

# **Grace Energized Men: Getting Serious About God in An Amused World Titus 2:1-2**

Are you reverent this morning? Reverence is feeling the “weight” of God in every part of our life and mind.

The word “glory” as in the Glory of God in the Old Testament is actually the word “heaviness”. God is so great, and those who reverence Him feel the weight of His holiness and glory. God is looking for believers who will revere Him, reverence Him, and live a life that shows the glory or weightiness of God touching and affecting every part of their life.

As you open to Titus 2, we are in the midst of an intense study of what God wants in men. In v.2, God starts with the older (50+ year old men) and gives them six indicators of the spiritual maturity He wants and uses. These six choices are possible when we ask, and surrender to God’s grace. That surrendered obedience is called a grace-energized life.

God asks men who want to serve Him to be reverent, serious enough about God to do what pleases Him and abstain from what does not please Him. As we see the Word of God is clear, the Lord has revealed His desires, there is no mystery about what he expects...

## **God has a Specific Desire For Every Believer Age 50+**

There is no more vital Scripture for every man who knows Christ personally than this verse. God asks us to either respond to Him or realize that in going our own way and not His—we are wasting our life. Especially for every man 50 and over these verses put the rest of our lives into sharp focus.

Because God knows how strong the world, the flesh, and the devil can be—He offers his pathway to maximize the rapidly passing days of our lives. How can godly men keep from wasting the most precious years of life? By grabbing onto the grace-energized changes God wants to make inside of you, so that you will be the man He can use to maximize His Kingdom, purposes and plan for this world!

We are on the second of six qualities are to become the life-priorities for grace-energized men.

Titus 2:2 "Teach the older men to be sober, **reverent...**"

First we saw last time that God asks men to choose to obey Him by...

**1. MAINTAINING A BALANCED LIFE IN AN OBSESSIVE-COMPLUSIVE WORLD** v. 2a "sober" is the Greek word *nephalios*

God wants matured, godly older men in Christ's church to live a life that exemplifies Jesus to a watching world. These men are to model the life God wants, to encourage younger men, intentionally take time to mentor some of the younger men. These older men challenge the younger to abandon the temptations of youth such as reckless living, impatience with decision making, thoughtless communication, and the unreliability that often characterizes young people. In other words, for them to maintain a life balanced by God's Word in an unbalanced world.

Then we find the second quality in v.2 which is the word "reverent" (NKJV) and also rendered "grave" (KJV), "worthy of respect" (NIV), and "dignified" (NAS). This word communicates the sense of...

**2. GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT GOD IN AN AMUSED WORLD** v.2b "reverent" is the word *semnos*.

God wants older men who model what its like to live life seriously. These men think deeply about God in an amused, shallow-thinking culture. These men never trivialize what God says is important; and live a life that doesn't ignore God. That means they are not entertained by sensuality, never amused by vulgarity, and don't treat God's Word superficially.

This man won't laugh at others troubles, nor mock their weaknesses. As an older person who has seen hardship, misfortune, and injustice—life is real, pain is serious, and time with people is important.

Older men in the faith who understands the brevity of life, the gravity of God's Word, and the reality of eternity, know that there are...

## **Dangerous Distractions Godly Men Avoid**

These grace-energized men, living in a sin-energized world are God's plan. God is on the lookout for men who are sold-out, full-hearted, true-seekers of Him. And here is the reason why—God has said that the "last days" in which we live, are terribly distracting days to live for Him.

Please turn with me to the world that God warns us to stay away from:

*2 Timothy 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away (present middle imperative)! NKJV*

*The end of days will be filled with people who are: self-absorbed, money-lovers, self-promoters, contemptuous, evil-speaking, disregarding parents, thankless, shameless in desires, affectionless, irreconcilable, their tongues used by the Devil, enslaved to lusts, savage, good-hating, traitorous, maniacal, inflated by pride, self-worshipping, and empty-hearted—keep yourself away from them! (My paraphrase)*

## **Pray**

God said people do not take Him or His Word seriously; rather they become completely wrapped up in self. They will disregard everything God says is important and turn away from Him into sensuality and rebellion. They destroy everyone in their way, live superficially, and are consumed with self-loving pleasures.

For centuries the church has bred deep-thinking, self-sacrificing men who led the way in the home, at work, and in ministry. But that is fast declining. What has decimated the men of the church? What spiritual enemy has sapped the church of its mighty men?

## **The Great Neutralizer**

I have been teaching God's Word for over 30 years. I have watched those I teach over these years struggle with "the great neutralizer." When they go home from a Bible study, fellowship, class, or worship service, they sit down in front of the single most powerful mind-altering device on the planet—and within half an hour have forgotten almost everything they had just learned. What is that mind-altering device? The images and powerful messages of today's powerful media: television, MTV, video gaming, the internet and movies!

Professor Neil Postman, author of *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, reports that between the ages of six and eighteen, the average American spends some 15,000 to 16,000 hours in front of the TV or computer, whereas he spends only 13,000 hours in school. Postman says that during the first 20 years of an American's life, they will see over one million commercials, at the rate of about 1,000 per week!<sup>1</sup>

Media's effects are infamous. People who frequently watch TV have the following: a shortened attention span, reduced linguistic power, and a limited capacity for abstraction. Thus they struggle to think about God; they struggle to talk about God;

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<sup>1</sup> Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (USA: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985), pp. 104-105.

they struggle to think about heaven; and they struggle to grow in Christ. What a negative impact!

What happens to a man whose mind is not musing (meditating) upon the greatness of God? A mind that doesn't muse gets amused, carried along, floating with the current of the world going away from God. This doesn't mean that a believer immediately goes against God; rather, it is a slow process of the Lord having less and less influence over the priorities of life. One writer expressed this condition well as he said:

*"It is one of the defining marks of Our Time that God is now weightless. I do not mean by this that he is ethereal but rather that he has become unimportant. He rests upon the world so inconsequentially as not to be noticeable. He has lost his saliency for human life.*

*Those who assure the pollsters of their belief in God's existence may nonetheless consider:*

- *him less interesting than television,*
- *his commands less authoritative than their appetites for affluence and influence,*
- *his judgment no more awe-inspiring than the evening news, and*
- *his truth less compelling than the advertisers' sweet fog of flattery and lies.*

*That is weightlessness. It is a condition we have assigned him after having nudged him out to the periphery of our secularized life.... Weightlessness tells us nothing about God but everything about ourselves, about our condition, about our psychological disposition to exclude God from our reality<sup>2</sup>."*

God becomes weightless because we are...

## **Drowning Out the Holy Spirit's Voice**

God speaks to us through His Word in what the Bible describes as a 'still small voice'.

God doesn't shout, nor does He push. He whispers and waits.

And what affect does daily media exposure have upon minds? One word—desensitization. Our culture keeps testing the waters and bringing new immoral depths to the screens of America. All the while, those watching are becoming desensitized. When that happens, we are headed away from God.

If your mind is being exposed to constant deadly spiritual viruses via digital media consider this ominous checklist:

- **Watch godlessness** — it will callous you to not seek godliness.

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<sup>2</sup> David Wells, *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a world of fading dreams* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 88, 90.

- **Watch sensuality** — it will defile you away from holiness.
- **Watch violence** — it will desensitize you to neglect Christlikeness.
- **Watch evil** — it will distance you from God.
- **Watch worldliness** — it will discourage your appetite for God's Word.
- **Watch Satan's mind** — you will forfeit Christ's mind in you!

Let me affirm and repeat what one pastor from Chicago wrote over ten years ago:

*I am aware of the wise warnings against using words like "all," "every," and "always" in what I say. Absolutizing one's pronouncements is dangerous. But I'm going to do it anyway. Here it is:*

*It is impossible for any Christian who spends the bulk of his evenings, month after month, week upon week, day in and day out watching the major TV networks or contemporary videos to have a Christian mind. This is always true of all Christians in every situation! A biblical mental program cannot coexist with worldly programming<sup>3</sup>.*

Today, choose to cultivate the mind God has willed us to have! There has never been a more crucial time for Christ's church, because we now daily face...

## **A Tsunami Of Sin**

"Right now television has the culture by its throat", said Neil Postman. According to an article in Time magazine, the average viewer sees more than 9,000 scenes of suggested sex or innuendo on prime-time TV in one year. Is music any better? No, according to media analysts, secular music is filled with..."violence, the occult, rebellion, drug abuse, promiscuity, and homosexuality are constant themes," says U.S. News and World Report. Couple this with the fact that teens "listen to an estimated 10,500 hours of rock music between the seventh and 12th grades alone just 500 hours less than the total time they spend in school over 12 years" and, well, you get the picture<sup>4</sup>.

We are being swept away by a society that, like the fool in Psalm 14:1, believes that "there is no God." I am not describing these evils so that everyone will burn their TV's and computers, and go hide in the mountains. Rather, it's to give you just a sampling of the powerful influences toward godlessness we all must contend with daily.

In the years ahead, we will live increasingly in the fictional worlds of human imaginations. We will turn on our virtual-reality systems and lie back, experiencing heavenly pleasures of sight and sound in a snug electronic nest. The real world will almost be totally blotted out from our experience.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishers, 2001), pp. 71-82.

<sup>4</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *You and Your Child*, Anaheim, California: Insight for Living, 1993, p.97

<sup>5</sup> Richard A. Swenson, M.D., *The Overload Syndrome*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: NAVPRESS, 1998, Pgs 137-160.

Movies continue their slide in the direction of violence, nudity, and objectionable language. Many blockbuster movies now have elements of all three. The tendency in this direction has been mainstreamed and seems to hardly elicit a yawn.

Children at younger and younger ages are drawn into the movie/video habit, especially with the common use of videos for baby-sitting. As parents become more overloaded, it is simply too tempting to put in a video and place the children before the set. They are well behaved and even entranced. And for busy, stressed-out, exhausted parents, there is nothing so attractive as quiet children—unless we seriously...

## Consider the Spiritual Effects of Media Exposure

The ocean of media we sail through each day is slowly seeping into our spiritual operating systems. Before our eyes in the last generation the media has changed societal thought and behavior in profound ways. Here are only a few elements we can observe from this ever present negative spiritual influence. The following list was first published by a Christian doctor in Florida.<sup>6</sup>

- **Media Resets the Moral Acceptability Threshold:** what used to offend no longer does.
- **Media Resets the Shock Threshold:** what used to shock no longer does.
- **Media Resets the Boredom Threshold:** Children who are used to watching media on a regular basis can often feel “lonely” after just a few moments of their absence.
- **Media Results in Addictive Behavior:** It has become culturally acceptable to use media to keep kid’s attention, so that from their earliest memory children are conditioned to watch, enjoy, and want movies, music, and gaming. Because media has come to define our world, taking the media away is like having our world taken away. The absence of media makes people feel like nothing is left—because media has become so intertwined with all their relationships, comforts, enjoyments, and security.
- **Media Increases Exposure to Immorality:** The pervasiveness of media leads to an almost unavoidable exposure to sexually explicit material at every-younger ages. Teenagers watch an average of three hours of TV per day, listen to music for an additional one to two hours, and often have access to R-rated movies and even pornography long before they are adults. Add to that the thousands of commercials per year each teenager in America sees with implicit messages that sex is fun, sex is sexy and everyone out there is having sex but you; and you have a potentially life-dominating influence<sup>7</sup>.

So, this tsunami of sins crashes across us each day eroding God's Word from our lives, and bits of evil seeping in here and there. The question every man needs to ask is...

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<sup>6</sup> Richard A. Swenson, M.D., *The Overload Syndrome*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: NAVPRESS, 1998, Pgs 137-160.

<sup>7</sup> Victor C. Strasburger, “Turning in to Teenagers,” *Newsweek*, 19 May 1997, p. 18.

## How Can I Reverse the Erosion of a Spirit-Filled Mind?

The only way to cultivate a Word-filled mind is by obedience to God's command that we mortify our lusts, as Colossians 3:5, 8 tells us.

*Therefore **put to death** your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 8 But now you yourselves are to **put off** all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. NKJV*

To mortify means "to throttle sin and crush it in our lives, sapping it of its strength, rooting it out, and depriving it of its influence." Mortification involves the cultivation of new habits of godliness, combined with the elimination of old sinful habits from our behavior.

The only way to recover from an eroded mind, a mind that has gotten neutralized, where evil seeps in a bit more each day, is to pursue personal sanctification:

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