

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Men of Grace:

## Incortuptibility: Guarding Against Corrosion in a Decaying World Titus 2:7

As we open our Bibles to Titus 2:7 we come to what may be one of the greatest issues confronting our culture, our world, and our church this morning. We are watching humanity "rusting" from the inside out.

I well remember my first car, it was so exciting to own my very own \$100, 1965 Oldsmobile F-85. The only trouble was that it was so rusted that it had to have large rubber mats on the passenger side so that when I went through mud and puddles of rain as I drove, it wouldn't get my passengers wet.

Can you imagine how dampening it would be, literally, to go on a date and splash, have your young lady covered with dirty water and mud or slush and salt? Rust and corrosion had eaten through the once strong and protective steel of my car. I didn't want it to, I didn't know it was happening, corrosion just worked its destructive powers quietly and unseen until the metal was perforated and the security of a waterproof interior of the car was breached.

Later we learned, living on the ocean for many years when serving in Rhode Island, that corrosion from the salt in the air was at work seen or unseen, day and night, year round, 24/7/365. Any metal, not just a car, left out and uncared for would be assaulted, penetrated, and slowly destroyed.

This morning we face an unprecedented assault upon the moral fabric of civilization, which we may describe as:

## The Corrosion of Humanity

To put it bluntly people around us, and among us, are rusting from the inside out; their souls are corroded, and slowly wasting away from the corrosive power of the sea of moral pollution they navigate each day.

Paul, guided by the Spirit of God, warns the young men of Christ's Church to be sure they are resisting, combating, protecting against, and dealing with the every present power of sin: seeking the corrosion and corruption of their souls.

Paul charges Titus to **beg** the young men (remember that gentle word that starts this final section? It is *parakaleo*).

Paul said to Titus to be sure he gently, earnestly, tenderly reminds ALL the younger men about not allowing the corrosive effects of sin to go unchecked in their hearts and minds.

Today there are many corrosive elements that surround all of us.

Each day we walk through life we are sprayed with the salt-like corrosive fog of the world that seeks to eat up the strength of our souls, corrode the framework of our spiritual lives, and decay us secretly on the inside—unseen by all but God.

The cry from God's Word to every young man here this morning is:

## **21st Century Men of Grace Need to Stay Un-Corroded**

As we open to this next word in our study of **21<sup>st</sup> Century Men of Grace**, we also come to probably the clearest example of the differences between the various translations and versions of the Bible.

In fact, if you've ever wondered the reason that I intentionally use the NKJV in my preaching, this verse is a good way to explain that conviction, by what we will see in Titus 2:7 this morning. Please stand as we read the entire passage to the younger men:

*Titus 2:6-8 (NKJV) Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, **incorruptibility**, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*

### **Pray**

Here are the top five Bible translations, in chronological order of when they were completed, that almost all of you have a copy of one this morning. Watch the Greek text being reflected in your translation:

1. (The 1611 KJV has the Greek word for "incorruptibility" both with "doctrine" and as the last word of verse 7) "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, **sincerity**<sup>1</sup>,"
2. (The 1971 NASB has a form of the word we are looking at, only with "doctrine") "in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with **purity** in doctrine, dignified,"

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<sup>1</sup> Word study of the root of this word in the Greek NT: 5351 **phtheiro** (from phthio, "perish, waste away") properly, waste away, corrupt (deteriorate); (figuratively) to cause or experience moral deterioration i.e. decomposition (break-down), due to the corrupting influence of sin. [This root (pht-) literally means "waste away" (degenerate), "moving down from a higher level (quality, status) to a lower form.] corrupt, defile, destroy. Probably strengthened from phthio (to pine or waste); properly, to shrivel or wither, i.e. To spoil (by any process) or (generally) to ruin (especially figuratively, by moral influences, to deprave) -- corrupt (self), defile, destroy. Forms of this word in the New Testament: (ephtheiramen) 1 x;(ephtheiren) 1 x;(phthare) 1 x;(phthareisontai) 1 x;(phtheirei) 1 x;(phtheiromenon) 1 x;(phtheirontai) 1 x;(phtheirusin) 1 x;(phtherei) 1 x.

3. (The 1978 NIV also has that word, only with "teaching") "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show **integrity**, seriousness."
4. (The 1982 NKJV follows the KJV using a form of the word with "doctrine" and as the last word of v. 7) "in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, **incorruptibility**," [The NKJV also footnotes this word saying the: NU-Text omits incorruptibility.]
5. (The 2001 ESV has a form of this word, only with "teaching") "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show **integrity**, dignity,"

So, we could say that all five versions have the word (or a member of the exact word family) that we are studying this morning; they just have it in different places and in a differing amount of occurrences. Look at your Bible and listen to the text as I point out the word "incorruptibility". If you have KJV it is sincerity; if you have NAS it is purity; if you have NIV it is integrity, and if you have ESV it is also integrity.

As you look down at your Bible you may ask, "What's going on here, why is that word in my Bible and not someone else's?"; or vice-versa, "Why isn't that word in my Bible and it is in yours?"

That is the whole realm of what is called the textual transmission of the original manuscripts of God's Word, and the preservation of the inspired Word of God to us.

What we know assuredly is that we HAVE God's Word, just parts of it may be in footnotes explaining a challenge the spelling, location, or repetition that word may bring with it into the text. **Bottom line: if you have one of those translations that are word-for-word translations of the Greek text, you HAVE God's Word.** So then we ask:

## Why Do Translations Differ?

Here is a thumbnail on Bible versions. There are two families of texts from which our Bibles come:

- **Western, Byzantine, or Majority Texts:** these are often mostly from the Western side of the Empire, and are more numerous, generally longer, and usually not as old (because they were from damp, musty monasteries and churches where they were attacked by moisture and mold, and so had to be recopied more frequently than other parts of the world). The other family is the:
- **Eastern, Alexandrian, or Minority Texts:** these are from the monasteries and churches of the Eastern Roman Empire (remember Rome existed as an Empire in the Eastern capitol of Constantinople until 1453), and are generally older (because the dry remote desert conditions often led to greater preservation), shorter, and fewer in number.

All modern Bible translations come from one of these two families. If I were to summarize the differences in how these manuscripts were categorized it would be:

- The shorter the better, the older the better for the Eastern or Minority Text Family.
- And for the Western or Majority Text Family: when in the majority of manuscripts, and early post-Apostolic Fathers include a word, it is retained and any concerns are footnoted.

As a Church History professor at the Masters Seminary, I studied what text the earliest recorded sermons from the years right after the Apostles, through the Fourth Century.

There were approximately seventy-six recognized Church Fathers who lived, taught the Bible, wrote what they found down on paper, and died, before 400 A.D. These men frequently quote the NT in their writings and sermons.

When closely analyzed, most quotations from these seventy-six Church Fathers are from the Majority, or Western Text Family: in fact the ratio appears to be as much as 70% Western to 30% Eastern! Dallas Seminary professor Zane Hodges (1932-2008) wrote very skillfully on this fact that marks the Majority, or Western Text.

So, the Bible to those that were closest to the time of the Apostles, and closest to those original manuscripts, appears to be the Western Text manuscripts. So that is why I preach from the NKJV, but study from them all. The NKJV will have many of the "extra" words that were excluded from the Eastern Text, but used, preached from, and taught: ***by the majority of all Bible teachers for the past 18 centuries of recorded messages from God's Word.***

**Conclusion:** First, be sure you use a word-for-word translation of the Bible, and then stick with the one you love, have studied, and grown to trust; but understand that there are slight differences between them. And secondly, since all versions are just translations from the originals, we often need to consult more than one translation to completely understand God's Word.

Now, back to the text.

## **What Does God Say About This Word Corruption?**

Let me apply just one facet of this word that is rendered by those five major translations variously as: uncorruptness, sincerity, purity, integrity, and incorruptibility. To help us zero in on what exactly this word may mean, we look at some of the other places that the Spirit of God directed that this word be used in the New Testament.

Let's start a short New Testament word study of "incorruptibility" in II Corinthians 11:3 Paul uses this word family to describe an activity of Satan trying to defile the minds of believers:

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds **may be corrupted** from the simplicity that is in Christ.

In Ephesians 4:22 where Paul again uses this word, he implies that corruption is tied to "lusts":

that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man **which grows corrupt** according to the deceitful lusts

An even more revealing usage of this word we are studying may be at the end of our Bibles as we turn onward to Revelation 19:1-2, when John writes that the Earth is corrupted (the word we are studying) by "fornication":

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! 2 For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who **corrupted** the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."

## **Porneia is Very Corrosive**

That word "fornication" in the Bible is rendered from the Greek word (4202) **porneia** (this is also the root of the English terms "pornography, pornographic"; which is derived from **pernao**, "to sell off"). That means that this word **porneia** describes a person who is involved in a selling off (or surrendering) their sexual purity; this would constitute sensuality, uncleanness, and promiscuity of any (and every) type that God's Word condemns, such as: nudity, prostitution, any sexual relationships outside of marriage, homosexual relationships, and every other form of sexual perversion.

For a moment, let me remind you how we got here, lest we all get shocked at the topics being discussed. Paul was pleading, on God's behalf, with every young man: to avoid rusting out his heart, soul, and mind. Listen again to my title for this message on this last word of Titus 2:7:

### **Incorruptibility: Guarding Against Corrosion in a Decaying World**

So, that is the lesson from this word, in this verse of God's Word. Now, what is the application?

Remember the Bible unapplied leads to lives unsanctified, defeated, and displeasing to God who gave us His Word!

What is an example of something, in today's world around each one of us, that is dangerously corrosive to the soul?

How about the number one most frequently warned of sin in every list of sins in the New Testament? What is that sin? It is the sin that Revelation 19:2 says will "corrupt" the whole earth!

That corrosive, rusting sin is any un-remedied contact with **porneia** (the Greek word) or "pornography" the English word. We can describe modern pornography as the Biblical sin of **porneia** which was:

- Looking for pleasure at nudity and sexual sin depictions;
- Reading for pleasure about sexual sins; or
- Actually participating in any form of what God's Word describes as sexual impurity.

God already knows that the whole world will be "un-repentantly pornified" by the Tribulation, that is what Revelation 9:20-21 describes when God says:

*But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not **worship demons, and idols** of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their **murders** or their **sorceries** or their **sexual immorality** or their **thefts**.*

Because of the growing darkness as we draw closer-and-closer to the end of days, Paul told Titus that he should come alongside every young man by sending older men in the faith to lovingly and gently nurture the younger men in the faith to avoid the corrosive influences that would first tarnish, then pit, and then eat away by corrosion: their pure hearts; and finally leave them rusted and displeasing to God in their defeated lives.

In modern culture, that would mean:

## **Guard Against the Corruption of Pornography**

Isn't it amazing that sometimes there are unsaved people who see things decaying in our modern culture, more clearly than some believers?

In the May 10, 2010 issue of the Wall Street Journal a person of international stature by the name of Steve Jobs (yes the iMac, iPhone, iPod inventor himself), confronted the "pornification" of America.

Listen to this analysis from both the Wall Street and an ensuing blog by Al Mohler of Southern Seminary<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> This next section has 518 words drawn from an article on a blogsite by **Albert Mohler**: Author, Speaker, and President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary entitled, "Pornography -- The Difference Being a Parent Makes". <http://www.albertmohler.com/2010/05/24/pornography-the-difference-being-a-parent-makes/>

Jobs, the Maestro of Cool at Apple, recently engaged in a most interesting email exchange with Ryan Tate, who writes the "Valleywag" blog for the gossip Web site, Gawker.

On his initial email to Steve Jobs, Tate complained about what he described as a lack of freedom in Apple's approach to the approval of products for its "App Store" for iPods, the iPhone, and the iPad. "If Dylan was 20 today, how would he feel about your company?," Tate asked. "Would he think the iPad had the faintest thing to do with 'revolution?' Revolutions are about freedom."

Apparently, Tate was upset about some of the restrictions put in place by Apple. Among those restrictions is a ban on pornography.

Steve Jobs threw Ryan Tate's definition of freedom right back at him. Is Apple about freedom? "Yep," said Jobs, "freedom from programs that steal your private data. Freedom from programs that trash your battery. Freedom from porn. Yep, freedom. The times they are a changin'."

One of the interesting dimensions of Steve Jobs' leadership at Apple is his habit of answering selected emails personally.

Steve Jobs is a businessman of unquestioned ability, a technological wizard, and one of the greatest orchestrators of "cool" in world history. Nevertheless, he has not been known as a critic of pornography . . . until now.

Furthermore, Jobs is in the computer business, and that makes his comments on pornography all the more significant. To get a sense of what that means, consider the observation made by Eric Felten in *The Wall Street Journal*<sup>3</sup>, "Apple impresario Steve Jobs is preparing to overturn one of the most basic assumptions of modern technology--that the computer business is built on pornography."

This is what makes Steve Jobs' statements so interesting and significant. Apple has created an entirely new way of thinking about digital devices and their phenomenally successful iPhone and iPod technologies — now joined by the iPad — have created an enormous market for "apps," shorthand for custom applications marketed and purchased through the company's iTunes digital store. While the Internet at large has become a vast supermarket for pornography, Apple's tight control over its "App Store" has prevented "pornification" of the apps.

The Internet is still the domain of the pornographers, and there is little chance of that changing soon. Furthermore, any device with a Web browser can still download porn. The digital world is rife with sexually explicit material, and this includes many musical and film offerings through Apple's iTunes store. Still, the "no porn" decision for the App Store is remarkable on its own.

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<sup>3</sup> Eric Felten, "[Steve Jobs In the Garden Of Good and Evil](#)," *The Wall Street Journal*, Friday, May 21, 2010.

**Application:** Paul's exhortation to younger men is widened by Peter to include us all. For a moment turn back to I Peter 2:11, here we see Peter telling us that when we are prompted by the grace of God and the Spirit of God we will choose to live like pilgrims and strangers to all the worldly lusts we are immersed in here on earth.

*1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, NKJV*

Purity is a choice, an un-corroded life is a choice we can make by God's grace and through the power of His Spirit we yield to. Peter goes on in the next chapter to explain some simple choices we can make to prevent corrosion of our souls:

The grace-prompted believer is never to allow themselves to get intoxicated by the error of the worldly; those who declare so loudly: "This world is my home and this is what I live for".

Peter explains for us the corrosion-resistant mind that God wants for us, and that Paul instructs Titus to train up in the younger men. God uses Peter to write down the exact words for five targeted exhortations in I Peter 1:13-16 (in the form of 2 imperative commands surrounded by three participles).

The NIV renders them all as commands, and that is the direction we will go this morning. The un-corroded mind is protected when governed by these truths.

**Stay UNDISTRACTED: "gird up the loins of your mind"** (NKJV) or **"Prepare your minds for action"** (NIV). In Bible times men often wore long, flowing robes. When strenuous work or running was required they would pull up and cinch into their belt that robe to make what we would call shorts. Obedience is a conscious act of the will. *We must abstain from distractions that draw us away from God.*

**Keep UNINTOXICATED: "be sober"** (NKJV) or **"Be self-controlled"** (NIV) is the same word as we saw in Titus 2:2 via the verb *nepontes* ("be sober"). This word describes a person free from every form of mental and spiritual "drunkenness" or excess; and one who resists the control of outside circumstances. *God wants to control our minds as believers.*

**Become UNRESERVED: "rest your hope fully"** (NKJV) or **"Set your hope fully"** (NIV). This guarded mind and holy life demands great determination. A believer's hope is to be set completely, unwaveringly, and without reservation solely by faith upon **God's grace**. *Only God's grace can maintain an un-corroded mind.*

**Stay UNSQUEEZED: "not conforming yourselves to"** (NKJV) or **"do not conform to"** (NIV). Here we see Peter using that famous word from Romans 12:1 (*suschematidzo* "not squeezed into the mould of") **the evil desires** of their past sinful lives. Rather **as obedient children** (lit., "children of obedience") we are to surrender to God. *If allowed God changes us into His image through His Word.*

**Keep UNCORRODED: “be holy in all your conduct”** (NKJV) or **“all you do”** (NIV). Grace-prompted living brings a denial of the old life (their former **ignorance**), and a new walk in the Spirit that is set apart to the desires and wishes of God who gave us new birth and called us to be His own.

Tonight at communion, we are going to look at Psalm 32, but before that we are going to study how the all-surrounding fog of pornography in media of every form, works to hijack our brains and make it seem nearly impossible to ever get free of it.

As we go this morning, stand with me and ask yourself: “Am I rusting away inside?” Are you getting corroded by the lusts of the flesh that swirl all around you? Young men and everyone else, God begs you to ABSTAIN from any fleshly lusts, because they WAR against your soul.

If you want to get started in purity, why not decide today that you will get started.

**Step 1:** Cry out in your heart to God for help.

**Step 2:** Decide if you need to ask for a godly older man or woman to mentor you. They will pray for you and help you with whatever you want them to help you with. Don't wait.

**Step 3:** Email me today [John.Barnett@calvarybible.org](mailto:John.Barnett@calvarybible.org) and say: “I want to be mentored in corrosion-resistance”. We will ask an elder or deacon, or godly older man or woman to contact you privately and begin to encourage your walk in godliness and away from lusts that war against our souls!

Tonight, why not give the evening to the Lord, lay aside other plans, come to communion, see how our brains have all gotten hijacked by the constant stream of what God calls **porneia** in movies, online, in some romance novels, and in myriads of other ways Satan throws at our flesh each day.

Then celebrate through communion the Miracle of Complete Forgiveness.

## For Further Study

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!

What a negative impact media has had upon an entire generation of young and older people! In effect, because of the world saturating their minds and lives:

## **To be an Un-Corroded Man: Saturate Yourself With the Word**

After you read and ponder, work on memorizing key Scriptures that can help you have greater victory over sin, and then regularly meditate upon those verses. (See Appendix A for suggestions.) **Meditate day and night!**

Joshua 1:8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.  
NKJV

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. NKJV

## **To be an Un-Corroded Man: Invite God Into Your Daily Life**

A profitable study to aid your prayer life is to look up each of the Psalm 119 verses below that contain Ezra's prayers. Thirty-eight times, with these eleven different phrases, he cried out to the Lord. The secret of his fruitful life was his choice to invite the Lord each day into every part of his life. For a rich blessing, I encourage you to meditate on each of these verses.

- Teach me (vv. 12, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135).
- Remove from me (vv. 22, 29).
- Revive me (vv. 25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159).
- Make me (vv. 27, 35, 98).
- Strengthen me (v. 28).
- Give me (vv. 34, 73, 125, 144, 169).
- Help me (v. 86).
- Save me (vv. 94, 146).
- Uphold me (vv. 116, 117).
- Redeem me (vv. 134, 154).
- Hear me (vv. 145, 149).
- Deliver me (vv. 153, 170).

This next group of verses from Psalm 119 could be considered as imperatives Ezra called out to God. These short prayers are examples of how he invited the Lord to impact and direct specific areas of his life. As you read each verse, ask the Lord to do whatever He wants to in your life, and prayerfully let the way God worked in Ezra's life become the guide for yours.

- Do not forsake me (v. 8).
- Deal ... with me (vv. 17, 124).
- Open my eyes (v. 18).
- Strengthen me (v. 28).
- Not put me to shame (v. 31).
- Incline my heart (v. 36).
- Turn away my (vv. 37, 39).
- Let or not let [me, my or to me] (vv. 10, 41, 76, 77, 79, 80, 116, 169, 170, 173, 175).
- Let [others] (vv. 78, 122, 133)
- Take not (v. 43).
- Remember ... to (v. 49).
- Be merciful to me (vv. 58, 132).
- Accept [from me] (v. 108).
- Not leave me (v. 121).
- Be surety (v. 122)—meaning “a basis of confidence or security.”
- Deal with [me] (v. 124).
- Direct [my] (v. 133).
- Make your face shine (v. 135).
- Consider (vv. 153, 159).
- Seek Your servant (v. 176).

Remember: God wants to invade every part of your heart, mind, and life. But He can only do so if you will say, “By Your grace, Lord, I purpose to *learn* Your Book, to prepare my heart to *live* Your Book, and to *lead* others in living and learning Your Word.” That is exactly what God has put you on earth to do!

What a difference a Word filled life can make! Are not your spouse, children, and family worth the little time it takes to invest in the discipline of the Scriptures to pursue a Word filled life? Is not your Lord and Savior worth *any* price to show Him how much He’s *worth* to you?