

Titus: “Doing Good” series

Week 4: Showing Jesus

August 16, 2026

Titus 2:1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. 2 Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. 3 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. 4 Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. 6 Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. 7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness 8 and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. 9 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, 10 and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

Introduction

- How many of you are fans of reality TV? Although it has been around for a long time, reality TV really took off around the 1999-2000 timeframe. Since then, there have been almost infinite variations on the reality theme.
- The “Bachelor” franchise has made 49 seasons and 25 spin-off shows.
- “Survivor” has been going for over 40 years, and has been filmed in 20 different countries.
- “Hell’s Kitchen” has aired over 18 seasons in the US, hosted by Chef Gordon Ramsay.
- “The Voice” is shown in over 180 countries.
- “America’s Got Talent” has featured over 13,000 acts since it started in 2006.
- “Big Brother” has been going for 29 years. A show that started in the Netherlands that has become a huge hit in the USA with 15 or so people living in a house with cameras and microphones everywhere. It has a version in over 60 countries.
- American Idol, Real Housewives, America’s Next Top Model, Keeping up the Kardashians, Ice Road Truckers, Deadliest Catch, Running wild with Bear Grylls.
- Program after program that watch, listen to and record life and actions of people so that others can watch.
- There are over 2,000 different reality shows in the last 10 years that have been developed because of this desire to watch people and see what happens in their lives when conflict or other situations occur.
- We like watching it, don’t we? We want to see conflict. To see how the people deal with problems or awkward situations. I used to watch American idol to see the really bad singers since I couldn’t believe that some of these people actually thought they were good.
- And have you ever tried to figure out how much of what you watched was staged versus real? How much were these people manipulated or put up to? When they know the cameras are watching, are they really themselves? Or so they act a certain way to get attention?
- We assess character. Motives. “Wow, I really admire them. I think I want to be like them” or perhaps we more often scoff and think, “What a real jerk. No wonder everyone hates them.”
- Here’s the thing – even if it is not on TV as part of some reality show, all of us are being observed.
- The people around us see us. They are watching how we deal with our spouses, parents and kids, what we do when there is conflict, how we respond to needs or deal with an annoying boss, what we do when faced with loss of a job or a sick family member. What do we do when things are going well. Or when they are going poorly.

- Eli asked a question a couple of weeks ago at the end of his sermon that I thought was very though provoking. “If I am the only Jesus people see this week, what kind of Jesus do they see?” How we live out day by day is seen and watched, and informs people of who we are and what we stand for.
- That is what Paul is writing about in the part of his letter to Titus that we are examining today.

Main Sermon Text

- We have been going through the book of Titus. Paul’s instructions to Titus were to finish what was unfinished in the churches on Crete, and to straighten what needed straightening.
- That included the laying out the standards for appointing of elders and encouraging them to stay rooted in the gospel message, not adding anything to it. We saw it is not Christ-plus or minus, but Christ alone.
- Remember, Paul has just told them about false teachers and how to identify and deal with them. Now he flips to the other side.

Titus 2:1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

- If false teachers teach this kind of thing, then what you are supposed to teach is this other.

I. Sound doctrine is the foundation for how we are to live.

- Doctrine is simply a body or system of teachings relating to a particular subject. That’s why when we talk about someone learning a new system or a new way of doing things, we say they are being “indoctrinated”.
- Sound doctrine, then, is a body or system of teachings that are wholesome, and uncorrupted. It is the kind of teaching that is right and true.
- Paul is speaking about teaching that promotes and makes Christ followers fit for serving God. It is that teaching that leads to right living. Sound doctrine leads to sound thinking & beliefs which spurs someone to continue to change how they live in a positive direction.
- Paul describes to Titus what sound doctrine looks like.
- v3 – “teach what is good.” The opposite of what is corrupt or wrong. Sound doctrine promotes holy behavior. Anything promoting continued sinful behavior is not sound.
- v5 – “word of God.” Sound doctrine originates with God himself. It is not the wisdom that people think they have figured out, but what God has set down. There are many philosophers that say things that sound OK, but are contrary to God’s wisdom. Look out for #1 sounds good but is directly opposite of Jesus’ command to serve others ahead of ourselves.
- v7 – “in your teaching show integrity.” Some translations say “purity in doctrine”. Sound doctrine does not manipulate for selfish purpose but the chief aim is to make sure God is first, rather than ourselves.
- v10 – “about God.” The focus of sound thinking is Christ. It should lead us to know him better, consider him more frequently and follow him closer. It leads us to desire to spend time with him, listen to him, be pliable.
- At its most basic then, sound doctrine are those beliefs that cause us live with a conduct that reflects Christ. It is teaching that promotes spiritual health and results in good behavior. This does not just “happen.” It comes through deliberate teaching, from hearing, seeing, watching and acting on it.

II. Sound doctrine is learned.

- Last week we saw that false teachers were leading people into wrong thinking. They were corrupting people with a focus on actions, religious duties. They were steering them away from Christ. For Titus, the goal was to communicate the right way of thinking and living.
- v1 – “teach . . . sound doctrine.” It is important for Titus to build up the Christ followers in the church. To keep them from error, he must pass to them the things that will lead to right conduct.
- v2 – “teach the older men.” He is to teach in a way that promotes spiritual health.
- v3 – “teach the older women.”
- v3 – “teach what is good”
- v4 – “train the younger women.” It is not just Titus’ responsibility. One of the reasons that the older women were to be taught, was so they could turn around and teach. And this happens two ways, but what they say (“teach”) and by how they model (“train”). They are to school others in the lessons that are right.
- v6 – “encourage the young men”. This is a stronger word than teach – might be better translated “urge” or “exhort”. The idea of getting into someone’s face – this is not a timid word.
- v7 – “set them an example”. Titus is to model to them what it looks like to live right.
- v7 – “in your teaching show integrity.” His “teaching” in its manner and content must be of the highest quality. He is to teach with pure motives.
- v9 – “teach slaves.” More closely related to the concept of “urging” or “exhorting”.
- Our faith and conduct comes from right doctrine. This comes through deliberate teaching, from hearing, seeing, watching and acting on it.
- That is why the teaching and learning of the truth is so important. It’s why at ARAC we want to speak truth clearly and differently to those around us.

III. Sound doctrine should result in Christ-likeness.

- If what we do and think and act is visible to others, then we want what we do and think and act to reflect Jesus. Charles Spurgeon said this excellently.
- *“A man’s life is always more forcible than his speech. When men take stock of him they reckon his deeds as dollars and his words as pennies. If his life and doctrine disagree the mass of onlookers accept his practice and reject his preaching.”* Charles Spurgeon
- If we are learning, internalizing, and taking to heart sound thinking, then it should be reflected in our day-to-day lives. To help Titus and the church understand he gives some specific picture of what it looks like. But before we go through this, I want to illustrate the difference between a checklist and a picture.
- What follows is Paul encouraging Titus to teach, model and train his church up in what their life should look like to others. A portrait of a Jesus follower.
- Before we take a quick look at this portrait, we need to talk about context. Whenever you read a letter in the NT, we must remember that it is written to a specific church or person in a specific time or place. These are not textbooks written to be comprehensive (more like the book of Romans). Nor is it a history (like the Gospels).
- When Paul mentions young women, young men, older women, older men and slaves, it is reflecting the specific challenges that different groups of people face. So we see specific instructions for older and younger women, older and younger men, as well as slaves. It doesn’t mean there are different “rules of conduct” that apply for each of these groups, just that there are some unique challenges based on their place in life.
- So let’s take a look at what it is like to base our faith on sound thinking.

2 Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

- "Temperate", "Worthy of respect" and "Self-controlled" means to be level headed, living with a degree of purpose that invites the honor and respect of those around them. It talks about mastering thoughts and impulses and not being controlled by them.
- "Sound in faith, in love and in endurance" shows their lives should reveal a focus on Christ, being mature in genuine love, not bitterness of vindictiveness, and the kind of persistence that bears up under the demands and trials of life.
- Older men are to have a stability and deliberateness so that they are not shaken easily.

3 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. 4 Then they can train the younger women . . .

- "Likewise" indicates that they are to have a similar stability and self-control, but specific to their station in life.
- "Be reverent in the way they live", "Not be slanderers or addicted to much wine" and "To be kind" conveys the idea of having a holy inner character, of having self-control and curbing wrong desires. It is about putting other first, not being harsh. Paul is responding to the tendency in that culture for wealthy women who had idle time for gossip and partying.
- "Teach what is good" and "Train the younger women" shows that by what they say and do, they must pass on what is morally good, noble, and attractive, particularly for younger women with less life experience which in that culture was their primary sphere of influence.
- If you are older, more seasoned in your life, what do you model to younger people?

. . . younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands,

- In this culture, young women's primary responsibility was in the home. They managed the family and house. It was a significant responsibility.
- "To love their husbands and children" and "To be busy at home" shows a devotion to family, to hard work that embraced the tasks and responsibilities that were in front of her. It was about managing a household, including slaves, well.
- "To be self-controlled and pure" and "To be subject to their husbands" refers to sexual purity in thought and mind. Don't fantasize about other people or a different outcome to life. They are to complement (not compliment) and support their spouse.

6 Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.

- This seems awfully short in comparison to the others, until you realize two things. One, the word similarly ties all the previous instructions to them but these are also Titus' peer group. All the things Paul tells Titus to model applies to this group of people. But he does highlight the idea of self control, because it speaks to the rashness of youth. The word encourage is a strong one and appeals to the moral responsibility of young men. Not only are they to have all the same instructions as he just gave to young women, but they also must practice balance and restraint.

- There's a reason young men are most likely to die in accidents or from rash decisions.

9 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, 10 and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted

- Slaves: this group of people cut across all ages and genders. They were a huge part of the culture at the time and their own set of issues. It most usually did not play out as slavery did in the US – it had a far more economic focus. The best connection we have to this is that we all have someone who is in authority over us, usually multiple people.
- "To be subject to their masters in everything" and "Not to talk back to them" is about honoring authority. Listen and follow. It is being subject in ALL things. Not to resist, undermine or dispute.

- "To try to please them", "Not to steal from them" and "To show that they can be fully trusted" are all about character. It is not a sullen, grudging following, but trying to satisfy those in authority over them. It is putting the interests of those in authority first. Petty theft was common among slaves in Roman households. Slaves have ample opportunity to resort to the various tricks of the trade for their own advantage.
- No matter our age, gender, station in life, we do not have any excuse for any behavior or belief that would compromise the message and gospel of Jesus. This matters because:

IV. How we live is supposed to point people to Jesus.

- The overarching theme of this entire passage, what Paul points out repeatedly to Titus, is that the purpose for right doctrine and right conduct is to point people towards Jesus.
- Three times this is put forward as a critical reason for their conduct.

4 Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

- If they lived loosely, then the gospel would be maligned.
- That means that if their living did not line up with their faith, others would criticize them and basically dismiss that they said they believed.
- We see this ALL the time.
- "I knew a Christian but they were the meanest person I had ever met."
- "If that what it means to follow God, I want nothing to do with it."
- "How can you believe all that stuff about God and love? You guys can't even get along."
- How much better if people said,
- "Every time I run across one of the Christian people, they all seem to be so different. They really care. I wish I had that."
- Our faith in Christ will be judged by the impact the gospel has on our lives.
- Jesus lived with us. Jesus died for us. He forgave us more than we can imagine if we only ask him into our lives. The impact on our lives should be huge.

7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness 8 and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

- People will always try to criticize.
- Actions we take will at some point be accused as being wrong.
- But our conduct is to be such that when the objections are examined, those making them will be made to look foolish, or feel personally ashamed because he is shown to have no case. The attacks and accusations are proved to be groundless.
- When people point the finger at how we did this or that, or we are being talked about at work, or someone is trying to undermine us, when we live a life that reflects our faith in Jesus, people will ALWAYS know.
- They may dismiss it, but they will be unable to criticize. Many a person has come to God who formerly were critical but by watching the conduct, were ultimately convicted about their own lives.

9 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, 10 and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

- Their actions will make the teachings about Christ attractive.
- It says "in every way". Not in some, not in part. In every way.

- For someone who follows Christ, there can be no stronger motive. How we deal with those who don't know Christ. How we deal with each other here. How we deal with our families. That is what makes Jesus attractive to others.
- How we relate to others will determine whether what we say will be listened to.

Conclusion

- If I am the only "Jesus" people see this week, what kind of Jesus do they see?
- We want to be the kind of people who, even if people don't understand us, look at us and the reality show that is our lives, and say, "I want what they have."
- Learn and build a solid foundation of knowing what God has revealed. Let it conform us to him. Then Jesus will be known and glorified.
- In the summer of 1805, a number of Indian chiefs and warriors met in council at Buffalo Creek, NY to hear a presentation of the Christian message by a Mr. Cram from the Boston Missionary Society. After the sermon, a response was given by Red Jacket, one of the leading chiefs. Among other things, the chief said:
- "Brother, we are told that you have been preaching to the white people in this place. These people are our neighbors. We are acquainted with them. We will wait a little while and see what effect your preaching has upon them. If we find it does them good, makes them honest and less disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again what you have said."
- As we consider these words this morning, I believe we can look at this one of two ways:
- We can think that this is a real hardship. Big brother is watching. Everyone sees what I do. I'd better be good and mind what I say and do because I don't want to step my feet wrong. I can't be myself, I can't do what I really want, because others might see it. Just another thing to feel guilty about or try harder to do.
- OR
- We can see the amazing opportunity that we have in front of us. When we know Jesus, and he changes us, people will see. By just pursuing Jesus and letting his truth shape our faith and actions (doing nothing else) we are going to get opportunity after opportunity, engage in conversation after conversation and have chance after chance to impact people significantly and for eternity.
- That is pretty cool.