

Women Energized by Grace Love Their Children Titus 2:4

Women energized by grace love their children. That is what Titus 2:4 says. We are going to see how to love children with love they can feel this evening. But before we do that we need to ask why are we even here tonight? Why do we even sacrifice another hour-plus to gather in this building and study God's Word? The answer is that we desire to be a faithful part of Christ's church!

You see, this evening you and I are part of something big, something grand, something that dwarfs all our broken down cars, lost jobs, bad health, work pressures, social problems, or even personal loneliness...this evening through Jesus Christ, you and I are a part of what God has chosen as His priority in the Universe. We are in partnership with GOD. Think of that. You and I are equity holders in something that will never end, never fail, never decay--we are a vital part of Christ's church!

God's plan to work in the world is through His church. Why not remind yourself of that by looking at three passages of Scripture with me tonight. In fact you may even want to pencil in three words on the pages of your Bibles.

The first word is MISSION.

- Each of us in Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as "Pleasing God" (1 Thessalonians 4:1) "Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God" (NKJV).
- Our mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as "the Gospel of Grace" (Acts 20:24) "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God (NKJV). This message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible.
- But the most amazing part is that God's plan to do all this through us is by **a method** spelled out in Titus 2. Paul summarized this plan as men and women energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

Let's read Titus 2 backwards this evening. Stand with me, follow along, or just listen as I start in v. 15 and go to v. 1.

Titus 2: 15-1 (NKJV)

15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.
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.
13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,
11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,
10 not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.
9 Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back,
8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.
7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,
6 Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded,
5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.
4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,
3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—
2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;
1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:

If you want a summary of our lives as believers it would be: We were saved by God's grace; we are kept by God's grace; and we live in a way that pleases God and earns His rewards—**energized by His grace.**

God's plan to work in the world is His church¹. Christ's church may be described as a group of people, energized by grace, doing the impossible for the glory of God. A key insight into God's plan to reach the world through Christ's church is in Titus chapter 2.

The verses of this chapter contain a call to First Century men and women energized by grace to live an extraordinary spiritual life in a very unspiritual culture.

¹ Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (I Thessalonians 4:1). This mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). The message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible. But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** is spelled out in Titus 2:11-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

When grace energizes us we want to deny ungodliness in any form we find it cropping up in our lives. When God's grace energizes us we want to mortify lust in any form in our lives.

The Cretan church was saved, bought from the slave market of sin (redeemed), but still had clinging to their lives the garbage of their culture. They had generations of bad habits, false thinking, and warped lives.

What was the plan God had in mind to transform these very un-saintly people? The same plan He has for all of us today. Save them by His grace and sanctify them by His Word.

As long as the power was on in their lives, as long as they operated energized by grace the old ways, the lusts of the flesh, and all the manifestations of pride were held back. But whenever the power was interrupted and they did not walk in the Spirit—the old corrupt ways of the flesh would spring to life.

As I worked over this passage for the past two weeks I kept thinking about what the church in Crete must have looked like. Can you imagine congregation after congregation around that island of Crete that Titus had to visit? Each one probably had at least one person not walking in the Spirit, not energized by grace to deny ungodliness, and so the unpleasant odors of un-disposed remnants of fleshly garbage would be present.

Just like someone who smokes that can't smell the stale odor of smoke that reeked from all their clothing, car or home—so these former pagans couldn't smell all their fleshly habits that needed change.

Like garbage left to rot smells until it is disposed of and cleansed away, so Titus was to start a spiritual search and dispose mission into the lives of the Cretans.

God wanted to shine the spotlight of His Word into their lives corporately, and then individually. As any garbage was exposed it was to be denied, and the area exposed to that garbage cleansed and freshened by the power of the sanctifying Spirit of God through His Word.

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, mortify, sanctify, and purify away anything that was not pleasing to God.

The Cretans as new believers needed long-term sanctification. They were just children-in-the-faith in need of a long bath in God's Word, administered by mothers and fathers-in-the-faith!

This need for removing remnants of garbage that stinks confronted me on Thursday night. I walked into our house for the first time in ten days and it smelled like a dumpster. I prowled around looking for where that horrible smell was coming from. Trash cans were checked, pantry potato bags, fruit bowl, and all came up clear. Then I

saw a dark circle on the floor in front of the fridge. When I pulled open the door of that trusted 12 year old appliance there was the finest collection of colorful molds and layers of decay available anywhere in the city. Most of the refrigerant compressor had died, thus the temperature had risen, and all the microbes always lurking around food had sprung to life. Normally they are abated by the low temperatures and can't grow or reproduce. But the moment that the coldness was limited, decay set in at warp speed; and the result was a stinking mess. But because I value that appliance I had only one choice—to get rid of the garbage.

For the next six hours I bagged, hauled, washed, scraped, bleached and scrubbed that trusty white fridge in the kitchen until it was pure white again, and mold and stink free. Refrigerators have no smell of their own; they just hold objects that begin to smell if allowed to. All it needed was to be washed and renewed and it would be back as good as new.

When Titus came to Crete to pastor Christ's church, it was sometime in the early 60's AD. As he arrived the churches were filled with spiritual lives that smelled like a dumpster. The old rotted flesh of their former ways stood in the way of their progress in Christ. They were bought and paid for but needed the washing of sanctification through God's Word.

There were stinking lives, stinking marriages, and stinking families. Paul proposed to Titus a two-part plan: regular systematic teaching in the church gatherings and private one-on-one discipling sessions for focused applications of the sanctifying Word.

As believers this morning we are on the journey of new beginnings through Christ—energized each step of the way by grace.

Titus 2 is a roadmap for all who want their life to count. It is God's pathway of disciplines to choose each day in the power of the Spirit of grace.

Christ's Church Used Grace Energized Coaches in Godly Living

The Titus Two woman is an imperfect person, saved by God, and energized by His grace to live an exemplary life as described in Titus 2:3-4. So we could easily say that:

- Women energized by grace—are reverent in their behavior,
- Women energized by grace—are not slanderers,
- Women energized by grace—are not given to much wine,
- Women energized by grace—are teachers of good things, and
- Women energized by grace—are discipling younger women.

Those new believers, fresh out of paganism needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices; and

those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

v. 4b “the young women to love their husbands” (6) Wives energized by grace love their husbands.

Wives energized by grace are first of all “lovers of their husbands”.

Titus 2 woman understand that there are three specific life long priorities that make a wonderful start:

1. **Decide that you will make** your own husband your number one most important human relationship of life over all others including your parents, brothers, sisters, and friends.
2. **Start to seek your husband’s friendship** and love ahead of all other human relationships including your children.
3. **Begin examining your lifestyle**, and schedule, to see if you are intentionally “spoiling your husband rotten...” if you are doing so as a way of life, then you can be sure that you are his best friend and are truly “loving” your husband.

Wives energized by grace become a beacon of Christ's love reflecting to an empty and hopeless world that true love is possible and can be shared for as long as you live.

v. 4c “to love their children” (7) Mothers energized by grace love their children.

Mothers energized by grace are secondly “lovers of children”.

This characteristic is also one word in the Greek text, **philoteknos** and it means to be a lover of children.

From time to time it becomes so very hard to take care of children that a mom of any century in history no longer “feels” positive feelings towards her children.

So how did God instruct Paul to prepare Christ's church for these great social challenges and family pressures? Again, Titus 2 has the solution. God says that the way that tired, burned out, and depressed mothers get relief is from the faithful army of Titus 2 grace-energized role models.

The Bible clearly explains and illustrates this love that was modeled by Christ. This special **phileo** love is demonstrated by Jesus Himself. This type of close, companionship and friendship, emotional love is how Christ's relationship is described with Lazarus (John 11:3) and with “the disciple He loved” named John (John 20:2). This is also the word used in Revelation 3:19 for Christ's love for true saints in His church.

Jesus demonstrated His love to Lazarus and all who saw that friendship knew how close they were. The same was seen in Christ's closeness to the Apostle John. That is how Jesus loves us, and wants us to know He loves us, feeling His closeness, and enjoying His friendship.

And that **phileo** love that is emotional, close, and visible is what the Lord asks from grace-energized mothers towards their children.

Give The Priceless Gift of Love to Your Children²

Do your loved ones in your family *feel* your love?

Just as many husbands think that their wives admire other men more than them as they relate how, "So-and-so's husband does this and that with his children or for his wife...". Those **men do not feel the respect and admiration** of their wives.

Likewise, many wives feel that their husbands think other women are either better at caring for their husbands, prettier, or better at caring for their families than they are. Those **women do not feel the love** of their husbands.

But most importantly for Titus 2 mothers energized by grace , we need to consider that many kids hurt because they sense that their parents don't even *like* them. Some ways a lack of love can harm our child.

- A struggling student watches his parents gloat about his sister's straight A's.
- A boy strikes out in a softball game and notices his father's disappointment.
- An overweight daughter is told, "Stop snacking so much if you even *care* about your looks."

This absence of loving approval, can lead to untold pain; whereas loved ones who feel approval and love face the daily challenges in their world with eagerness and confidence. Look with me for a moment at how Paul cultivated this type of love with a needy young man named Timothy. The mighty pastor of the church at Ephesus was also a young man with many physical, and emotional needs. Paul disciplined Timothy with love that could be seen and felt.

Paul Loved his "son" Timothy

Paul loved his "son" in the faith. So as our example, how was his "love" for Timothy his "son" in the faith expressed? One of the most beautiful testimonies to the power of encouragement (or affirmation) in the New Testament is in the life of the Apostle Paul. If

² These ideas are adapted from *The Blessing* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986, Nashville) and *The Blessing Workbook* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993, Nashville) by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Ph.D.

you turn to I Timothy 1 listen as Paul explained to Timothy that he was:

- **'a true son'** (I Timothy 1:2); "To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord" (NKJV);
- he told Timothy he was **'an example to the flock'** (I Timothy 4:12) "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (NKJV);
- that he **'had a gift'** (I Timothy 4:14) "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership" NKJV and needed to **'stir it up'** (II Timothy 1:6) "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (NKJV).
- and he reminded him of his incredible spiritual heritage **'and that from a child'** (II Timothy 3:15) "and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (NKJV).
- Paul was careful to not **'belittle Timothy for his weaknesses'** (1 Timothy 5:23) "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities" (NKJV), and 'his frequent tears' (2 Timothy 1:4) "greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy" (NKJV).
- Rather, he told Timothy he had a **"treasure"** entrusted him (I Timothy 6:20) "O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—(NKJV), and that he should never stop no matter what lay ahead because he was **'gifted'** and that God was **'going to use him and reward him'** (2 Timothy 4:8) "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing (NKJV).

So Paul loved Timothy with love he could feel. Paul "affirmed" Timothy, and used tender and encouraging words to help him as his son in the faith Timothy. These exhortations were tenderly given to a struggling man.

Practice Ways to Make your Love Felt

Make sure your loved ones in your family feel your love. To help them receive and be touched by your love, we can try to use those several key ingredients that we see in Paul's ministry to Timothy. These small choices always help us to communicate affirmation and encouragement.

1. We love our children in a way that can be felt when we use meaningful touches with them.

That is what Jesus did (Mark 10:16) when he blessed the children, He was always touching those He ministered to. He could have healed them with a word, eight times in Mark alone Jesus touches those He served. So should we! The act of touch is a key to communicating warmth and affirmation. It is even essential to physical health. Be generous with your hugs.

2. We love our children in a way that can be felt when we prepare special words for them.

Remember how we saw that Paul used tender and encouraging words to help his son in the faith Timothy. He doesn't belittle him for his weaknesses and tears. We should always remember that hugs aren't enough.

Tell your children how you feel about them! Those who are left to fill in the blanks often feel worthless and insecure. At best, only confusion can come from silence. Far too many of us are really not that encouraging.

It's not that we have a critical spirit. Rather, we just say nothing. Our loved ones are not mind readers. We can do better than just expecting them to know we are in their corner, loving and admiring them silently. They need to hear it! Make an effort to catch them doing something good, right, thoughtful, considerate, well done, etc. and point it out. Highlight it! "Hey, you really handled that situation very well."

3. We love our children in a way that can be felt when we attach high value to them.

Remember what we saw in Paul, how he told Timothy he had a "treasure" entrusted him; and that he was "gifted"; and that God was "going to use him". So should we also tell the ones we love about the qualities you admire in them.

One of the best ways to do this with children is to liken them to a physical object (like calling your daughter a "pearl" or "precious jewel").

With your husband this is communicated by saying your husband is such a "wonderful dad, husband, friend" or such a "faithful leader, provider, diligent, hard working, thoughtful, etc."

With your wife this comes in the form of "you are so beautiful I think about you all day long; I can't wait to see you; I know how hard you work all day and can't wait to get home to help you; there are so many things I want to talk over with you; I'd rather spend an evening walking and talking with you than anything else even sports, friends, golf, etc."

4. We love our children in a way that can be felt when we picture a bright future for them.

Paul told Timothy about a “crown” that was awaiting him as he ran the “race” set before him; and that the Lord was going to “reward” him. So we also should express what God can do with them as they follow Him in their life.

How they can shape the lives of the children (wife), launch wonderful children into life through their faithful example (husbands), or become the greatest servant of the Lord in what ever field God has gifted them (children). Explain why you think their gifts and character traits will be useful throughout their lives. Avoid the overuse of negative admonitions; use Biblical affirmations to inspire confident dependence upon God.