Jesus’ first and second comings, between the “already” and the “not yet.” What Paul here calls “this present age” (v. 12).

**v. 14 – “to purify for Himself a people”** – Jesus sacrificed Himself not only to save us from sin, but to purify us. To make for Himself “a people of His own possession” (v. 14).

We don't have to just sit around and wait for "the age to come." As we are waiting (v. 13), we can live a kingdom life now, "in this present age" (v. 12). Paul describes how:

- Renounce ungodliness and worldly passions (v. 12)
- Live self-controlled, upright and godly lives (v. 12)

The life of "this present age" is a time of preparation for the age to come. A time of sanctification. Of growing more and more like Jesus every day (Ephesians 5:27; 1 Timothy 4:7–8; 1 Thessalonians 4:1–3). And we can do that because Jesus "trained us" to do it (v. 12). When He came, Jesus both taught His disciples with His words and showed them by the example of His life, just as Paul commanded Titus to do. Even more, when He left, He sent us the Spirit to give us the power to actually live godly lives:

*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence (2 Peter 1:3).*

This passage is really all about Jesus. Paul is saying, if you call yourself a Christian, if you call yourself "a people of His own possession," that means your life must look like His. But the good news of the Gospel is that living this godly life doesn't depend on our working harder to be better and do better. It all comes from Jesus. Jesus is the One who saves us *and* the One who purifies us. God's grace both saves us *and* enables us to live godly lives<sup>20</sup>:

*The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation ... and training us ... (vv. 11–12)*

The exhortations in the first half of the chapter aren't a laundry list of things Christians should do to be good people. They are a description of what your life will look like if Jesus is the Lord of it—if the Holy Spirit is dwelling in you and bearing fruit in you. So, it isn't an obligation; it is a joy.

***How can we grow in godliness? What should we do, practically speaking, to become more like Jesus?***

***How can we encourage each other in our church to live like this?***

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1992), 309-311.

## **Titus 2:15 [Read]**

**Sub-Point 3:** Church leaders should exhort, rebuke, and teach sound doctrine boldly.

Paul concludes this chapter with one straightforward sentence of command, just as he opened the chapter. Verses 1 and 15 create bookends for the exhortations between them.

*But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine .... (v. 1)*

*Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. (v. 15)*

It is the job of our church leaders to teach us, exhort us, and even to rebuke us when we are not walking with the Lord. This is why we need to take great care to choose our leaders wisely (Titus 1). If we have chosen godly leaders, we should be happy to submit to their authority. Just as Proverbs tells us, “A wise son hears his father’s instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke” (Proverbs 13:1).

***How can we, as a church, do better about teaching our people and training them in godliness?***

***How can we personally pursue godliness in our daily lives?***

***How can our own personal spiritual maturity help advance the Gospel?***

## Lesson 2: Healthy Teaching *Titus 2*

### Took

**Main Point: We advance the Gospel by living godly lives in Christian community together.**

In 2007, Barna Research Group did a study and wrote a book about what the new generation of the secular world in America thinks about Christians. The book was called *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity and Why It Matters*. The back cover explains the purpose of the book.

The author wrote that most young unbelievers are turned off by Christians who seem hypocritical, judgmental or holier-than-thou. But they loved the sense of community in the Church and they respected a church that helped the poor or marginalized. In other words, when we actually *act* like Jesus instead of *talking about* how like Jesus we are we are seen as being more authentic.

So the question for us is “How can we, as a church, be a positive example, instead of adding to that negative image that too many secular people in our culture have of the Church?”

***What can I as an individual do specifically?***

***What can we as a Bible Fellowship do?***

***What can the universal Church do?***

### Challenges

***Grow up!*** Just as we said last week, God doesn't expect us to be perfect, but He does want us to grow in godliness throughout our lives. What steps can you take to become closer to God? Scripture reading, prayer, spiritual disciplines? Did practicing the spiritual discipline you chose help you last week? Keep doing it; see what kind of difference it makes over time.

***Be a positive witness.*** Throughout this week, think every day about what your behavior is doing for the Church's image problem in the world. Pray every morning that you can be a positive witness. It will help you be more aware and check yourself throughout the day.

***Exhort one another.*** Hopefully we won't have to do much rebuking of false teaching or awful behavior in our church. But we can always exhort one another, encourage one another to be

better. Consider finding an accountability partner and checking in with each other every week or more often to share your struggles and encourage one another to walk with the Lord.