

Church Life: Old and Younger Women, Part I (Titus 2:3-4)

Paul “zooms” in on the importance of old women in the life of the church (60 and older). The same virtues as old men are required from them as well.

First century dignified women were of a special class: they provided hospitality to traveling Christians, visited the sick, provided food for Christians in prison, walked the streets for abandoned newborns, and were a source of sound teaching, wisdom, and encouragement to women of all age.

Three areas of Christian conduct:

1. Old women are to be reverent (v.3,a)

- It means “priest-like.” It means to have a sacred character. Their demeanor, or mentality was always: “I am set apart for God and set apart to God.”
- Godliness is not only expressed in their demeanor, but also their dress and clothing because reverence is a matter of self-control. They are to set an example to the younger women in speech, conduct, and dress; not in “trend or style” but in purity.
- Unfortunately, for many dignified and reverent women, pride can “swell up” in their hearts and a specific sin is mentioned.

2. Old women are to stop gossiping (v.3,b)

- Paul is not “nit-picking” on women. It was a serious problem not only in first century Crete, but for us today.
- The Greek word for gossip/slander means “between” and “to throw.” Literally: “throwing between.” The word slander (gossip) is where we get _____ from.

Why were dignified, reverent women gossiping?

- I. Jewish women would have exceptionally high standards and when others failed to meet those standards, gossip often times followed.
- II. They were poor stewards of time. Children were out of the house.
- III. They may have been jealous or envious of others.
- IV. Discussions of “life issues” may have unintentionally morphed into gossip.
- V. Personal preference about matters of the church with no biblical warrant.

Gossip has to do with a lack of self-control and reverence not only to God, but also to man. Love never rejoices in wrongdoing (1 Corinthians 13:6). Unfortunately, sometimes we rejoice in another person’s sin because we don’t do it.

Gossip does not exist in heaven. The Trinity and their holy angels will never bring up any of your sin. We should want to bring heaven to earth.

Gossip assumes the role of the devil because the devil has been a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). When we gossip, we murder at least three people's reputation: our own, the ones we gossip to, and the person we gossip about. Gossip is devilish and is evidence of a lack of self-control. We must be careful we do not murder other's reputation with half-truths or half-lies.

How do I handle situations when there is a potential for gossip?

- If you are approached and "gossip" insinuates, ask them if this is about something or someone. If it is about someone, ask them if they have discussed this with the person. If their answer is no, the conversation is done unless they are seeking wisdom. If they are seeking wisdom, they should be receptive to what you have to say.
- Ask them if it is profitable to discuss these matters
- If they are "venting" they are not in a sobered state of mind. You have the right to interject and change the course of the conversation if there is slander or gossip.

3. Old women are to stop being enslaved by wine. (v.3,c)

Two functions of old women in the life of the church:

They are to teach what is good (v.3,d): the word good means "beautiful or attractive." Dignified reverent women are to teach what is good in God's eyes to all women and children.

They are to encourage (v.4,a):

a) Young women with a godly perspective to love their husbands. Crete was like a mini-Corinth with all the glamour, excitement and tourism. Younger married women were being influenced by the culture. Old women need to remind and give "God's perspective" to the younger women regarding what God values in a family.

The Greek has a "to be" verb, which means "Wives must exhibit a willingness and determined love that is not based on the husband's worthiness but God's instruction for order in the home." It is a volitional choice to love regardless of his worthiness. When he is difficult to love, be reminded of God's love towards you.

b) Young women with a godly perspective to love their children. To love someone is to be concerned with their greatest well-being. Train up your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord and ask Him to bless your labor.

Whether teaching or encouraging, life lessons are both taught and caught. Are the old women at CrossWay functioning as Titus 2 women?