

Last week we began our consideration of chapter 2, by examining v1—I intended to summarize that verse with three observations (of which we only had time for the first)—thus here, by way of introduction, I want to briefly review the first, and simply suggest the latter two...

[1] Sound theology results in practical piety—I mentioned last week, that sound doctrine is healthy teaching, that results in healthy living—sound doctrine was passed down to Titus from Paul, likely in a form of short early creed—in its essence it refers to the gospel—the person and work of Christ—this, rightly believed, results in godly living...

Thus, I suggested last week, that strictly speaking, vv2-10 are the things that adorn sound doctrine, and vv11-14 are a summary of that sound doctrine—we find the same thing in chapter 3—sound doctrine (vv4-7), good works (v8), or that which adorns the gospel...

Thus, Paul exhorts Titus, that he wanted him to preach this sound doctrine, "constantly" (v8)—"that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works"—or, the only way to maintain good works is to be told the gospel...

[2] Christians need specific domestic instruction—this need was twofold—[a] because false teachers were subverting (weakening) entire households—because their teaching wasn't sound and healthy, it failed to produce healthy hearts and homes...

[b] Because of the context in which Titus ministered—if you remember, Paul left Titus in Crete (an Island south of Greece), to establish the churches—Paul describes the Cretans in 1:12—"Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons"—in other words, the Christians in Crete, would be in need of constant instruction, to fortify them from their surroundings...

[3] Practical piety adorns the gospel of God—Paul describes the practical teaching of vv2-10 as "things proper for sound doctrine"—that is, things that are fitting or adorning to sound doctrine—in other words, the lifestyles described in vv2-10 adorn the beautiful gospel of God...

Throughout vv2-10, Paul makes this point clear, v5b—"that the word of God may not be blasphemed," v8—"that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say to you," v10—"that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things..."

- I. The Identity of Older Men
- II. The Duties of Older Men
- III. Lessons from Older Men

I. The Identity of Older Men

1. If you notice—Paul provides instruction for the older men (v2), older woman (v3), young women (vv4-5), and young men (v6)...
2. Thus, the first question that needs answering is—Who exactly does Paul refer to, when he speaks of OLDER MEN...
3. The Greek word rendered "older men" literally means "an aged man"—Zacharias used it of himself, in speaking with the Angel..
4. Lk.1:18—"And Zacharias said to he angel, How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years..."
5. Zacharias was informed by the Angel, that Elizabeth his wife, would bear him a son—"and you shall call his name John..."
6. Zacharias thinks this strange, given the fact that he is an "older man"—and his wife—"well advanced in years..."

7. Thus, by "older men"—I suggest, is meant, those past the ordinary age of child bearing and raising children...
8. 1Tim.5:1-2—"Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity..."
9. Here, Timothy is exhorted to view "older men" as fathers—that is, old enough to be his father, and thus treated as such...
10. 1Tim.5:9—"Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, etc..."
11. V11—"But refuse the younger widows...v14 Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully..."
12. Here—Paul expressly describes "older widows" as 60 yrs and up—younger widows were to remarry and bear children...
13. [1] Older men are in contrast to young men, [2] older men are past the age of fathering children, and [3] older men are old enough, for the young men to consider as fathers—that is, to respect them as fatherly figures...
14. Furthermore, since Paul himself used the age 60 as a dividing line between older and younger widows, I suggest it's a good number to broadly use here as well...

II. The Duties of Older Men

1. Paul categorizes the specific duties of older men into two groups of three—three outward and three inward virtues...
2. [1] Three outward virtues—by "outward" I mean—these things are evidenced more so by outward actions and dispositions...
3. [a] Sober—this word means to be "sober minded"—to be spiritually alert, vigilant, attentive, and watchful...
4. 1Thess.5:6—"Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober" 1Pet.5:8—"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour..."
5. Thus—older men are to be sober-minded—because of experience, their spiritual senses are alert and watchful...
6. [b] Reverent—this word refers to a "dignified" or "worthy of respect" attitude—it refers to a serious disposition...
7. It doesn't negate the place for proper humour—but refers to an attitude that takes serious, the issues of life...
8. John Benton—"There is a weightiness about his character which remains even in lighter moments. That weightiness of character brings a sense of gentle dignity which inspires confidence..."
9. This weightiness, we shall see, is the result of having come to know God in Christ, of being mindful of eternal things...
10. [c] Temperate—this word means to be "self-controlled" or "moderate"—he is able to control his bodily appetites...
11. He isn't addicted to pleasure and/or entertainment—he enjoys these things in a sensible and judicious manner...
12. But the world also refers to a temperance of passions—that is, he knows how to control his control his spirit...
13. Prov.16:32—"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city..."
14. [2] Three inward virtues—by "inward" I mean—these things are inner dispositions of the heart or of the soul...
15. Paul uses again the word "sound" which means "healthy"—it here refers to a spiritual strength or health (it's best to apply it to all three virtues)...
16. Healthy people are ordinarily strong people—thus older men are to be sound or strong in faith, love, and patience...

17. John Calvin—"By this he means that if older men are frail and infirm, nursing many illnesses and with less energy than before, they ought at least to make up for it by soundness (health) of soul..."
18. Now—let me say by way of summary—these three, faith, love, and patience (or hope), are three primary graces...
19. Thus—Paul expects of older men to be strong and healthy in grace—they are to grow in the fruit of the Spirit...
20. [a] Sound in FAITH—that is, be strong or healthy in faith toward God—faith in God and faith in His word...
21. Why does Paul specify this need for older men—well, likely because of the temptation to grow self-sufficient in old age...
22. Unless our hearts are kept healthy, the first thing that begins to erode is FAITH—we begin to trust ourselves...
23. [b] Sound in LOVE—that is, be strong in love to God, but especially, be strong in love toward the brethren...
24. Older men are to be selfless in their actions—they are to live to assist and better those who are around them...
25. Biblical love is tangible and manifest—it's seen in practical ways—it gives itself for others—it esteems others...
26. Again, we have to ask the question—Why does Paul specify the need to be sound in love—selfishness and bitterness...
27. [i] Selfishness—this is a common temptation—for men to spend their final years on things that don't matter...
28. Fishing, hunting, golfing, vacationing—while these may have their place, men, they are not to consume our time...
29. Love is sacrificial—it gives of its time, talents, and treasure—it gives of itself for the good those around us...
30. [ii] Bitterness—I fear most of us have seen older men who have grown, not loving, but bitter, mean, and sour...
31. Dear brethren, this is a very common temptation that older men will face—for they have seen many discouraging things...
32. They have seen the world for what it is—they have seen numerous fake Christians, fake pastors, fake friends...
33. They've likely had their love spurned and rejected—they've likely had little love returned for all they've shown...
34. And friends, it's rather easy to respond with a cynical, distrusting, and unloving spirit—thus, they must be sound in love...
35. [c] Sound in PATIENCE—this word refer to patient endurance and perseverance—being steadfast and consistent...
36. The word refers to a man who presses on, who patiently endures, regardless of the opposition he will encounter...
37. Why does Paul specify the need for this grace, but because of the temptation of growing weary and giving up...
38. Older Christians, likely have been running this race for a very long time, and the temptation is grow fatigued...
39. This of course couples with their physical weaknesses—they can grow discouraged and eventually lose heart...
40. Thus, Paul exhorts Titus—to teach the older men, to be sound in faith, in love, and in PATIENT ENDURANCE...

III. Lessons from Older Men

A. All Christians are needed

1. Here I want to suggest that Paul begins with the older men and women, because these play a vital part in the church's life...
2. We presently live in a country that seeks to forget about the elderly, and in many cases even despises them...
3. In recent years, we have even heard the suggestion, that after a certain age, older people should be put to death...
4. They have served their purpose and now they are merely taking up space—they no longer contribute to society...
5. Oh but dear brethren—surely this is a very foolish concept, and one that's foreign to most cultures in the world...
6. In many African and Asian cultures, the elderly are esteemed highly for their wisdom, and contribution to society...
7. But tragically, this foolish notion has made its way into the professing church, which often despises its elderly...
8. For the past 20-30 years, most "Church-growth" experts suggest—you can never build a church with hoary heads...
9. Oftentimes, older people are marginalized, forgotten, and perhaps even despised—you need YOUNG couples...
10. Now—don't get me wrong, for obvious reasons, a church does need younger couples, but they also need older couples...
11. In fact—I suggest, ordinarily, a healthy church will likely have older men and women, and younger men and women...
12. Thus, brethren, I also suggest that it's wrong to target any one group of people, for example, like young couples...
13. Churches need all age groups—and they especially need mature older men and women—let me suggest three reasons...
14. [1] To provide wisdom, Job 12:12—"Wisdom is with AGED MEN, and with length of days, understanding..."
15. Now—this does not necessarily mean, that all older people are wiser, but it does mean, it is ordinarily true...
16. What a happy church to have older men, who can give practical counsel to younger men on the matters of life...
17. Buying a house, car, getting married, budgeting money, marital issues, purity, parenting, and theological matters...
18. These, and many more, and topics that younger men are in need of counselling, and who better to help, than older men...
19. Men who have done these things, and perhaps not always rightly, and thus can share from their own experiences...
20. [2] To provide stability—older Christians should have a stability and maturity to them, both in doctrine and life...
21. Younger men are still forming these things for themselves, whereas, older men should be grounded in these...
22. Perhaps I can go a step further—older men should serve as imperfect but mature, patterns for young men to follow...
23. [3] To provide encouragement—by this I mean, they are a testimony to others of God's keeping love and grace...
24. What a wonderful thing it is, to have hoary heads within the congregation, testifying of God's sufficient grace...
25. What a necessary blessing, to have older men (women), coming alongside the younger encouraging them on...
26. Testifying of God's sufficient grace—getting out before the younger people, urging them on in their callings...
27. CHS—"Every aged Christian is a letter of commendation to the immutable fidelity (faithfulness) of Jehovah..."

28. Ps.71:18—"Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come..."
29. This is a plea for a long and fruitful life—but notice why—so that he could tell his grandchildren about God's grace...
30. Oh my older friend—is this the reason who want to live longer—is to encourage the generations behind you...
- B. No Christian ever retires
1. This lesson is closely connected with the first—if ALL Christians are needed, then EVERY Christian must grow...
 2. This is very relevant for American Christians, who dream of spending the last half of their life sitting on a beach...
 3. Thus—though Christians by "retire" from a specific job—they never retire from being a follower of Christ...
 4. What a wonderful thing it is—to behold Christians, whose outward man is decaying, while their inward man is be strengthened...
 5. 2Cor.4:16—"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day..."
 6. I fear the temptation for many older men is—to begin to coast, and no longer aggressively seek the things of God...
 7. My friends, surely we all understand, that mere growth in years, does not necessarily mean, growth in grace...
 8. John Calvin—"Older men may think that a long life has made them sufficiently wise. But no, see how God summons them back to his school and how, even though they may have one foot in the grave and have lived many years, he still wants them to listen and be taught, and to yield to his direction. If they claim to be wiser than they are he will shame them in their arrogance. Gospel doctrine is not therefore a simple ABC which instructs us in our raw, immature years; it is the perfection of all wisdom to which all of us, young and old, must submit..."
 9. Thus—here I want to address the question—HOW are older men to grow in these outward and inward virtues...
 10. [1] The inward takes priority over the outward—that is, above all else the heart must be guarded and strengthened...
 11. John Benton—"True masculinity is about an outward, loving, dignified strength which is based on a healthy inner spiritual life..."
 12. Thus—I want to ask this question—How does God ordinarily strengthen the inward graces of His beloved people...
 13. Ps.92:12-15—"The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him..."
 14. It was a common practice to plant trees in the court of your house—such trees were tended to with great care (they flourished)...
 15. The Psalmist speaks about an amazing truth—Christians are like trees planted in the courts of God's House...
 16. [2] The grace of faith takes priority over all else—that is, faith is the queen grace, because it begets all else...
 17. How do Christians grow in love and endurance but BY FAITH, how do Christians grow in sobriety, reverence, and temperance, but BY FAITH and LOVE...
 18. Thus, though faith is a gift from God, we are responsible to strengthen and increase it—we must be sound in faith....
 19. [a] Empty—that is, we must empty ourselves of all self-trust—we must know how weak we are in ourselves...

20. Thus—a person who is sound in faith, strong in faith, is a person who is consciously weak in and of himself...
21. [b] Fill—by this I mean, we must FILL our minds with knowledge of God in Christ, and His word (esp promises)...
22. Dear brethren, we must ever be reminded, that FAITH in itself is nothing, but derives its power from its object...
23. FAITH in Scripture, Christian FAITH, saving and sanctifying FAITH, is always directed toward God and His word...
24. Scripture talks about faith IN GOD, faith IN CHRIST, and faith IN THE WORD—these are the objects of faith...
25. [c] Pray—that is, because faith is a grace from God, you must ask for it, Lk.17:5—"Lord, increase our faith..."

C. God's grace never runs out

1. This final lesson, is closely related to the previous two—if ALL Christians are needed, and thus EVERY Christian must grow—then of necessity God has promised to supply ALL Christians with EVERYTHING they need to grow...
2. That is to say—the grace of God is sufficient to ensure that every Christian bears fruit all the way to the end...
3. Titus 2:11-13—"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should love soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..."
4. Oh my dear hoary head friend—society may forget about you, the professing church may forget about you—but God never will...
5. I think most older Christians are tempted to struggle with fearfulness—Will God's grace keep me to the end...
6. Hymn (80:5)—"Even down to old age all My people shall prove My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love; and when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn, like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne, like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne..."
7. Isa.46:4—"Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you..."