

BaptistWay Bible Series for August 13: Life in the Fellowship of Faith

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Life in the Fellowship of Faith

- Titus 2:1-14

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In Titus 2:1-14, Paul offered Titus his own brand of "age-graded curriculum": what should be taught to older men, older women, women, younger men and slaves. Paul introduced his "curriculum" with a general comment: "teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (v. 1). But rather than giving a theological treatise of what comprises sound teaching, Paul dealt with matters of character and conduct. While right belief is very important, such is meaningless if it is not accompanied by the proper behavior. However, Paul did not deal in a rigid list of dos and don'ts; rather he wrote with a view to how people ought to relate to one another. Additionally, Paul presented Titus with the reasons for these instructions.





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Older Men (2:2)

When Paul addressed "older men," he did not mean the elders of the churches in any official sense. Here he used a word that refers to men of older age. But see the character qualities they should possess. They were to be models of temperance, respect, self-control, and be sound in faith, love and endurance. It is clear that their character would be emulated.

Women (2:3-5)

Paul discussed what Timothy was to teach women together. He first addressed the older women. Again, the word "older" refers to maturity, not an office. They were to live reverently and use their words responsibly. But they also were charged with teaching the younger women how to live. Because of the content of these verses, some may not receive Paul's instructions very well. First, Paul did not instruct Titus to teach the younger women directly. Likely, Paul was following the culture pattern, women taught women. But more offensive to some are Paul's words regarding women being submissive to husbands and being busy at home. However, he was writing in a given culture, and while he wrote elsewhere of the equality of women in Christ (Galatians 3:28), he did not have as a goal an immediate upheaval of society. One command, however, that

should be no problem in understanding as a universal exhortation is the need for women to love their husbands and children. Ironically, too often people use Ephesians 5 to teach that men are to love their wives but women are to respect their husbands. They state that women are never commanded to love their husbands. But here it is. It should also be noted that men are to respect their wives as well (1 Peter 3:7).

Younger Men (2:6)

Paul has only a brief comment for what Titus should teach younger men, but it is pertinent. Young men are to be self-controlled. This is now the third time Paul has invoked this character description. Older men are to be self-controlled (v. 2), older women are to teach the younger women to be self-controlled (v. 5, perhaps implying that the older women must do the same). This character quality is of paramount importance in the Christian witness.

Instructions to Titus (2:7-8)

How is Titus supposed to do all this? As he told Timothy (1 Timothy 4:12), Paul exhorted Titus to set the example. This may have applied only with reference to his instruction of the younger men, but Titus' position was such that this most certainly would have applied to his role as leader of the congregations as well. The language of the larger portion of verse 7 speaks to teaching in general. Most of all, Titus should teach in a manner that makes it impossible for any accusation against him to stand.

Slaves (2:9-10)

Returning to the matter of other individuals, Paul broached the topic of teaching slaves how to conduct themselves. Slavery is another matter that brings up negative feelings. While we might wish that Paul had been more overt in denouncing slavery, again, he was working within the system of his day. Elsewhere Paul's words addressed the matter in a very personal way (Philemon) and may represent his heartfelt attitude for all slaves. Yet, it is readily understood that Paul's words apply to employees today. And relevant words they are. Employees should seek to please employers, respect them by not talking back, and to show themselves trustworthy at all times.

Striking are the three times Paul inserted a "so that" statement throughout this entire passage. Each statement connects our character and conduct with how people perceive Christians and the gospel message. Verse 5 states the proper character and conduct of the women would prevent against the word of God "being blasphemed." In verse 8, Titus' character and conduct would bring shame on those who would falsely accuse him, for he would leave them with no basis for the accusations. Verse 10 states the character and conduct of slaves (employees) would make "the teaching about God our Savior attractive."

The Grace/Hope Factor (2:11-14)

Paul concluded his exhortations to Titus with the overarching two-fold rationale for why Christians should exhibit such qualities. The first reason is the grace that has been shown to us in Christ. It helps us to distance ourselves from ungodliness (2:11-12). But the second reason looks forward. We are to live godly lives because of the blessed hope we have of Christ's return. It is a sure future; it is what we eagerly await. We await the return of our redeemer who has purified us. However, Paul did not mention Christ's return in attempt to motivate by fear. It calls for us to look

expectantly for his return. Godly living aids in that hope.

Discussion Questions

- How do people perceive those who have right doctrine but wrong behavior?
- What are some ways Christians act that make the "teaching about God our Savior" unattractive?
- What is the power of strong character combined with right belief?
- How does the hope of Christ's return make you think of your character and conduct?



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