

Message #7**Titus 2:2-3**

Not long ago I heard a discussion about a military leader who was in the intensity of warfare and the battle could go either way. Things were dangerous, things were chaotic and victory or defeat could go either way. So this leader maintained a calm, level head and he came up with a plan to win and, ultimately, in the battle he did win. As I listened to one of his men describe his demeanor, he said things were very emotional and there was a lot of turmoil, but this leader stayed steady and we won. That is what any chaotic world needs to see—stable, steady people.

Titus was on the wild party island of Crete and it was his job to establish churches in every city that would make a difference in that environment. One of the responsibilities he had was to teach people how to reflect the grace of God to a wild and unruly world. What the world needed to see were stable, godly people.

ALL BELIEVERS ARE TO REFLECT GOD’S GRACE TO THE WORLD REGARDLESS OF GENDER OR AGE BECAUSE THIS IS WHAT A WILD WORLD NEEDS TO SEE.

What Paul does is he breaks down people into age categories and gives each category instruction as to how to reflect the grace of God:

CATEGORY #1 – The grace of God is to be reflected by older men. **2:2**

Men who are getting older or who are already older are to demonstrate the grace of God in their lives. The specific age of the men is not stated, but in ancient times there were different classifications of men.

S. Lewis Johnson said there were seven categories of men and this was category number six, somewhere around age 60. These men were called the “gray beards” which was a term that spoke of their aging maturity.

Now for someone who is around age 60, how does this man demonstrate the grace of God? He is not as spry as he once was and he cannot do what he used to be able to physically do. What can a man do as he is nearing the twilight years of his life? **He can demonstrate a godly character that reflects the grace of God.**

There are six character traits that the older man is to have:

Character Trait #1 - Older men are to demonstrate God’s grace by having self-control. **2:2a**

The word “temperate” or “sober” is a word that refers to someone who did not get drunk. As the New Testament age developed, it came to be used as a term for one who could stay under calm control. An older man is to be clear-headed.

Now it is very possible that alcohol was a problem for older men on the island of Crete. The island was one of the great wine producers in the first century. In fact, one historian said that one of the great wine distilleries of the first century was on the island of Crete.

People drank wine and Paul did not have a problem with that, but he did have a problem with one who was a drunk. There is nothing worse than to find some 60-year-old plus man lying in some gutter who is a drunk. That certainly does not reflect the grace of God.

So what Paul tells Titus to do is to tell the older men that they need to be self-controlled in every area.

When I was in school, I got involved in some mission work in Grand Rapids and some of the men you would see were depressing. They were drunks who couldn't even clean themselves or even know where they were.

Older men are to be temperate. They are to have self-control. This makes a wonderful statement to the world for the grace of God.

Character Trait #2 - Older men are to demonstrate God's grace by being dignified. **2:2b**

Older men need to be dignified. The word means that older men need to be august, reverent and respectable. There is nothing more honorable to God than a man who is growing older and is dignified and reverent. Being grave does not mean being grumpy or gloomy.

There is a sense of respectability and an aura of a "godly class." When you see godly older men who are reverent and dignified, you are looking straight into the face of the grace of God.

Bob Kregel, a man for whom I worked for, who is now with the Lord, was a man like that. He was a very dignified man. He told me a story about Louis Berkhof, the Dutch Reformed theologian. He told me that Dr. Louis Berkhof was a man who would often slip into the used bookstore quite frequently. He said he was always dressed sharp. He said his flowing white hair was always neatly combed and when you were around him you sensed he had a dignity to him.

That is the way it should be for one growing older. There ought to be a reverent dignity to him. Mr. Miles was a man of great dignity and when you were in his presence, you knew it. Mr. Miles said Dr. Chafer was like that. In fact, in his description that he gave of Dr. Chafer, he said there was "always a dignity about him" (*The Thrill of the Ministry of Fifty-five Plus Years*, p. 48).

We have several older men in this church who meet this criteria. They are a true God-honoring demonstration of the grace of God.

Character Trait #3 - Older men are to demonstrate God's grace by being sensible. **2:2c**

The word "sensible" is one that means he is to be a man of good sense and in his right mind.

He is to have self-control of his mind (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 438).

Now there are things that tug at a man's mind no matter how old he is. As a man ages, many things start to go wrong. However, as one is reaching an older age, there is nothing wrong with the old Adamic nature. A man who will reflect God's grace to the world is one who maintains a sound mind. He is a man who has good sense. He is solid and stable and sensible.

Years ago, there used to be a program called "Laugh-In." There was an actor named Artie Johnson who played the part of a dirty old man. He would try to chase women as some old guy and it was somewhat humorous. But there is nothing funny about it in real life. There is nothing more pathetic than to see some old man trying to hit on some young woman. That is not the mark of one in control of his mind, but one who is out of his mind. That is not a reflection of the grace of God.

Character Trait #4 - Older men are to demonstrate God's grace by being sound in faith. **2:2d**

Now the word "sound" is that same word we have already seen (1:9; 2:1). The word refers to that which is sound in the sense of being healthy because it is true to the Word of God. Older men are not to have some "half-hearted" faith. They are to demonstrate a strong, stable faith.

Older men are to be sound in what they believe. The noun "faith" is articular, "the faith" which means the faith that is consistent with true faith of the Grace Age. Older men are to have a healthy faith and trust in God and His Word. They should be well-grounded in grace.

Older men should develop a solid faith over time. There should be a great trust in the Lord as the older man nears the twilight years of life.

Older men are in a position to testify of what they have seen God do and how God's Word is true.

Character Trait #5 - Older men are to demonstrate God's grace by being sound in love. **2:2e**

The word "love" means the highest kind of love, the Biblical love that seeks to do the highest good for others. The older man is to be healthy in his faith and love. He should more and more be developing a Biblical kind of love.

Character Trait #6 - Older men are to demonstrate God's grace by being sound in perseverance. **2:2f**

The word perseverance is one that means to patiently wait and endure things (*Ibid.*, p. 462). Older men are to demonstrate a solid and sound perseverance. They are to be steady even when things don't happen overnight.

I read an unbelievable statistic that had to do with men. The highest rate of suicide among men occurred with white men ages 45-64 and the second highest rate occurred with white men ages 85 and older. Apparently these men get depressed and think life is over because they have nothing to offer.

Well, Titus says older men are needed in the church. We need older men to demonstrate God's grace by their perseverance. They can pray. They can come to church. They can give and worship. When you see an older man who stays a steady course in his faith, you are seeing a great demonstration of God's grace.

CATEGORY #2 – The grace of God is to be demonstrated by older women. **2:3**

Women have always been important to the work of God and the church of God. Older women are a vital part of the church and they are to be a visible demonstration of God's grace and in this verse Paul tells them how.

There were to be four character traits in the lives of older women:

Character Trait #1 - Older women are to demonstrate God's grace by being reverent. **2:3a**

These are very interesting Greek words. The words imply that an older woman is to demonstrate a priestly reverence as if they are involved in a very sacred work. Older women are to conduct themselves in a reverent way and promote a reverence in the church of God. God wants older women reverent in their behavior. An older woman is to have a sanctified life.

One Greek scholar said women "are to carry into daily life the demeanor of priestesses in a temple" (Walter Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 140). As we age, our bodies lose some of its beauty, but our spirituality can be gorgeous.

Older women are to reflect the fact that they have a reverence for God. They are to reflect this by their behavior, their attitudes, their dress and their speech. They are to demonstrate that they are very serious about God and His Word.

Years ago, I was in Woodland Mall in Grand Rapids and there was a woman walking down the mall who must have been in her 60's. She was wearing pink hot pants, orange leotards and under them was a psychedelic colored tank top. Everyone in the mall was doing a double take of this older woman, not because she looked good, but because she looked like a clown. In fact, the entire mall was laughing at her. She was pretending like she was some teenager and it was pathetic.

One minister said that he used to work in a very expensive hotel in Chicago as a bellman. He said there was a very wealthy woman who would cake on 10 pounds of makeup every day on her face and then come down and walk through the lobby so people would look at her. He said what she didn't know is that everyone in the hotel was laughing at her.

We live in world that promotes a self-centered philosophy for self-centered women. We live in an age of cosmetic renewal. If you don't like your face, get surgery. If you don't like your body, get surgery. God says you don't demonstrate my grace by cosmetic surgery, you demonstrate it by reverence.

One way women in the church demonstrate the fact that they are godly women is by a graceful reverent aging. This kind of woman remembers she is a priestess for God and she does not try to look like some teenage clown. She is reverent and godly.

Character Trait #2 - Older women are to demonstrate God's grace by not being gossips. **2:3b**

The word "malicious gossip" is the word diabolos. It is a word that actually is a name for Satan. It is the word devil. A woman is not to be devilish in her speech. The basic meaning of the word is verbal accuser. Paul is saying that an elderly woman is not to be a woman who verbally accuses and abuses people.

Now it is interesting that the next trait has to do with drinking too much wine. One commentator observed there is a contextual connection between intoxicating drink and a loose tongue. When people sit around and have a few drinks, they can talk too much and wag their tongues in nothing more than gossip.

Now apparently one of the major problems that can plague an older woman if she is not careful is that of talking about others, especially talking about all of their bad faults and problems. John Calvin said, "Talkativeness is a disease of women, and it is increased by old age" (*Titus*, p. 311). Ladies, guard your tongues.

In our day and age the possibility of talking to others about others is intensified by the fact that we have phones in our homes, cell phones in hands and I-phones and I-pads that can talk, talk, talk. There is twitter and facebook that can spread gossip and spread it fast.

God specifically says that one of the ways that older women can demonstrate God's grace is by controlling their speech.

Character Trait #3 - Older women are to demonstrate God's grace by not being drunks. **2:3c**

The words "not enslaved to much wine" mean not a slave of a great amount of alcohol. The words mean not a slave of the bottle or wineskin.

On Crete, wine flowed. Crete was a party island known for its free-flowing wine. To this day there are over 30 wineries on the island of Crete. Even now you can buy a glass of wine for about 1.50 and a bottle of wine for 8.50. As we said before, Paul was not against drinking wine but he was totally against men and women becoming drunken luses.

I am certain all of these ladies drank wine, and Paul did not have a problem with that. But Paul did not want them “enslaved” to it.

There were some women, apparently some older women, who would start drinking wine early in the day and they have their cocktail hour in the afternoon and then have more to drink at dinner and continue on drinking wine into the evening. They drank wine all day and got up the next day and did it again. Paul says you do not reflect the grace of God by doing that.

Character Trait #4 - Older women are to demonstrate God’s grace by teaching what is good.

2:3d

An older woman is in a position to make a great impact on younger women so that they may develop into becoming a godly woman.

The older woman must be about teaching younger women what God classifies as “good.” The word “good” (kalos) refers to a good that is manifested for others to see. Older women have the responsibility to teach young women how to manifest God’s grace.

As you will see what the world says is good for an older woman to teach younger women and what God says is good are two different things. But that is what an older woman is to do.

What this world needs to see in older men and older women is the fact that they love the Lord and love the Word and they back that up by their character. It is so interesting because what this text teaches is that older men and women are needed in the church if it is to be a powerful reflection of God’s grace.

We need to respect the gray heads. They are needed in God’s church to make a powerful statement for God’s grace in a wild and wicked world.