

## Godly Living Titus 2:1-10

**(Show slide 1 as soon as Bible Reading ends)**

One of the most powerful questions we can ever ask is also one of the shortest.

In fact, it's only got two words: **So what?**

It's one of those questions that takes us from the **realm of theory** to the **pitch of practice**.

That is, it allows us to move from interesting ideas that don't impact how we live to an experience of **deep and lasting change**.

I've realised that if I want **a more comfortable life as a pastor** then one of the best ways to achieve this is to stop asking the so what question in my teaching preparation.

The key is **not to stop teaching entirely** but to **stop short** of application and implication.

So yes still **hold out** the truth of God's word but **hold back** on saying what it will mean for our daily lives.

As tempting as this approach is, it's not what God has commanded pastors to do.

Look at verse 1. **Read verse 1.**

Or as some translations put it, teach what **is in accord** with sound doctrine.

That is, teach what **flows out of** and **aligns with** sound doctrine.

Let's be clear. Pastors are certainly to declare the glorious truths of who Jesus is, what he has done and what he promises to do in the future..

However, we are **not to leave it there**.

No, we are to **rub our noses** in the **so what question**.

- This is who Jesus is...so what?
- This is what Jesus has done...so what?
- This is what Jesus will do...so what?

In the opening 10 verses of **Titus chapter 2** we are presented with lots of examples of what practical life-changing Christianity looks like.

We certainly won't have time to look at all the details. However, my prayer is that all of us will leave with a clearer understanding of how following Jesus cashes out in our daily experience.

**(Change to slide 2)** As we do this, let me make **three** observations.

**First**, everything we see is **motivated** by the **grace of Jesus**.

This is us working salvation out rather than working for our salvation.

Knowing that Jesus has done everything for us and because we are secure in our **salvation status**, we have an inward keenness to trust his lordship over our activities.

**Second**, everything we see is **shaped** by the **truth of Jesus**.

The content of how we are to live will echo the attitudes and actions of Jesus. Jesus is more than an example but he is not less.

**Third**, everything we see is **possible** by the **power of Jesus**.

We don't have the natural resources but in Christ we have supernatural power. The Holy Spirit is working inside us to achieve the outcome spelled out by Jesus.

**(Change to slide 3)** For the rest of the sermon let's zoom in on the **practical examples** given in **Titus chapter 2**.

You'll notice that **different kinds of people** are highlighted in these verses.

- Older men (Vs 2)
- Older women (Vs 3-4)
- Younger women (Vs 4-5)
- Younger men (Vs 6-8)
- Slaves (Vs 9-10)

We know that **all Christians** are to grow to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, in one sense our discipleship across the ages and the sexes is the same.

However, it's also obvious that there are different challenges, temptations and opportunities that face men and women, that face different ages and stages, and that face different cultures.

All of those factors are reflected in **Titus chapter 2**.

Let me take you on **a whistle stop tour** of what is said to older men, older women, younger women, younger men and slaves.

## **First**, the older men (Vs 2)

Look at verse 2. **Read verse 2.**

Some of us have a **naive view** that as people grow older they automatically mature as godly role models for the generations to come. That's not the case at all.

As the years continue our bodies get more frail, our vulnerabilities get more exposed and our opportunities to make a difference become less. When it all becomes too hard, our real temptation is to get grumpy rather than godly, frustrated rather than being full of faith, and to give up early rather than persevere with joy until the end.

In light of this, God says to the older men, aim to be different. With the help of the Holy Spirit, resist the temptation to indulge the vices of life in an uncontrollable manner. Battle the temptation to be selfish. And run from the temptation to be a man of superficial spiritual depth.

This was particularly relevant to the older men of Crete but there are big lessons for us in Scarborough as well.

As we embrace the words of God for us then it will help us to be effective for the kingdom in this season of our lives.

## **Second**, the older women (Vs 3-4)

Look at verse 3. **Read verses 3 and 4.**

Again the issues highlighted were particularly applicable to the older women living in Crete. However, as we examine our own situations in the UK this list may strike a cord or two for some of us.

Older women are to be reverent in the way they live, not vulgar. They are to be those who know how to use their words to build up rather than tear down. Those who don't seek escape from the pain of life by indulging in multiple glasses of pinot grigio. Instead, they are to be those who are active in helping the younger generation learn the faith and live out what it means in practical ways.

None of this happens naturally as women age. You will need the powerful help of Jesus as he works by his Spirit in his heart. However, such a life is possible because of his abundant grace.

**Third**, the younger women (Vs 4-5)

Look at verse 4. **Read verses 4 and 5.**

These verses are not saying that all younger women must get married, have babies and spend all their time in their homes.

However, what is said here was imperative for the younger women in the churches of 1st century Crete to hear.

We don't know all the background details of the problems being faced by this early church. However, back in chapter 1 verse 11 we are told that there was teaching being swallowed that was **ruining whole households.**

As a response, Paul says to the younger married women that they are to be trained to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, kind and to be busy at home.

Or in short, they are **not to abandon their responsibilities** in whatever pursuit of personal self-fulfilment they are tempted to experiment with.

No, they are to trust that their place in the home as a wife, mother and home-maker is deeply honouring to God and in step with his plans and purposes.

This doesn't mean that every woman needs to pursue this way of living in God's world. However, it is worth stressing in a culture that devalues the role of mum and wife and home-maker that if this is your current situation then you are not missing out on a better life with more self-fulfilment. You may not be earning money and paying income tax but you are definitely a worker in God's kingdom.

Your task is one of the most complicated and draining there is, requiring much skill, creativity and patience. If that is you, let me encourage you to stop looking out of the window dreaming of a different future but lean into your role with faith and passion as you seek to be godly in all you do.

#### **Fourth**, the younger men (Vs 6-8)

Every day our young men feel the pressure of many internal desires and are confused by how they should respond. Is it best to act on impulse and experiment with options until they discover what is best? Or should they seek to master their passions so they are not being driven along by the strongest emotion of the moment?

Look at verse 6. **Read verse 6.**

This is a timely word for the young men of **our church** and **our culture**.

With the help of God's Holy Spirit, be self-controlled.

Do not be a slave to your contradictory passions. No, learn how to **control** and **channel** what you say and what you do.

The result will be a godly life that is attractive to others and useful in the kingdom of God..

**Fifth**, the slaves (Vs 9-10)

Look at verse 9. **Read verses 9 and 10.**

Being a **slave** in the **ancient world** wasn't identical to being an **employee** in the **modern world**. Although, maybe it does feel like that in your workplace!

However, even though the situations are not the same, surely there are key lessons that we can still learn from what is said in these verses.

- Try to please them
- Do not talk back to them
- Do not steal from them
- Show that you can be fully trusted

All this will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.

It's not that by itself the teaching about Christ is less than inspiring. No, it's that by our conduct we can tarnish the reputation of Jesus.

However, as we seek to live godly lives we can show the world that following Jesus transforms us in ways that make us a positive difference to those around us.

## **In Conclusion**

**(Change to slide 4)** Many of us have been taught how to drive by a driving instructor. In order to pass our test we need to do two things.

**First**, we need to listen to the instructions of the one who knows best.. **Second**, we need to put them into practice.

**The same is true in the Christian life.** We need help from the God who knows best. This often comes when we are brave enough to ask the **so what question**.

However, that's only half the story. As well as listening to what flows out of sound doctrine, we need to **embrace** what we hear.

Here's the good news. This is **possible** because of the **power** and the **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Let's pray.**