

# **LifeWay Explore the Bible Series for May 23: Mature Christians should provide an example\_51704**

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LifeWay Explore the Bible Series for May 23

## **Mature Christians should provide an example**

Titus 2:1-15

**By David Morgan**

*Trinity Baptist Church, Harker Heights*

New Christians need guidance. They do not instantly know how to live godly lives when they begin the lifelong journey of learning what it means to be Christ's disciple. Developing Christian character and conduct takes time. New believers can expect Christians in the community of faith to steer them toward Christ-likeness.

### **Guiding principle for behavior (2:1)**

The church on Crete was struggling. False teachers endangered it. Resisting these threats required Titus both to teach sound doctrine and live

an exemplary life. Christians sometimes pause to learn “doctrine.” They fail to understand that such teaching focuses on the practical side of living. True teaching aims for the spiritual well-being and Christ-like behavior of believers. Godly behavior then becomes its own witness to the transforming power of God's grace.

### **Behavior of various groups (vv. 2-10)**

Paul singled out five distinct classes of people for advice—older men, older women, younger women, younger men and slaves. Christian behavior for all can be summarized as exercising self-control, being reverent, honoring God's word, preventing damaging accusations against the church and making the gospel attractive.

The “older men” may have been designated church leaders. That they were older surely gave them influence. “Temperate,” “worthy of respect” and “self-controlled” suggest the need to control excesses and demonstrate behavior that secures a high reputation from others. Being sound in “faith,” “love” and “endurance” echoes 1 Corinthians 13. Faith is personal commitment to God. Love is personal commitment to others. Endurance generates persistence in tough times. This steadfastness arises from the Christian hope that God is working all things to accomplish his purpose.



Older women with holy behavior are tasked to teach younger women those things necessary for Christian homes. Resisting the temptation to tear down or slander others modeled Christian conduct.

In Paul's day, the primary responsibility of women was as wives and mothers. Young women learned their duties from older women. “Young” may suggest a newlywed. Younger women would honor God by protecting the faithfulness of the marriage bond, providing a good home environment

and exhibiting goodness (“kindness”) in behavior. Such conduct would bring no dishonor to their family or the church.

Paul appealed to Titus to teach the young men to be “self-controlled,” perhaps because some young men tend to be impulsive. Titus may have been a young man himself, since Paul urged him to model godly behavior. Pure motives and not personal gain should motivate Titus in his actions.

“Soundness of speech” means more than simply true proclamation. It includes all actions. To be “sound” would be to eliminate unfair criticisms that might bring disrepute on the church. The opponents may have been either Christian or unbelievers. Paul reminded Titus how important it was to live a life no one could criticize.

Slaves comprised a large segment of both the Roman population and the early church. An attempt to abolish slavery would have proved futile. Instead, Paul instructed slaves (and masters in other passages) on how to relate to one another in Christ.

Christian slaves possessed new freedom in Christ. Slave and master worshipped and ate together in the church. Paul instructed slaves not to use this freedom as an excuse for not serving their masters, but instead to serve their masters more faithfully. Such willing service would honor Christ and perhaps attract others to the Savior.

### **Rationale for Christian behavior (vv. 11-15)**

Christians live “in the meantime,” between the first and second comings of Jesus. Mentioning “God our Savior” (v. 10) may have reminded Paul of a hymn, prayer or confession that recalled the gracious work of God in Christ. Paul viewed the work of Christ in its totality—birth, life, death and resurrection. “Grace” specifically refers to God's unmerited favor by which he redeems humanity. The verb “appeared” stressed that grace happened

in history. The word suggests a dramatic appearance. Christ appeared to make salvation available to every person without consideration of gender, ethnic background or economic status.

Christians expect “the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” when God will bring all things to his appropriate climax and conclusion. Christians live with an assurance of a final completion of their salvation.

While Christians wait, God's grace teaches them to renounce passions not from God. Christians enter God's kingdom by a grace continually transforming them. Christians' lives should please God in a world hostile to God.

Jesus secured redemption. The word “redeemed” was often used in ancient times to indicate the freeing of a slave. Christ freed Christians from enslavement to sin as he gave himself for them. Jesus also came to cleanse sinners into a people as his own unique treasure. God's grace frees believers from the power of sin.

### **Question for discussion**

- ❑ How should the redeemed live?

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