

The 21st Century Woman of Grace: Not Given to Much Wine “Disciplining Her Appetites in An Undisciplined World” Titus 2:3c

When we gather as we do today, and open God’s Word, we are asking Him to speak to us. Sometimes what we hear touches on a small part of our lives, other times what He says is huge. This morning, the topic we have arrived at to study is HUGE.

The only way to understand the gravity of what we are hearing from God's Word today is to go to where it will matter. Open with me to the end of the Bible, Revelation 4.

Through all the centuries the single greatest deterrent to sin and motivator to holiness has always been the thought of standing at last in Heaven. Revelation 4:6, 9-11 (NKJV):

6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

Point number one for your notes:

Crowns: What We Earn From our Earthly Choices

Better write that down in your mind. Choices matter, God is going to test every moment we lived with fire. The crowns that are cast at Christ's feet come from a previous event, the assessment of our lives. With the scene of Heaven, God’s Throne, and the awesome opportunity to give back an offering of gratitude, look at the actual method God uses to sort out our lives captured in I Corinthians 3:10-15 (NKJV) as we stand to read God's Word :

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each

one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Pray

Every day we each choose what will someday go through that very fire we just read about. God says here to us this morning: Be careful what you do with your life lest all or most of it ends up being just worthless black soot and ashes. That what must have been on the mind of Paul as God moved him to write to a group of new believers in Crete.

The world of the New Testament was dominated by the Roman Empire. That era of history was a time when most people often lived short, and usually hard lives of physical labor, emotional stress, and poor health.

As we open to Titus 2:3, look at the third element of our study. Women of grace were already called by God to be:

- **Reverent in their behavior** by living as representatives of God; and
- **Not slanderers** by never surrendering their words to the Devil's use by speaking gracefully in a graceless world.

Then comes the third of five, which is the middle of the list, where Paul relays God's strong desire that each woman of grace be **not given to much wine**. This quality of the woman of grace's life means she begins and maintains a life-long goal of disciplining her appetites. That is one of the crowns that God offers to us in Heaven.

As you read those words, remember that every believer who read, heard, and was taught these truths, lived in that difficult Roman world. In that period, as in all ages of mankind, people were deceived into believing the:

Myth of Drinking Your Way to Happiness

In all that dark struggle of First Century life, the one bright spot for most was the warming glow that drinking wine would bring. After a few swallows, troubles seemed to drift away, cares began to evaporate, and all those aches and pains lessened until they too, almost vanished.

But as all the struggles of life were drifting away, minds got clouded, discipline was abandoned, and behavior became unrestrained. The downside of alcohol is the deadly effect of loosened inhibitions, abandoned discipline, lurking powers of addiction, and the inevitable surrender to the desires of the flesh.

God never desires for any person to drown their troubles in alcohol. God has always affirmed that wine is a mocker. The pleasures of sin are short, and sins committed always come back to bite and infect our lives with an even deeper woe.

Giving ourselves over to drinking, or drugs, or substances, or ungodly activities to satisfy our souls is much like being adrift on the ocean, dying of thirst, and drinking saltwater. The more you try to satisfy the thirst the more you make it's burning power even stronger. Drinking saltwater to satisfy your thirst is deadly, and so is giving in to any lust of the flesh. So with these words God is presenting to the godly women a choice that will shape their lives.

God says, to please Me with your lives, each of you must:

Discipline Your Appetites

When Paul told the women of grace, who lived on Crete to not give themselves to wine: he was calling for them to a life of disciplining their appetites while living surrounded by a completely undisciplined culture. And to any woman who would obey, God offers the unfading crown.

This morning we look at this central quality of every godly woman's life: disciplined appetites. This quality will determine, perhaps more than any other, whether or not you as a woman of God will get an unfading reward to cast as Christ's feet.

What amazes me as I listened to all that God has said about this vital area of disciplining our flesh, and lessening our appetites for the world, the flesh, and the Devil: that it seems few are even aware that God has spoken on this critical area of daily life.

Life is like a shopping cart, be careful what you check out with at the end.

Our lives are so much like shopping at a supermarket. Choices we make in life are like items pulled from the shelf and placed into our shopping cart. Usually once there in the cart, they slowly get buried by all the other items; and they stay with us the whole way.

It seems that today most believers go through all the events of their daily life as if choices were in the food section of a giant Wal Mart Super Center where everything is equally safe and healthy.

Many people go through life each day piling whatever they see on the shelves of choices, into the cart of our life, never realizing that some choices are deadly, poisonous, and destructive to their eternal lives.

The Lord says, godly women are very careful about what they pile by habit into cart of life. The same servant of God who wrote to Titus, gives his own testimony in an earlier letter. Turn back with me to Paul's shocking self-disclosure in I Corinthians 9.

Before we read these words remember this was the quintessential, hand-picked servant of God.

Jesus Christ Himself went out soul winning, knocked Saul of Tarsus off his horse on the road to Damascus, blinded him with His glory, convicted him of his sins, humbled his pride, and left Paul helplessly led by the hand to the home of an elderly saint named Annanias.

Paul went on to be taught one-on-one by Jesus in the desert for three years, graduated to home service for about 7 years in Tarsus, and then was launched from Antioch to plant most of the churches in the Roman Empire, get a personal tour of Heaven so special he couldn't tell us what he saw, and to write or be written about as the content of one-third of the New Testament. That is a thumbnail of Paul. Now look at I Corinthians 9:24-27 (NKJV):

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize (agonidzomenas "agonize through the race") is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline (hupopiadzo "punch under the eye") my body and bring it into subjection (doulagogo "lead into slavery"), lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

The Christian life is described by God in other parts of the New Testament as an agonizing race, and a grueling wrestling match. But here in these verses spiritual living is compared to a painful boxing ring. Paul describes spiritual boxing as where we have to give our own flesh regular knock-out blows, so we don't get thrown out of the race for the crown Christ offers.

That last statement lest "I myself should become disqualified" speaks of not finishing the event and thus not being able to get the award for competing and winning. But this was not a newcomer, this was Paul, who knew the Lord, suffered for decades, and loved God with all his heart. Paul said if I don't stay vigilant, my traitorous flesh, in a time of spiritual weakness will betray me and I may get out of my lane in the race and be ejected from the game.

Paul sums up his life as a struggle for each day to be:

Not Enslaved by Appetites But Surrendered to God

Women of grace are slow to choose items they will push through life in their cart, that are displeasing to God. Grace restrains godly women from even getting near some things that God has said will rob them of His joy, His blessing, and His power.

This morning ladies, can you honestly say that after careful self-examination that there is no appetite in your life stronger than your appetite for God?

If we could see your heart and mind and habits as God sees them would we conclude

that the only thing you are addicted to is the Lord?

Would we find that there are no idols that you are secretly hiding and secretly sacrificing your time and money to them instead of for God?

An idol is a chosen, humanly made object or practice that we turn to instead of God.

Typical American idols are: **media** (we listen to music more than we listen to God); **money** (we trust in wealth and jobs more than in the God who gives us life and strength); **our appearance** (we are more concerned about our clothes and looks than our spiritual condition); **our status** (we sacrifice to have things, pleasures, and experiences that are not pleasing to God); **our personal agenda** (we sacrifice the eternal: time with God, His Church, His Word, His ministry—for the temporal: schedules filled with sports, amusements, pleasures, even sinful activities we allow to crowd out God).

We are to seek God ahead of every other option. We still live everyday life, but there is a higher calling, and that calling is to seek FIRST the rule of God in my life (Matthew 6:33).

Here is a pop quiz from God to every woman who wants to gain eternal rewards with the Lord God Almighty who inhabits eternity. Where does God fit in your life-habits of:

1. **Possessions:** Are you more excited about going to shopping and acquiring more beautiful things than about seeking how to transform more things heading for destruction on Earth into things that will be your offering of worship to God at His Throne? Women of grace are not addicted to their temporal possessions. Look at Matthew 6:19-21 where Jesus tells us that where we are to be stacking up possessions is in Heaven.

Matthew 6:19-21 (NKJV) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2. **Sacrifice:** Are you more committed to school, work, and sports events than to God, His Word, and Christ as His Church gathers? Is your life running at full speed, and it seems that your family life, devotional life, and ministry life all are waning but your activities are actually increasing? Women of grace are not addicted to sacrificing the eternal on the altar of the temporary. Look at Romans 12:1-2 where Paul defines what we are to sacrifice for is Christ and His eternal priorities not earth and temporary ones.

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world,

but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3. **Beauty:** Are you more faithful to the exercise, beautification, and care of your physical body or the nurture of your spiritual soul? Women of grace are not addicted to their temporal beauty. Look at I Peter 3:3-4 where Peter explains that real beauty is spiritual and that is to take priority over passing, momentary earthly beauty.

1 Peter 3:3-4 (NKJV) Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

4. **Communications:** Are you more connected with your friends on FaceBook or your pictures in your Scrapbooks, than you are connected to the One who bought you with His own blood? Do you share with others more about yourself and your every movement and thought than your God and His Greatness that surpasses life? I believe there are women addicted to FaceBook instead of to loving their Master in Heaven, their husbands, and their children. Some of you ladies need to think that someday in the hospital as you breathe your last you will not be wishing you had posted one more picture or update, but wishing you had spent more time loving God, serving Him, and loving your family. Women of grace are not addicted to their temporal communications. Look at Revelation 3:20 where Jesus tells us how He waits for us to meet with Him.

Revelation 3:20 (NKJV) Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

All of those point to the desire of God that women of grace be:

Never Enslaved to Anything but Christ

The mission Paul sent Titus out to do was to take the new believers and have them scrape off their lives anything that clung to them of the old life and mortify, sanctify, and purify away anything that was not pleasing to God.

Most women in the early church were formerly pagans. Drunkenness was the norm for many women in that society. Drinking was the best way to forget about the problems of being a “slave” to a pagan man who looked upon his wife as a convenience that bore him legitimate children and enhanced his reputation in the community. Because this life was all there is to a pagan, hopelessness led to drunkenness. Paul said that prior to salvation they all were “without hope and without God (Ephesians 2:12).

Coming to Christ changed everything, but old habits are hard to break. The old ways of

their husbands would come back, old pains from emotional and physical abuse would resurface, and the temptation to slip back to the intemperance of slavery to wine would grow strong. Lack of physical control of any appetite points to a spiritual immaturity. Both Timothy and Titus were told to beware of women returning to their old habits in this realm of drinking.

Today “not given to much” goes far beyond merely wine. There are so many forms of alcohol never imagined in the Biblical times that can be abused, plus drugs (both acceptable and unacceptable kinds) that can be abused, tobacco that can be abused, wonderful varieties of food that can be abused, beautiful varieties of fashionable clothing that change with every season that can be abused, housing options, exercise options, recreation options—all that can be abused and become addictions. We face the danger of being:

Temperate in Alcohol, but Intemperate in Life

There is a generation of believers who have never tasted a drop of alcohol and pride themselves in that choice—while overeating with daily regularity; and both are condemned by God in Proverbs 23:19-21 side-by-side.

Because of Romans 14:15-21 and I Corinthians 8:9-13, we see that though the Bible never forbids wine drinking, our liberty is limited by the consciences of other believers and our testimony to the world. The lesson of temperance is consistency.

We must be as cautious of any intemperance; and “not be given to” too much of anything be it the use of money, the enjoyment of leisure, or the establishment of a house to live in. Whatever we do is to be tempered by the glory of God. He must be the object and focus of all we do. 1 Corinthians 10:31 *“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”* (NKJV).

“Modern society has elevated fashion almost to the point of idolatry. Clothing stores, newspaper and magazine advertising, and television commercials are like giant billboards that continually proclaim, “We covet clothes.”

Expensive, often ostentatious, jewelry for both men and women is becoming more and more prevalent as a means to flaunt material prosperity and glorify self. We are continually goaded to put our bodies and apparel on parade”. 1

Godly women are Spirit-controlled in every part of their life. They resist excess in any area of daily life. They are not slaves to any substance, any amusement, any fashion, or any attitude that does not please their Master in Heaven.

Godly women live as a priest for God; with guarded tongues; and no excesses. Godly women seek to be reverent in their behavior, careful in all their conversations,

¹ MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

and never enslaved to anything but Christ.

*Titus 2:12-14 **teaching** us that, **denying** ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. NKJV*

Two words stand out in v. 12. The word God chose for “teaching” is the word **paideuo** which speaks of training a child using discipline as needed. God wants us to be instructed, taught, trained, and whatever else is needed until we say no to sin.

The word “denying” is **arneomai** and means ‘to refuse, reject, not accept, not take an offer of’. This is the word used for Peter’s denials of the Lord after Gethsemane (Matthew 26:70, 72); and it is the same word for Moses when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter (Heb. 11:24). God wants us to not accept any stinking garbage from the world, He wants us to refuse anything that will foul the fragrance of the worship we are to offer.

What are you denying that the world has on the shelf because you want to fill the cart (your time on earth) with what won’t burn up? Do you waste hours online aimlessly update old high school info, constantly logging events of your life, chatting with folks that you never directly seek to influence for Christ.

Open to one last passage in II Corinthians 5:14-15, as here Paul explains his motivation for restraining his fleshly appetites. This passage has both the method and the motivation we all need to hear.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (NKJV) For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;¹⁵ and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

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