

# Titus Chapter Two (vv.1-5)

## The Practice of Good Works – In the Home [vv.1-10]

- Both Titus 2 and Titus 3 follow the same pattern. First, Paul describes the kind of conduct which is produced by sound doctrine, then expounds the power of the gospel to produce such a marked change of lifestyle. In other words, ‘how’ believers should behave, and ‘why’ they are to behave in that way.
- The good works in Titus 2.1-10 are focussed on an ordered life in the *home* – where the false teachers had done much damage (cf. 1.11). The good works of Titus 3.1-2 are focussed on an ordered life in *society*.
- Good works produced by believers are set in contrast to the false teachers who have an inconsistent profession – they are unfit for any good deed (1.16). In works they deny (contradict) the God they profess to know.
- Good behaviour has three objectives indicated by the word “that”. 1. That the word of God is not brought into disrepute (v.5). 2. That the opponents may be silenced (v.8). 3. That God is glorified (v.10).
- In a climate of so much religious *talk* it was necessary to *walk* the real character of the Christian faith.
- The chapter is framed by direct charges to Titus to ‘speak’ (2.1, 15). The present tense implies he is to continue to speak what is spiritually healthy (the word of God) despite potential opposition.

## An Exhortation to Titus [v.1]

**v.1. But speak** [*laleō*] \***thou**\* (emphatic) sets Titus in contrast with the false teachers. They are ‘windbags’ speaking what is vacuous, deceptive and empty (1.10). By comparison, Titus is to *repeatedly* speak – in the sense of teach – the **things which become** sound doctrine. The word “become” [*prepō*] means ‘what is becoming’ (seemly), thus fitting or appropriate. So, Titus was to teach the kind of practical behaviour that was in accord with the gospel, i.e. sound doctrine. It seems as if Cretan society was so morally bankrupt, they did not appreciate what true Christian conduct looked like.

“The” **sound** [*hygiainō*] **doctrine** refers to a definite and distinct body of truth, no doubt the apostolic instruction (teaching) mentioned in 1.9. *Hygiainō* describes that which is healthy – whether physical (Luke 7.10) or spiritual. John Kitchen says, “Here ‘sound doctrine’ stands in contrast to the ‘Jewish myths and commandments of men’ (1.14) which are espoused by the false teachers. They are defiling (1.15-16), while ‘sound doctrine’ brings holiness and health.” In 1.9, the word order in Greek is ‘the doctrine that is sound’. Here, the order is ‘the sound doctrine’. In 1.9, the emphasis is on the *content* of the truth. Here, the emphasis is the *consequence* of the truth – it produces healthy living.

## Aged Men [v.2]

**v.2.** The household of God is one large Christian family comprised of different individuals and generations in happy and harmonious relation. Every assembly needs the maturity and experience of advanced years, blending with the vigour and energy of youth. Given the categories that are listed here, clearly *every* individual belonging to the fellowship of that household has an important contribution to the effective testimony of the assembly. In summary, and according to John Riddle, old men are marked by *dignity*; old women by *decorum*; young women by *devotion* and young men by *discipline*.

The word translated **aged men** [*presbytēs*] is used in Scripture to refer to Zacharias (Luke 1.18) and Paul (Philemon v.9). It refers to those of older physical age and maturity. It is difficult to be precise about the specific age intended. The ancients divided life into various stages of age, and did not always agree with one another on those stages. When Paul described himself as “aged” in Philemon, he was in his late 50s (perhaps 56). For Hippocrates, *presbytēs* referred to anyone above the age of 50, whilst Philo used it to describe a man over 56. In any case, as far as John Wesley was concerned, age is but a number. At the age of 83 – after having travelled some 250,000 miles on horseback, preached more than 40,000 sermons, and produced some 200 books and pamphlets – he regretted that he was unable to read and write for more than 15 hours a day without his eyes becoming too tired to work. After his 86th birthday, he admitted to an increasing tendency to lie in bed until 5:30 in the morning! Godly, older saints are to be cherished by any assembly. Leviticus 19.32 says, “You must stand up in the presence of the aged, honour the presence of an elder.”

Fitting behaviour for aged men begins with being **sober** [*nēphalios*]. The word is elsewhere translated ‘vigilant’ (1 Timothy 3.2) and literally means ‘free from intoxication’ with a wider metaphorical meaning of ‘clear headed’. It is a state of mind which is free from the excessive influence of passion or emotion – not given to extremes of behaviour. MacArthur says, “a sober person avoids extravagance and over-indulgence. The sober older man can discern more clearly which things are of the greatest importance and value.” The word **grave** [*semnos*] means ‘worthy of respect’, but in a list of qualities describing character, the better translation here is ‘dignified’ [NET]. William Barclay says, “It does not describe the appearance and manner of a person who is a gloomy killjoy, but the conduct of someone aware of living in the light of eternity.” The dignified older brother is never frivolous, trivial or superficial (MacArthur).

Aged men are also **temperate** [*sōphrōn*], the same word translated as ‘sober’ (1.8). This describes a person who has a disciplined, healthy mind and is characterised by self-control. He is balanced in his judgments (rational) and not prone to sudden unpredictable impulses. Note that with both the aged men, young women and young men, reference is made to the same word group associated with the *mind*. This is critical because the world will attempt to mould our thinking (and therefore behaviour) according to its value system. Instead, we should think according to the word of God (Romans 12.2).

Finally, the aged men are to be **sound** [*hygiainō*], which is applied here to *character* rather than doctrine (cf. v.1). Hiebert says, “The definite article with each of the three nouns in the Greek makes them definite and distinct, apparently carrying a possessive force, ‘their faith, their love, their endurance.’” Thus, the aged men are to be **sound in their faith** referring, not to the objective body of Christian truth, but a healthy personal trust in the Lord. Their experiences of God through passing years have taught these men to increasingly trust Him. They must also be healthy in **charity** [*agapē*], having warm regard for, and interest in, others. The passing years can foster a spirit of criticism and fault-finding which should be overcome with tolerance and understanding. Finally, they are healthy in **patience** [*hupomenō*], graciously enduring and bravely bearing the trials and afflictions of life. Adam Thropay says, “healthy patience is not frustrated by circumstances. Instead, the person is able to remain happy and confident in God during testing.”

### Aged Women [v.3]

**v.3.** According to the Greek physician Hippocrates, **aged women** included those who were 50 years of age and above. According to Philo, and Paul’s comment in 1 Timothy 5.9, the age when one became ‘old’ was 60. The aged women **likewise** (as the aged men) were to live in such a way as to commend the gospel (sound doctrine). They were to exhibit **behaviour** (a settled deportment) fitting for those who are **holy** [*hierō*] – a word derived from *hieron*, meaning ‘a sacred place’ like the temple. In other words, older sisters are to carry into daily life the demeanour of priestesses in a temple, i.e. reverence, of which Anna is an excellent example! Luke 2.37, “She had lived as a widow... for eighty-four years. She never left the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day” [NET]. The word “behaviour” suggests an outward deportment that is indicative of an inward state of mind – these older sisters do not compartmentalise life but live as if each and every part of their day was a sacred assembly. William Barclay aptly comments, “If it was always remembered that we are engaged in sacred things. Much of the embittered argument and the touchiness and the intolerance which all too frequently characterise church activities would vanish overnight.”

The ‘fitting behaviour of holiness’ is delineated by two negative statements and one positive statement. In summary, the exhortation is to grow old gracefully and with dignity. They are **not to be false accusers** [*diabolos*], a word used 34 times of the devil – slander is a diabolical habit, advancing the cause of the devil himself. The word means to ‘be given to finding fault with others’, spreading criticism and malicious gossip (whether true or untrue) designed to injure the reputation of others. The exhortation to control the tongue is especially directed toward women, whether the wives of elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3.11) or young widows (1 Timothy 5.13). John Calvin said, “Talkativeness is a disease among women and old age usually makes it worse.” Aged women are also **not to be given** [*douloō*] **to much wine** – the word *douloō* signifying enslavement or servitude (addiction), a much stronger expression than the corresponding phrase in 1 Timothy 3.8. Ancient inscriptions in Crete list heavy drinking as a virtue. Aged Christian women were therefore not to be self-indulgent but show disciplined control of both her tongue and her appetite. Positively, aged sisters should be **teachers of good things** – instructors in what is noble, excellent, and spiritually attractive (see examples in vv.4-5). The word “teachers” does not refer to an official or formal teaching position in the assembly, and certainly not a women’s conference! Rather the thought is of informal counsel and advice given in the home – by both word and example.

### Young Women [vv.4-5]

**v.4.** The purpose of such instruction from the older sisters is to train the younger sisters. Newberry literally renders the start of this verse as, “that they may school the young [women] to be lovers of [their] husbands...” Likewise, the NET translation is, “In this way they will train the younger women to love their husbands...” The phrase **to be sober** [AV] is not so much a character trait to be displayed by the young sisters, but the *result* of the godly example and instruction of older sisters – they are schooled to think correctly [*sōphronizō*] as to appropriate Christian behaviour for a young woman and wife. They are brought to their correct spiritual senses, likely a far cry from the societal norms of Crete. The young sisters must **love their husbands** [*philandros*]. In Crete, marriages would typically have been arranged, and therefore love was something to be acquired. MacArthur says, “If a wife does not truly love her husband, she must, in obedience to the Lord, train herself to love him.” The word *philandros* describes devoted, affectionate love with warm emotional attachment, fondness, and companionship. Likewise, young women must **love their children**, involving the same level of warmth and affection as to her husband. The work of a Christian wife and mother is selfless, prioritising her husband and children in her affections and care. She seeks to promote their welfare above her own. Her priority will be their spiritual development, just as Timothy was taught the Scriptures from his earliest days by his mother and grandmother. Part of a mother’s love

for her children involves firm and fair discipline (cf. Hebrews 12.6). Children need and appreciate firm boundaries for “the rod and reproof give wisdom: But a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Proverbs 29.15).

**v.5.** As to her own character, she must be **discreet** [*sōphrōn*], the third use of the word in Titus (1.8; 2.2) – self-controlled, prudent and balanced in her judgments. She will avoid extremes of behaviour and be responsible in her actions. The next word **chaste** [*hagnos*] describes her moral and sexual purity being faithful to only one man, her husband. The word is broad and involves avoiding impurity in thought, word and action – both in behaviour and dress. Returning to her responsibilities in the home, she is to be a **keeper at home**, safeguarding its affairs. There is a discrepancy here between the majority text (KJV) and the critical text used by most modern translations. The difference is explained by Kitchen, “Such women are to be ‘workers at home’ (οἰκουροῦς). This is the more difficult and more likely reading, rather than οἰκουρός (‘keepers at home,’ KJV).” Whichever reading is followed, the emphasis is that the first responsibility and absorbing interest of young wives is the duties of the home. This is her vocation – her divine service for the glory of God. In 1 Timothy 5.14, Paul says younger sisters should “guide the house” – she is the household manager and administrator. Whilst the Bible does not confine women to their homes – the virtuous woman pursued endeavours outside the home for the good of her husband and children (Proverbs 31.16) – she will never pursue a career to the detriment of the family unit. Daniel Akin well says, “Paul isn’t so much defining the only place a wife and mother can work as he is defining the home as the number one workplace... the first priority for her energy and work. Being busy at home is not a drudgery; it is a delight. Pouring her life into her children is not domestic slavery; it is a blessed divine calling.”

The sixth quality is **good** [*agathos*] or kind. Though household responsibilities will be particularly demanding, she must resist the temptation to be irritable and harsh. *Agathos* points to what is virtuous (good) in character resulting in actions that are beneficial or helpful to others. Finally, young women must be **obedient** [*hypotassō*] **to their own husbands**, a word that is generally translated ‘subjection’ or ‘submission’. Divine order is built on the principle of subjection. In society, believers are to be subject to governing authorities (Romans 13.1); in the home, wives are to be subject to husbands (Colossians 3.18; Ephesians 5.24) as children are subject to parents (cf. Luke 2.51). There is subjection in the assembly too, as females are subject to the headship of the males (1 Corinthians 11.3). *Hypotassō* literally means ‘to arrange under’ and was used to describe marshalling soldiers in military order under a commanding officer. It does not imply inferiority or inequality. In summary, submission is the willing recognition and support of divinely ordained leadership (headship). This involves obedience, but is not a fearful, slavish or passive servitude. It is an active partnership. Daniel Akin says, “Submission means to yield in one’s will to the leadership and direction of another. Contrary to popular misconceptions, there is no inferiority in submissiveness. Indeed, unless a husband asks his wife to do something that is unbiblical, illegal, immoral, or unethical, she is to follow his leadership. By doing this she will honour God and his word.” The *middle voice* shows this is a voluntary and personal choice which becomes an abiding attitude (present tense).

The concluding purpose clause of these seven distinct demands is **that the word of God be not blasphemed** – slandered, in the sense of being dishonoured and discredited. Any and every departure in behaviour from the word of God provides grounds for unbelievers to scorn the gospel. This is set in contrast to the word to servants who are to “adorn” (beautify) and bring credit to the gospel by the commendable way they behave (see v.10).