

Invitation to Effectiveness

The Key to Sharing Our Faith

God's Invitations Series – Part 4

Titus 2:1-10

August 30-31, 2025

Introduction

- The (A) problem with Christianity in America – church-based Christianity in America has been suffering from a PR problem for most of my life. Respect for Christian leaders has plummeted over the last 50 years. What was once a beacon of hope for the lost and hurting has become seen by some as another institution of domination and oppression. Before the 1960's people assumed the Bible and church leaders were right and but didn't want to hear about it. Since, in many people's hearts, its changed to seeing the church as either irrelevant or bad.
- It's not theological, it's relational - But what's fascinating to me is that I'm not sure that the problem is theological. Sure, we have some bizarre Christian streams out there doing weird things, but I don't get the impression that the world is struggling as much WITH the Bible as it is with the PEOPLE talking ABOUT the Bible. Don't get me wrong, the more secular America becomes the more people struggle with seeing the Bible's perspective as right such as with social issues. But what's far more dominant is that it has been the people behind the VOICES pushing what they deem a biblical agenda that has deteriorated trust and connection with the American public.
- How did this happen? – how did we get here? What changed? The Bible is the same. People's hearts are the same. So, what happened? The Christian church gained popularity with the advent of TV and media, and its leaders have been exposed as inconsistent with what they teach. For a long time it was believed that although our Christian neighbor wasn't a great example of Christ, surely there were Christians out there and Christian leaders who did it right and therefore the Christian Church as an organization had moral authority. But once the top level was exposed through scandal after scandal, the public began to see that their neighbors might actually be MORE moral and integrous than the professionals. Over the years it's been confirmed by more scandals, more exposures. Instead of quieting down and focusing on highlighting healthier leaders, mainstream Christianity doubled down on getting louder and more forceful about what was right and wrong and condemning society. This may have had impact if it were not for a degrading and eroding moral authority.
- Defining moral authority – The internet's AI overview defined moral authority as, *"Moral authority is the power to influence others based on character, virtue, and integrity, rather than formal titles or positions. It is earned through consistent actions that align with strong moral principles and the respect and trust of others, allowing leaders to inspire rather than coerce ethical behavior. This earned influence creates a lasting impact, enabling leaders to guide and shape the moral landscape of individuals and society."*

- How authority structures work – In any given human tribal concept or grouping, there needs to be authority and structure otherwise it implodes into chaos. That authority either needs to force their way with power OR the group has to agree to their authority in concept and go along with it assuming the power could be used at any time. The healthiest and most mature societies don't need to demonstrate power as much as its agreed upon. The unspoken assumption, however, is that the authority is doing the right things for the right reasons, and looking out for everyone's best. In other words, the assumption is that they are morally superior to make the best decisions so everyone needs to go along with it.
- How authority structures disintegrate – it is the underpinning of 'they are the moral boss' that allows all of it to work, which means that once the moral authority diminishes, their ability to get buy in to the system of agreed-obedience, erodes. Let's get practical for a moment.
 - Parenting – why should your children do what you say as parents? You think it's because you know better but that's not true. They have their own opinions. When they are young they follow you because you seem larger than life and in full control with power. They have no reason to doubt your authority. But as they grow they realize that you are not always right and you are human and they begin to test those boundaries. Ultimately when you tell them what they can and can't do, and they disagree strongly, it will only work if one of two things exist: 1.) Actual Power - you have something over their head that they are scared of losing; 2.) Moral Authority – they know that you are right and know they are wrong and have a guilt associated with their rebellion knowing that in the end God's on your side. Therefore they agree to cave because they are not willing to risk their relationship with you by defying you on something they know is wrong.
 - Policing – why should society do what the police say? Again, the same rules apply. Either there is going to be a show of force, or everyone agrees that we know they are the authority and do what they say. Can they force their way with their guns and resources? Yes. But for a more peaceful public we agree to let them be the boss, believing they are upholding the law we all agreed on and are doing what's best for society.
 - When authority slips – In both parenting and policing, moral authority is everything. It is what holds the system together. But when the child finds out that their parent is making selfish and immature decisions they no longer see them as the moral authority and their decisions are suspect and rebellion seems more appropriate. Similarly, we have watched that once a percentage of police officers were exposed for being bad guys, the whole system became under scrutiny and rebellion became more normal. The thought shifted from – I should do what they say because they are right and good, to why should I do what they say, they are as bad or worse than I am.

- Authority and Christianity – a fascinating part of how we operate in Christianity is that we operate as moral authorities. Whether we should or not is a debate we don't have time for. Nevertheless we find ourselves making moral judgments on the lives of others. We tell them what is right and wrong, what is good and bad, what the Bible says, and what God thinks. We claim that we are doing that for their best interest and defending God's rule. But, that is only going to work if people willingly agree and believe that we are the good guys and have their best interest at heart. It's only going to work if we are trusted to believe what we say and live it out ourselves. It's only going to work if we are consistent with our convictions. It's only going to work if we are actually acting in alignment with God's Word and way, with the right heart, the right motives, and living lives that honor Him in love.

Our LIVES must match our WORDS.

- The System of Christianity – We must never forget that the system of Christianity is relational above everything else. We talk about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ to be saved. We talk about loving our neighbor as ourself. We talk about loving our enemies. We talk about loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength.
 - The result – the result of a relational system is that everything is built on trust and the common good. In a religious relational system everything hinges on connection, alignment, and consistency with God. The more God-like we are, the more safety exists in our group. The more God-like we are, the more smoothly our systems run. It's not just how we are viewed outside the church, but inside as well.
 - How we live matters – how we live matters a lot. It's not just our actions, but WHY we do what we do. It's not just minimizing sin, it's about being as pure internally as possible so we WANT to love people and serve them. Why does this matter so much? Because it was how Jesus was and we are walking under the banner of His name thereby called to be just like Him.
 - Different wrongly – Our lives are not different enough in the RIGHT ways. They are plenty different in the WRONG ways.
- The Series so far – if you are just joining us, we have embarked on a journey through the book of Titus, a super tiny but powerful book in the New Testament of the Bible. Like all good preachers we have taken a very small amount of material and made it into an 8-part series. Today we are on part 4. Can we appreciate the pastors who have led us so far: Pastors Brian and Rodney!!!
 - Part 1 – Pastor Brian intro'd the book and highlighted the powerful truth that we become what we believe and the objects that we worship. What's forming us?
 - Part 2 – Then Pastor Brian talked about the importance of having good leaders in our lives that we can trust to lead us well. Paul instructed Titus to install elders, or church leaders that would lead properly.

- Part 3 – in contrast to that we learned in part three what happens when **false teachers start becoming influencers**. Pastor Rodney talked a lot about trust and what happens when its broken.
- We now turn to chapter 2 – **We shift from a focus on leaders to a focus on everyday Christians and how it REALLY matters how each of us live**. We are not only accountable to God for it, but we are accountable to one another. Please turn with me...
- The best way to read Paul's letters – **Paul's letters are highly contextual**. In other words, they are speaking to very specific situations that are occurring in the location the letter is sent to. You can know the troubles of the region by looking at what areas Paul addresses. **In this context, Crete, excess, bad choices, newfound liberties, loose morals, and stupid decisions seem to be the norm of the day**. Paul will be specifically addressing how Christians should look in this context.¹

Lesson

- Solid Role Models
 - Instructions to older men

¹ "Young women were married just after puberty was reached, while husbands would be as much as ten years senior. Husbands routinely engaged in extra-marital sexual activity, though this cultural norm was clearly opposed by Christian teaching (1:6; 1 Tim 3:2). Now, however, under the influence of the "new woman" paradigm, young Christian wives in Crete were apparently throwing caution and traditional cultural values to the winds, and pursuing sexual freedom. While outsiders to the faith, already suspicious of the Christian groups and their gatherings, would find more fuel for criticism in this unruly behavior of young wives, the Roman government had already proved itself ready to impose bans on any religious groups suspected of sexual misconduct. Both risks—to reputation and ongoing existence—could well have been in Paul's mind. But the focus of his concern is clear: behavior in the household was to be an endorsement of the gospel. The similar "purpose" clauses (2:8, 10), the concern for the opinion of outsiders (2:8, 10; 3:1–2, 8) and the strong statement of Paul's missionary calling in 1:1–3 indicate that the purpose of respectability goes beyond simply preservation and includes mission... Titus is to "teach" young men "to be self-controlled in everything." The verb, drawn from the *sōphrōn* word group and applied widely to all groups thus far (2:2, 4, 5; 1:6), intends the now familiar range of meanings (self-controlled, sensible, prudent, moderate, etc.) that converge in the balanced, respectable lifestyle approved in the wider society. The scope of its application, "in everything," suggests that this is to be the fundamental characteristic of their outward conduct. Moreover, the self-control called for is equally measured to pull these young men out of the sexually and otherwise indulgent lifestyle that was the norm in Cretan culture..... The fact that masters are not addressed might indicate that Christian slaves of unbelievers are in view (1 Tim 6:1). Then again it may simply have been a case (as with younger wives) that the Cretan situation required that the member of the household pair most vulnerable to criticism or most affected by the disruption be instructed.⁹⁰ Slaves were known for their readiness to embrace new religions. While this generally did not disrupt the family religious practices, the intolerant nature of Christianity (and Judaism) became an irritant within the otherwise rather tolerant households,⁹² and any religion or teaching that might be seen as disruptive to this sector of society would have been regarded with suspicion. In a situation where the respectability of a household was likely to be under close observation, subordinates would be observed most closely for evidence of non-conformist or unruly behavior. It has been argued by many that this kind of teaching simply reflects the church's surrender to a cultural status quo, the endorsement of a secular ethic. But this ignores the alternative possibility, argued by myself and numerous others: the purpose statements of these instructions and other textual cues suggest that Paul and other early Christian writers regarded the church's calling in the world as a robust, redemptive role. Elements that (in the absence of the purpose clauses) might reflect secularization are actually evidence of the kind of theological negotiation required by the conviction that the social structure could be more easily redeemed from the inside out.... In fact, the household as the center of society was under attack from converging cultural forces. Its central place in life made it the strategic hill to be taken by the gospel if Christianity was going to prove its redemptive capability in the world. The point of the theological passage to follow is that the life Paul expects Cretan believers to live in this context is not an ordinary life in the least; it is the product of the Christ-event. And the implication is that the gospel creates a people capable of living within human society, observing its institutions, speaking its language, embracing its good values, while reshaping and retooling others, in order to bring redemption to it." NICNT – Phillip Towner

- Titus 2:1-2 - *"But as for you,² teach what accords with sound doctrine.² Older men³ are to be sober-minded,⁴ dignified,⁵ self-controlled,⁶ sound in faith,⁷ in love,⁸ and in steadfastness.⁹"*
 - But as for you, - Titus is to be the complete opposite of those false teachers who are ruining everything. The Cretan church was in a PR nightmare and the only thing that was going to get them out of it was solid leadership getting the ship righted and be consistently good people doing the right things for the right reasons.
 - teach what accords with sound doctrine. – there had been so much false teaching that it was paramount that the teaching was dialed in and solid. This was not the time to be creative and progressive with doctrine. This was a time to hunker down and get back to the basics. There were too many opinions in the air and Titus needed to let the dust settle and ground people in a firm foundation.
 - What is SOUND doctrine – doctrine are principles and beliefs. For a Christian, sound doctrine are principles and beliefs that are strictly ALIGNED with what Christ actually taught and demonstrated. The key is that it is SOUND which means consistent throughout, or solid. The false teachers were teaching their opinion and things NOT in alignment with Christ.
 - Older men – In a culture where life expectancy was relatively low compared to today, older people were likely forty and older. Usually, older means that someone is more settled down and likely has a family (in that culture), and life experience. It means they SHOULD be able to be relied upon to some degree and not in the childhood-young adult learning curve.
 - Biblical view of enough is enough – there seems to be a vibe in Scripture that children and young people get a pass on being stupid and chaotic. They are called to strive to be better but there is less expected of them. But there comes a time and perhaps its different for each individual, when it's time to grow up and get your act together.

² "Paul contrasts Titus (and implicitly the whole church) with the failed opponents. The transitional phrase "you, however" occurs several times in these letters to Titus and Timothy to indicate a 180-degree change in direction from the false teachers. The device is simple, but it sends the appropriate message of censure as it marks out the start of a new course." NICNT – Phillip Towner

³ "Depending upon which ancient classification of age groups we follow, old men are at least somewhere upwards of 40 years old, possibly into their fifties or sixties." NICNT – Phillip Towner

⁴ "The term ranges in meaning from the literal sense of "cautious in the use of wine" to the metaphorical sense of "sober-minded" (1 Tim 3:2)." NICNT – Phillip Towner

⁵ "This term is also broad, but generally denotes an observable bearing or demeanor that commands respect from other people, and was to be especially characteristic of older men." NICNT – Phillip Towner

⁶ "self-controlled" (sōphrōn; 1:8; 2:5, 12) or "sensible" ("prudent"; NRSV) depicts a measured restraint in all things—the opposite of behavior that might be regarded as foolish or "Cretan." NICNT – Phillip Towner

⁷ "How is soundness measured here? First, "in faith" (see on 1 Tim 1:2) depicts the invisible dimension of Christian existence, focusing on the activity of believing (in the gospel, in God/Christ) that determines Christian identity and expresses the human response to God." NICNT – Phillip Towner

⁸ "It is meant in the sense of sacrificial service done for another, and therefore represents the visible counterpart to believing." NICNT – Phillip Towner

⁹ "Endurance" (see on 1 Tim 6:11; cf. Rev 2:19) [in place of "hope"] completes the triad of spiritual health. This element of perseverance could envision the conflict setting or more generally the struggle to live as believers in rough Cretan social conditions (cf. Rom 5:3; James 1:3; 5:11). In either case, it expresses the determination and perseverance that support faith and love in the face of adversity." NICNT – Phillip Towner

Accountability raises and expectations change. It's shameful for an 'older' person to still be in chaos.

- are to be sober-minded, - **sober minded means clear headed**. That can be in a variety of ways. The most obvious is that they are not impaired by alcohol but a broader meaning is that they are clear headed from anything that may make them impaired. We have a mandate to be **clear headed enough not to hurt others**. This can be in needing to get healthy **emotionally**, it could be making sure we are **not too exhausted** that we are snappish, or it could simply mean clear headed in **wisdom**.
- dignified, - a better definition for me (more modern) is the term **respectable**. It's not about looking elite, or looking fancy, or appearing dignified in society, it's about **being someone worthy of respect**. Do they live in a way that others will respect as proper and good?
- self-controlled,¹⁰ - **measured restraint in all things**. I think all of the concerns and corrections are really heading toward this broad term of self-controlled. **This is where all things fall apart in humanity**. It's when we are no longer controlling our impulses and drives and letting them control us.
- The Biblical view of self – **in today's world, there is far too much emphasis and importance put on being 'true to ourselves.'** The Bible **doesn't share that perspective**. The Bible teaches that although there are great things about how God made us and good things we can be proud of, **there is a lot in us through our brokenness that is suspect and should be kept tamed**. The idea of being free to do whatever we want to the cost of our bodies and others is foreign to Christianity. **The self is to be shaped not catered to**. The self will lead to excess and sin naturally. We are bent toward it. You don't have to teach a toddler to be selfish and take from others, they naturally do it. We teach and train them to do otherwise for their benefit and the benefit of the whole.
- The 'natural' fiction – so many arguments about behavior today talk about what is 'natural.' Usually someone means that what's the human body, or the human nature would normally do if it wasn't impeded by something else. **People argue that it's natural to feel a certain way and to deny that is wrong**. There's an attitude in society that blocking what's natural is going against what's right. I firmly disagree. **Natural isn't pure and natural isn't always good**. It's not good to naturally want to hurt someone else but for some people it's natural. It's not natural to want to be loving and unselfish if the other person has harmed you. **We must never argue about 'what's natural' but argue, 'what's intended by God.'** God is our creator, not nature. We are not accidents. We are purposeful creations and therefore we have a plan

¹⁰ "Within his churches, Paul assigned himself this task (1 Thess 1:7; 2 Thess 3:9; Phil 3:17), and Timothy (1 Tim 4:12) and Titus, church leaders (1 Pet 5:3) and believers in general (e.g. 1 Thess 1:7) were instructed to do likewise. In this case, the behavior to be modeled is described with the language of "good deeds" ("doing what is good"; 2:14; 3:1, 8; 1:16)." NICNT – Phillip Towner

and design. Our job is to harness our bodies, souls, minds, and emotions to align with our created purpose. We are here primarily for God, even more than ourselves.

- Drives and desires – it's critical that we understand that we are in charge of shaping our desires and drives. Every human being has drives and desires and sometimes they are good, like ambition to do something significant, and sometimes they are bad, like selfishness. Just because we have a 'natural' desire doesn't mean it's healthy or good. We may have the natural desire to hate. We may have the natural desire of retaliation. We may have the natural desire to have multiple sexual partners. But that is not something we cater to or encourage. We harness those into something more noble and beautiful. We shape them into something that blesses God, ourselves, and others.
- The feeling fallacy – another danger is that we have debased our ideas into wanting to live life according to how we feel about something. We feel like we are a gender that we are not. We feel like we want to divorce our spouse. We feel that we want to have sex with anyone we want. We feel that we want to take shortcuts in our jobs. Our feelings are simply our broken human nature's way of telling us what it wants, but those feelings need to be filtered. If I feel like I don't want to go to school that doesn't allow me to miss school if I want to graduate. Our feelings must always be curbed to what's healthy and good (which is dictated by God through Scripture).
- sound in faith, - Faith in the Bible (especially in the New Testament) is used in a bunch of different ways. Sometimes, like here, 'faith' means, 'the faith of Christianity.' It's the faith or belief, or confidence in the tenets of Jesus Christ. To be sound in faith is another way of saying, keeping locked into the ways of Jesus. It's another call to 'sound doctrine' that was mentioned earlier to Titus as the pastor. Everyone that is a Christian is called to keep in step with Christ and not get too far away from His premises and foundational teachings.
- [sound] in love, - to be sound in love means to love genuinely, with the right motives, in the right ways. It means not a whimsy love, not a flaky love that only wants to do it sometimes, but a solid, unselfish love that is consistent with the motivations that Christ had for us. It means that we don't just love those who love us but we also love our enemies and everyone in between. It's consistent and integrous.
- and [sound] in steadfastness – in the same way we aren't flaky people with our convictions, loyalties, and promises. We are to be secure and consistent and solid. What we say we are going to do we need to do. What we start we need to finish. When we walk our faith journey of Christianity we need to stay in there day after day and not be all over the place.

- General Directions – it's easy to read passages like this which are broken out under titles of certain groups: older men, older women, younger women, etc. and think that it's only for them. That's never how I read them. I read them as directives of something (principles) that honors and pleases God so I want those aspects in my life as well regardless of what category I am in. There's nothing in that last for older men that every other group shouldn't be doing. The only time when we should not see it as 'for us' is when it's very specific to a context, role or office.
- Masters of Their Domain
 - Instructions to women
 - *Titus 2:3-5 – "Older women¹¹ likewise are to be¹² reverent in behavior,¹³ not slanderers or slaves to much wine.¹⁴ They are to teach¹⁵ what is good,⁴ and so train¹⁶ the young women to love their husbands and children,⁵ to be*

¹¹ "Gk. πρεσβυτις ("old[er] woman, elderly lady"; only here in the NT; see BDAG, s.v.; 4 Macc 16:14; Philo, On the Special Laws 2.33). The age range covered by the term "older women" is the same as that in "older men" (cf. 1 Tim 5:2)." NICNT – Phillip Towner

¹² "notably, these are arranged so that two positively framed virtues bracket two stereotypically negative traits often associated with the loose behavior Roman women were freer to participate in. Paul is again drawing on both the Cretan and the wider Roman social discourse as he describes the foibles of some Cretan Christian women." NICNT – Phillip Towner

¹³ "The first quality, "reverent in the way they live" ("in behavior," NRSV), considers the entire demeanor of older women—conduct understood as the interplay of inward and outward realities." NICNT – Phillip Towner

¹⁴ "In our texts slanderous talk and drunkenness are closely linked (1 Tim 3:8, 11) because they were already linked in secular discussions, and particularly, as here, in relation to shortcomings of a certain kind of older wife. What should be noted is that these behaviors, typical of the liberated Roman women at dinners and banquets, were also linked to a loss of "self-control"—sōphrosynē, the feminine cardinal virtue that insured sexual fidelity—and sexual promiscuity. These implications were a strong enough part of the social discourse that Paul need not have mentioned them here to have implied them. His intentional echoing of this stereotype is meant to ensure that Cretan Christian older women rid themselves of this "typical" reputation.⁴⁰ They were to show themselves as older wives who had successfully emerged from the Cretan way of life." NICNT – Phillip Towner

¹⁵ "Most English versions understand the Greek compound, kalodidaskalous, to mean "teaching what is good," with the accent more on the content of "what" was to be taught (2:1) than on the character and responsibilities of who was to do the teaching. But there is nothing in the term itself to support this decision. The context focuses on the character of older women and perhaps the need to make some changes. This suggests that a better translation here is "good teachers," and that Paul is calling these older women to a certain quality of performance ("good, excellent") as "teachers." While there is no reason to doubt that this role would include modeling or mentoring in areas ranging from domestic responsibilities to personal godliness (vv. 4–5), Paul nevertheless entrusts to these older women a very significant educative responsibility within the context of the oikos." NICNT – Phillip Towner

¹⁶ "From the virtues these young wives are to be called back to embrace, the likely impact of the "new woman" morality on the Cretan Christian households can be seen (see on 1 Tim 2:8–15). The values of the "new woman" had little to do with the traditional commitments to the household: the new morality they emphasized endorsed the freedom to pursue extra marital sexual liaisons and liberties normally open only to men, which would place marital fidelity and household management at risk. Thus the household was the chief theater of Paul's campaign." NICNT – Phillip Towner

self-controlled, pure,¹⁷ working at home,¹⁸ kind,¹⁹ and submissive to their own husbands,²⁰ that the word of God may not be reviled.²¹

- Older women – again, like the men above, these are women likely over forty, have some experience and wisdom under their belt, have raised families (if God has blessed them with that) and have a good head on their shoulders.
- likewise – in a similar manner to calling out the older men, the older women are just as accountable for their behavior and lifestyles.
- are to be reverent in behavior, - Reverent means ‘showing respect’. The behavior of the women should be done in such a way as to show respect toward others, toward themselves, and in alignment with the expectations of God. In other words, there is no honor in selfish living and out of control lives.
- not slanderers – although all people should watch their tongues, women tend to not only be the greater communicators and relational gender, but the way that they interact and build bonds is by sharing information about people. This sets up a particular temptation which is to speak inappropriately about others. Slander is intentional negative things said about someone which may or may not be true (if it's true it tends to use a different word than slander). Gossip is non-formal and casual conversation

¹⁷ “The adjective “pure” (“chaste”; 1 Tim 5:22; see on 4:12; 5:2) completes the pair. It has various applications (e.g. of wisdom, James 3:17; of purity of motive, Phil 1:17), but its use in similar passages (1 Pet 3:2; cf. 2 Cor 11:2; cf. Phil 4:8) and in this particular context indicates the meaning of sexual purity in the case of the wife.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

¹⁸ “The first term depicts domestic activity: “busy at home” (“domestic,” RSV; “good managers of the household,” NRSV). In using this rare term,⁵⁵ Paul expresses the ideal in Hellenistic and Jewish cultures that the wife should remain at home and occupy herself in the running of the household—and in doing so he echoes the complaint of those who criticized the morality of the “new woman.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

¹⁹ “The final adjective can be translated variously as “good, kind, or benevolent” (etc.). It either qualifies and strengthens the preceding reference to domestic skill (“fulfill their household duties well”), or stands alone as a reference to kindness.⁵⁸ The syntax favors the latter understanding and suggests that she is to show consideration to those with whom she has contact in carrying out her household duties.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

²⁰ “Finally, the instructions invoke the most fundamental element of the household ethic concerning wives: younger wives must “be subject to their husbands.” As we have seen, when the NT writers employed the secular teaching on the household, certain nuances were added that distinguish the Christian from the secular use. The middle voice of the verb (hypotassomai) possibly softens the implication to the degree that the wife is to show submission to the husband of her own free will. And the stipulation that submission be shown to one’s “own” husband (TNIV “their”) limits the relevance of the instruction. Yet in this application of the tradition, there is a noticeable lack of the attention to theological detail seen in Ephesians and Colossians, which suggests a less thoughtful, less nuanced instruction, or a more rudimentary and volatile situation. Whereas elsewhere in the tradition the wife’s right to just treatment by her husband could be seen in the reciprocal address to the husband (1 Pet 3; Eph 5; Col 3) and “subjection” is to be “in the Lord,” here these notes are lacking (though the theological ground supplied in 2:11–14 should not be overlooked). This truncated application of what is elsewhere a more reflective apostolic use of the Greco-Roman household ethical tradition may indicate a response to a specific problem among young wives, in which the influence of Cretan values in the local teachers’ message converged with the avant-garde ideals and freedoms of the emerging “new woman.” Paul’s response parallels the secular traditionalist response to such developments, with a major difference. This instruction for younger wives was designed to stabilize the household, by calling them back from promiscuity to godliness and respectability. Yet at the forefront of Paul’s thinking was not the collapse of society or the Empire, but rather damage to the church’s public image and witness.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

²¹ ““that the word of God might not be blasphemed [“maligned,” TNIV; “discredited,” NRSV].” For “blaspheme” in the sense of “slander” (3:2), see on 1 Tim 6:1 1:20. Paul’s language echoes OT texts that lament the slandering of God’s name among the nations due to Israel’s sin (Isa 52:5; Ezek 36:20–36; CD 12.7–8), except he shifts the concern to “the word of God.” This theme acquires more of a missionary slant in the NT as the concern for witness to outsiders develops (cf. 1 Thess 4:12; 1 Tim 6:1; 1 Pet 2:11–12). The fear is that unbelievers might trace the unconventional (and especially promiscuous) behavior of young women to the Christian gospel they have embraced and the God in whom this message originates... The master determined the religion of the household, and conventional wisdom alleged that slaves and women were notorious for bringing home all kinds of new-fangled religions from the market place. If a new religious conviction entered the equation, the potential for tension and strong reactions by unbelievers inside or outside of the household increased dramatically (1 Pet 3:1–2; 1 Tim 6:1). The negatively stated purpose reflects sensitivity to the kinds of suspicions that would revolve around a household into which the Christian faith had gained access. However, in this case, it was the church’s standing, more than simply the husband’s honor, which was at stake.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

of talking about someone else in an unrestrained way usually in a negative way or sharing something about another person that isn't ours to share. Both forms of communication have healthy ways and unhealthy ways to be handled. Slander and gossip are damaging and unhealthy ways. This is not befitting a Christian man or woman.

- or slaves to much wine. – In the ancient world, and specifically in the Middle East and Mediterranean area, the main sphere of influence and existence for women was in the home. It's where they conducted business, where they conducted relationships, where they were moms and wives and did most everything. The challenge there is that they were in control of their environment so if they wanted to drink they could drink and there was little to no accountability. When you add in the higher classes of the secular world (Greek & Roman) you had parties and hosting and excessive drinking. In Crete it was more of a party atmosphere and that's how people related most. Women were largely involved in that. But for a Christian woman her life wasn't about selfishness, bad choices, and excess. Here life was about submitting to Christ and helping others.
- They are to teach what is good, - women are gifted to teach and they should instruct with their wisdom in whatever arenas are open to them. In the ancient world, there was little to no easy path for young ladies to be educated like the young men so it was left to the older women to teach the younger women in all matters of life and business and education. But whatever came out of a Christian woman's mouth was to represent Christ and be good. It wasn't about sharing opinions as much as sharing the truth of God. Too many of us today share more of our opinions on the world, than God's opinion on the world.
- and so train the young women – These women were anywhere from 13-40 because it was any of the women that were yet in charge of households and expected to lead others. The older women were to train...train means to explain it in a way that they can understand and embrace the teaching. Just sharing that things aren't right, isn't training. Just sharing that they are failing in something isn't training. Training means that you are involved until they get it.
- to love their husbands and children, - What are they to train the younger women in life? First they are to be instructed and guided on what it means to run a family well. It's about what it means to actively, intentionally, and effectively love your husband and your kids. That is all about making sure the younger women have the right worldview, right view of identity, right modes and methods to convey their love to their family. It's very tempting in a party atmosphere to make it all about us. We need to be trained out of a selfish mindset.
- to be self-controlled, - Again it all comes back to this. The women are to be trained to harness their power and strength into the right areas and not be wasteful with their gifts and talents. It's about shaping their desires for attention and affirmation. It's about not using the cheap channels like

gossip and slander to get ahead socially. It's about remaining dialed in to be used by Christ and the Holy Spirit.

- pure, - in a party atmosphere, there is one role that women are called to play and that is the sexual OPPORTUNITY. Whether that is realized or it's just teasing, the women are looked at to be either eye candy or actually possible partners. It's common knowledge that man want to have sex so whether a party has a sexual tone it's not going to come from the men but authorized by the women (are they willing to go along with that vibe?). The problem is that sexuality is powerful and has the ability to both heal and bond while at the same time the power to destroy and confuse. For the Christian young women they have a role to play in society to demonstrate that there is more important things than simply allowing themselves to be used or to take advantage of that seat of influence to get ahead. It be pure is not only kind and loving, but it shines in a dark environment where 'everyone's doing it.'
- A word on purity – this is going to be a soapbox moment for me and won't get into the sermon but I have to say that it bothers me that a Christian view of sex, especially conveyed by women, is 'gross' or 'yucky' or 'bad.' Yes, purity is valuable, but not because sex is bad but because sex is valuable and powerful. Being sexually prudish in a Puritan way isn't more honoring to God but a strange distortion of how God designed people. I think that a much more powerful way of conveying Christ in a sexual context is loving sex and wanting sex but submitting to a more noble way of life so that it can be all that it's designed to be, not to act like we can't think such thoughts.
- working at home, - I find it interesting that how we read this statement will demonstrate a bit about how we think the Bible feels about women. If we read those three words with an emphasis on HOME, it means that we think that Paul is telling women to get back into the home because they aren't supposed to have influence in society and aren't valued there. But if we read it with an emphasis on WORK, it demonstrates that Paul is more focused on making sure that while the women were in their domain, the home, that they weren't wasting everything away. The focus was that they would be productive and get things done. Paul wanted them to be effective, to be useful, to be powerful, to make a difference. In this case, he wasn't telling them to quiet down in the home, but to rise up in their homes and be society changers.
- kind, - It is difficult for any human being to remain kind, but for women in the ancient world that were told a lot what to do it was easier to be bitter. If we add in a culture of selfishness of society, it's a recipe for disaster. Do you realize that the more selfish minded we are, the more miserable we will be? Why? Because looking too close at our lives makes us disappointed with everything. It's only when we keep our eyes looking outward to others that we have contentment with ourselves. We need less attention on self, not more.

- and submissive to their own husbands, - Paul was very clear in a lot of his letters that **the condition of the home is a HUGE deal for the foundation and spread of the gospel**. What happens between the husband and wife and the parents and children will tell the rest of the world whether Jesus Christ makes a difference in the lives of Christians today. Therefore he doubles down on roles and functions within the home and what makes it smooth and running like a **finely tuned machine**. **His primary foundation is the Trinity**. Although the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are equal in every way in essence, they have different roles and functions to play when it comes to what they DO. The Holy Spirit submits to the Son and the Son submits to the Father. The Father is the primary initiator and lead on initiatives. Anyone COULD take that role, but the Father does so and in turn so do we have roles in our home. In our society, we get to choose to get married. This means that we get to choose, as women, who is our lead. Who do we want to be the initiator? Who do we want to be the one to dial in the home from direct contact with Christ? What head of the home do we want? Technically, husbands and wives are equal in every way but in the home **they have a job to do, run it smoothly here on earth as it is in heaven**.²² How do they do that? It can't be everyone in the lead all the time. Someone has to be the point person. But how that flows should be as **Ephesians 5:21 states, 'mutually submitting one to another'**. This means that just as the Son did what the Holy Spirit said in His area, so too did the Holy Spirit do what the Son said in His area. **There was no tension because they were on the same team on the same agenda in the same fashion. The goal for our marriages and homes are that we are on God's agenda for our homes, and on the same page with one another**. In the home role, wives are to submit to their husbands in all the right ways and not be forcing their own opinions or being bullies.
- that the word of God may not be reviled. – what is the focus of Paul's correction and instruction here? **That the gospel wouldn't be shut down in Crete**. Paul didn't want anything to get in the way of God's kingdom being alive and well there. What happened in the homes of Christians had direct impact on the reputation of the Christian church because it was **grass roots and IN HOMES**. It was small town mentality where everyone knew everyone else's business. What happened in the marriages affected the reception of the gospel because if they were failing in the homes how could they tell anyone else how to live?

- Keep it Together
 - Instructions to young men

²² "Broadly speaking, Paul's concern was for the witness of the church to be protected by good behavior. "This same theme receives a more distinct missionary interpretation in the New Testament: respectable behavior, which bears witness to the power and truth of God, enhances the church's witness (1 Thess 4:12; 1 Tim 6:1; 1 Pet 2:11–12)." In short, our conduct impacts the quality of our witness." Towner, P. (1994). 1–2 Timothy & Titus (Vol. 14, Tt 2:4–5). InterVarsity Press.

- Titus 2:6 – *“Likewise, urge the younger men²³ to be self-controlled.”*
 - Likewise, - in a similar manner this is not just about older men and the women, it’s about everyone and another key group demographic is the young men. They have some instruction coming their way because their lifestyles will also dramatically impact the reception of the gospel in Crete, perhaps more than other groups.
 - urge the younger men – Urge in this Greek word, means to tell someone what to do with authority but to do so by helping them find out how and to walk alongside them to make it happen. It’s a strong but gentle concept of pressing them forward. The younger men are going to be anyone from 15-40 I assume. It’s men who are still considered by society as getting their act together and growing up to take on responsibility so I would assume that it was probably on the young side of that age bracket. I would assume it was much more young adult age that is being addressed here.
 - to be self-controlled. – What do we want young men to do? Gosh dang it, control yourselves! *What blows up young men? Going with their impulses and not submitting them to God. What ruins them are bad decisions and reactionary living. What do we need in a party environment of Crete? Not more parties.* We need responsible young men that lift people’s attention to greater things in life than getting drunk and wasted. As long as the young men lived like all the other young men in their society they weren’t going to have any true influence. That is true today.
- Integrity and Character in All
 - Instructions on teaching and living models
 - Titus 2:7-8 – *“Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity,²⁴ dignity,²⁵ and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.”*
 - Show yourself – *this seems to be Paul shifting back to talking about Titus the pastor and the role that he is playing in all of this*, although it can grammatically be referring to everyone already addressed.²⁶ This is why I was saying to just assume that all of the instructions are for everyone (ex. young and old men are to be pure too, not just young women).

²³ “We saw that the age range for the older groups was approximately forty years old and upwards; younger men might be from twenty to thirty years of age, with some flexibility at the upward end.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

²⁴ “The first qualification on teaching comes in the rare term often translated “integrity” and taken as a reference to Titus’s disposition. Keeping in mind the corrupt motives of the opponents (1:11), a reference to purity of motive would perhaps be fitting at this point; e.g. “show yourself to be above corruption in your teaching.” But the possibility remains that integrity (i.e. orthodoxy) of doctrine is meant (cf. 1:9). Either way, the intentional contrast with the failure of the rebellious teachers is unmistakable.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

²⁵ “Next, however, “seriousness” (or “dignity, gravity”) is a clear reference to Titus’s manner of teaching (assuming that “teaching,” and not conduct in general, is still the sphere). Drawn from the dominant *semnos* word group (2:2; 1 Tim 2:2 Exkursus; 3:4, 8, 11), this quality is meant to provide Titus’s teaching with the accent of respectability that will distance it from the opponents’ rambling arguments (1:10–11; 3:9) and disarm any critics outside of the church before they get started (2:8b).” NICNT – Phillip Towner

²⁶ It’s unclear if verse 7 is meant to refer to Titus specifically or to all young men. It’s difficult to imagine Paul objecting to these instructions applying to all. The key point is that Titus’s teaching (and the teaching of the church in general) will have limited impact if his life didn’t match it. That is a huge tie that binds this whole section together. The quality of our lives is of tantamount importance to our public witness.

- in all respects – in every area what Titus the pastor did, mattered. There was not the compartmentalization that he would prefer to do good stuff in one area and have a part of his life that was different. There was so much integration in areas of life and such a small town feel of everyone in everyone's business, that all his actions, words, behaviors, reactions, mattered.
- to be a model of good works, - Pastor Titus should be the role model for others to follow. The congregation can go beyond the senior leader. He should set the bar of Good Works. Good works are good godly things done for Christ.
- and in your teaching – with all the false teaching that had messed so many people up, Pastor Titus' teaching had to be dialed in tightly. People were being influenced mostly by his sermons so they needed to be right and good.
- show integrity, - he needed to show integrity in his teaching which meant that his life matched up to what he was preaching. He needed to make sure that he was teaching solidly throughout and not contradicting himself and saying one thing one time and another the next.
- dignity, - he needed to preach and teach and lead in a way that demanded respect from people. People should be able to see that he is a pastor for the right motives and doing the right things out of love for God and people.
- and sound speech that cannot be condemned²⁷ - he needs to be so tightly connected to the teachings of Christ and so dialed into TRUTH that **no one can come in later and tear it apart as bogus**. This is not just someone holding their own personal opinion. Pastor's don't get that freedom. They need to know what's right because what they believe gets taught one way (intentionally) or another (unintentionally). Titus needed to work on developing his sermons to be solid, clear and accurate.
- so that an opponent may be put to shame, - **there were people wanting to disagree, discount, and destroy Titus' influence**. They were actively trying to find things wrong with him to debunk him. Titus has to be so solid and integrous in his role as pastor and teacher that no one could say anything against him. If he did his job well then when they came to attack him they would find out he was right and end up **embarrassed themselves** for having said anything against him.
- having nothing evil to say about us. – If we preach right and live right, then the **enemy doesn't have a foothold** to condemn us whether that enemy is the devil or false teachers.

- Faithful Servants
 - Instructions to slaves and servants

²⁷ "The latter, literally meaning "nothing known against," comes from the language of the courtroom. It describes the innocence of a person who is acquitted of a crime of which he or she has been accused. This is the meaning of the term in its sole occurrence in the Greek Bible."" Collins, R. F. (2012). 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary (C. C. Black, M. E. Boring, & J. T. Carroll, Eds.; p. 344). Westminster John Knox Press.

- Titus 2:9-10 – *“Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing,²⁸ not argumentative,²⁹ ¹⁰ not pilfering,³⁰ but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn³¹ the doctrine of God our Savior.”*
 - Bondservants³² – the word here in Greek is *doulos*. It means someone committed to the full intention of another. It’s more the concept of slave than servant in real life, but when used metaphorically, it means totally dedicated to. But here Paul is talking about literal slaves. People who were owned by another person. Although chattel slavery of North America (blacks) was a more vile and brutal form of slavery than was common in the ancient world, if you were owned you were owned and your condition of living was dictated by the person who owned you. That could be good and healthy or it could be terrible and nasty. Slaves were a key part of the home existence in the ancient world. So what part did slaves play in presenting the gospel through their lives? A lot of early Christians were slaves. What should their lives look like to make a difference for Christ?
 - are to be submissive – One way for slaves to shine Christ is through their behavior toward their masters. They are to be submissive, because they are OWNED. Just because they are Christians doesn’t mean their life situation agreement (whether sold by another person and unwillingly, or personally sold out of desperation) changes. They don’t get to rebel against their owners. As a matter of fact, while it was common for slaves to be mistreated and thereby have a bad attitude, this was a particular way for Christians to shine and make a difference.

²⁸ “First, “subjection” to masters means “to please” them. “Pleasing” is a measurement of acceptable service. In the NT, the term is most often used of pleasing God; in the case of a master, the slave will achieve this quality of service by meeting the superior’s expectations in acceptable, satisfactory fashion (cf. Exod 21:8).” NICNT – Phillip Towner

²⁹ “In this context (cf. 1:9 note), “do not talk back” aims at avoiding charges of defiance that might be leveled against obstinate, disobedient slaves who question their masters and refuse to do what they are told. This tendency (along with dishonesty, see below) belonged to the cultural caricature of the lazy, good-for-nothing slave.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

³⁰ “Third (v. 10), “stealing” from masters formed another part of the traditional caricature of the lazy dishonest slave population.¹⁰⁰ Undoubtedly, the temptation to improve one’s situation in this way was great, and perhaps changes brought about in a Christian household offered more opportunities for theft (cf. Phlm 18). Christian slaves were not to fall to this temptation.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

³¹ “But in what sense can “the teaching” be “made attractive” (“to adorn”)? The language is frequently used of outward adornment and beauty. Applied figuratively to the Christian message, the sense is that the conduct enjoined would augment or draw attention to the beauty that already exists. Spicq has linked this usage to honor, benefaction and tribute, which suggests that here again (see 1 Tim 6:1–2) Paul is playing subtly with (co-opting and redefining) the very social fixtures he calls Christians to live among: “So slaves ... at the bottom of the human hierarchy, are able, through the splendor of their conduct, to honor God and increase the attractiveness of the gospel in the hearts of pagans.” Ordinarily, it was the well-to-do benefactors, not slaves or the masses, who gave “adornments” to cities and leaders in return for public recognition. But life in Christ involved many reversals.” NICNT – Phillip Towner

³² “Paul commands to slaves somewhat mirror his teaching in other letters. In 1 Timothy, he connects the obedience of slaves to the good reputation of the church. “All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God’s name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare of their slaves.” (Yarbrough, R. W. (2018). *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (D. A. Carson, Ed.; p. 524). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos.) Through their good conduct, slaves bear witness to their Christian witness. There may be some application here for employees/employers. In this case, Paul wants masters to be impacted by the gospel message by seeing their slaves live it out. “Doctrine by itself can be lifeless and dull, but lived out nobly, it may work magnetically and give rise to admiration.”. Broadly speaking, this teaching is a reminder that when we live out our convictions wherever God has placed us, God is glorified.” (Yarbrough, R. W. (2018). *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (D. A. Carson, Ed.; pp. 522–523). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos.)

- to their own masters in everything; - In everything means, remember you are owned and they run you. They get to say anything they want about you and **you don't get to live in rebellion**. They may not be good leaders/owners. They may be bad people doing bad things, but in your circumstance of life, this is your lot right now and so the goal is to honor Christ where you are at, not where you want to be.
- they are to be well-pleasing, - Paul talks in another letter to slaves about keeping the mindset that they are truly **working for God beyond their masters**. They work ethic they put in is a dedication and offer of worship to their true king and Father. They may work on paper for a person but their hearts work for God and they need to act as if that's so. What this means is that we want to be good at our jobs. **We want to make our leadership proud that they have us not bitter**.
- not argumentative, - there is no good in arguing all the time. It **demonstrates that you think you know better** and that is not the right posture of a slave. **Humility means that you take direction well**. It means you are supporting the vision of your superior.
- not pilfering, - there is **never an allowance to steal for personal gain**. Many slaves were given care over money (allowance) to do tasks for the master and make business transactions. This allowed a lot of room to be dishonest about what the actual cost was and keep the rest for themselves. That is not okay for Christians then and it's not okay today.
- but showing all good faith, - Always be honest in every situation, **no matter if someone is looking or not**. This is about your heart and integrity more than anything.
- so that in everything – people are watching you when you don't realize they are watching you.
- they may adorn the doctrine – this is a weird way of saying this. It means in Greek, to **make something look better**. It means that in an area of society where no one expects anything amazing from the slave population, we have an opportunity to shine. We can demonstrate that the change of Jesus is so deep that it even impacts us at the bottom rung and we will act accordingly. That may make the gospel more stunning and beautiful to the master and they might consider engaging with it.
- of God our Savior – The doctrine, what we are promoting is not from mankind and not our own. It's the doctrine, the stories and teachings of God our Savior. **We are here to promote Him, not us**. We are react as if He matters more. We are to live for Him not build our own kingdoms. He is our rescuer and savior. We owe Him our lives.
 - A brief word on slavery – it's commonly brought up that Paul doesn't say anything against slavery in these types of teachings. I would argue in books like Philemon he's very clear about how it should be, but no, Paul nor Jesus argued against slavery directly. Why? Because there were a lot of agendas to push and the gospel was paramount. Our life situation, of one human hurting another human, was rampant. There

were hundreds and thousands of terrible human systems in play at any given generation. Slavery was just one of them. The point was not about whether slavery was wrong but whether or not a slave can have a value in the kingdom of God and the answer is yes. The slave has a way of living evangelistically and impacting those around them just as much as a free person. Jesus and Paul laid down teaching that would eventually uproot and destroy slavery, but that was the long game. In the short term, while it was still an unhealthy institution, how should slaves act? That was on the menu for this letter and others.

Conclusion

- What all bad behavior has in common – **Selfishness**. If we put God in the center of our reality, it forces us to adjust out of the center. If we follow Christ and put others before ourselves, then it forces us further from the center. If we make decisions with God as first and people as second in our mind, then bad behavior doesn't make sense.
- An Opportunity to Shine – Paul was teaching Titus that in a society like Crete, which was so out of control and behavior was so bad, they had an opportunity to shine. Being hyper moral in a largely moral society doesn't shine as bright as those obedient to Christ when everyone else is doing their own selfish things. **This was an opening for the gospel. This was a chance to get the attention of the public. The more Cretan Christians lived like Jesus, the more people would ask them why because it was so different. What's our opportunity?**