

## Older Women & Younger Women

Titus 2:3-5

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, April 28, 2019

Please turn in your Bibles to the book of Titus. And as you're doing that, Titus was written by a man who was encouraged. It was written by a man who saw the Lord do wonderful things in his life, and the man's name was given in the first few verses of the book. So, if you look in Titus chapter 1:1, it tells you who wrote it.

It starts off and says, "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ." The first verse says, this book was written by a man named Paul. 13 letters in the Bible start out that way. They all begin with that name. And Paul was not being egotistical when he did that. He wasn't trying to brag on himself. That was just the way the ancients signed their letters. They signed them at the front of the letter, whereas we do it at the end.

But as he wrote these letters, his writings accounted for 28% of the New Testament. One out of every three words in the New Testament was written by the Apostle Paul, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ. He had a huge impact on the church. He left an indelible legacy for us today. Some say he was the greatest figure behind Jesus Himself. He's the most well-known person, potentially in the Bible.

But the greatest impact Paul had, as many of you know, is in the area of church planting. The greatest work he did was to start new churches. From what we can tell, Paul planted close to a dozen churches in the New Testament, which is just staggering if you think about it. You guys are in the process of planting a church here, and it's hard work, isn't it - just to do one church. He did 12 or more that we know of.

The book of Acts says that he started churches in Galicia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Corinth, and Thessalonica. He started other churches in Iconium, Lystra, Antioch, Cypress, Berea and Athens, often being beaten in between the churches, often spending time in jail. Some of those churches were started from a jail cell. You imagine telling that story to your grandkids. "Well, this church started in that jail over there." And there could have been more churches. We don't know all of them. Acts doesn't mention them all.

And I would add to you that he did this while traveling some 10,000 miles through three continents - Europe, Africa, and Asia. If you look in a map, Israel is right in the middle of three continents, so Paul just crisscrossed from one to the other.

He also did it while working a full time job. Some of you know how hard it is to work a full time job. Paul was a tent maker. He did this while making tents for a living full time.

He also did it without the means of modern technology, which is also incredible. He didn't have emails, he didn't have text messages. I don't even know how you would plant a church without text messages. I am a text messaging machine throughout the day, I feel like. He rode camels and donkeys everywhere he went.

One author named Roland Allen sums up Paul's success like this. He said,

In little more than 10 years, Paul established the church in four provinces of the Empire: Galicia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia. Before AD 47, there were no churches in these provinces. In AD 57, Paul could speak as if his work there was done. He was not only the foremost preacher of Christianity in the world of his day, but he was also a pioneer missionary and planter of churches. Nothing can detract from his achievement as the Gentiles' Apostle par excellence.

And you really get a taste of this and the book of Titus. That's why I just mentioned all that to you. If you're joining us for the first time this morning, we're in the middle of a series on the book of Titus called the "How to Plant a Church" series because that's what the book is about. It tells us how to plant a church and it does it from the lips of the greatest church planner of all time; the Apostle Paul.

And here's some of the advice he gives us for planting a church in Titus 2:11-12, if you want to read that with me - read it to you a moment ago. But here's some of his church planting advice. In Titus 2:11, he says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age." I'll tell you how that passage ties into the rest of the book in a moment, but Paul says right here in the middle of his letter that the church is planted by the grace of God. That's how it's done. It's planted by God's mercy, "for God's grace has appeared bringing salvation to all men." It means it's appeared for the first time in this way. God's grace had already appeared in the Old Testament. The Jews knew about the grace of God, but they didn't know about it like this. Jesus revealed God's grace in a way that had never been seen before. And Paul says, "You can go out now and tell people about this grace and you can plant churches."

If you've read through the book of Acts before or some other of Paul's letters, you might think that this was all about Paul because he worked so hard. I mean, the guy was like a machine. One of my favourite stories is when he got stoned so badly that the Jews thought he was dead. Do you remember that story? And what does it say? He got back up and went right back into the town he came from and kept preaching. Now, I don't know about you, but that seems kind of dense to me. I mean, if I just got beat, I would go to the next town. Paul went right back. And you read about those kinds of stories and you think this is all about Paul, Paul, Paul. Paul says here, it wasn't all about him. This was about the grace of God. "For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men." "That's why I did this," he said. That's what it was all about; God's grace.

Hudson Taylor was a famous church planter in China in the 1800s. If you ever get a chance to read the book, "Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret", I really encourage you to do that. It's a wonderful book about his life and the ministry he had in China. But when he first moved to the country, there were no churches to speak of. I mean, Christianity was almost unheard of. But when he died, there were churches in every province of the country and there were tens of thousands of Christians and his mission - the China Inland Mission had sent out hundreds of missionaries by the time he died.

And at one point in his life, someone asked him, they said, “Hudson Taylor, aren't you tempted to be proud of all this? Aren't you tempted to be puffed up because you've been so successful?” And he said these words, he says, “No, but on the contrary, I often think, God must've been looking for someone small enough to use until He found me.” He said, this was all by God's grace. This was all by His mercy. God wants to use the little people, not the big ones. He wants to be glorified in the weak, not the strong. And that's what Paul is saying here. He says, “In all my success, in all my labours, in all the churches I've planted, God did it all. I've done nothing,” which is what we're going to talk about this morning.

I told you before that the outline for the book of Titus is very simple at the end of the day. It's about leadership and then living. That's the outline for Titus. Chapter 1 talks about leadership, the kind of leaders you want in the church. And if you remember from the couple of months ago, we went through that as we looked at the qualifications of an elder. And we looked at Titus 1:5, where it says, “For this reason, I left you in Crete that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city.” And we talked about what that looks like, setting things in order in the church.

And then in chapter 2, Paul talks about living or the way we're all to live as Christians. I appreciate your patience in chapter 1, but some of you might have wondered as we went through that, when are we going to stop talking about elders? When are we going to stop talking about leadership? Well, chapter 2 is when we stopped doing that. Now we get into the lives of everyone else. And Paul says, “You can live the Christian life by His grace. You can live the way God wants you to live as a Christian with His help. You don't do it alone. God is with you.”

And you see this several ways in the chapter as Paul lists several groups of people that the grace of God impacts. You see it with the older men in verse 2 of chapter 2. There, Paul writes, “Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love and in perseverance.” And the idea tying verse 2 into the end of the chapter in verse 11, is that older men can do this by His grace. That's the idea of the chapter. They can be all of these things with the help of God. They don't have to do it alone. God is with them.

You see it with the younger men in verse 6 as well, where it says, “Likewise, urge the young men to be sensible.” That's kind of interesting. There's only one command for the younger men there because they have a short attention span (just kidding). I'm a young man, so I can say that, I feel like. Some of the young men are saying, “Huh, what? What's he talking about?” But Paul tells them to be sensible, be reasonable, level headed. And the idea is the grace of God can help young men do that.

And this is really interesting because right in between those two groups of people, the old men and the young men, you see a whole section on how the grace of God impacts the women of the church. It doesn't leave them out. God's grace impacts the women as well. If you look in verses 3 through 5, Paul says this, he says,

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at

home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

I mention to you that this is interesting that there is a section on women right in between two sections on men. The reason I say this is because nobody would have put this in here like this in the first century. Nobody would've put a section on women in between two sections on men because the ancient world had a very low view of women. They didn't believe in the equality of the sexes yet. They thought women were not worthy of this honour.

As a matter of fact, in a lot of ancient documents, what you would see is you would see a list of rules for the woman in the home and there'd be none for the men. Men could do whatever they wanted. They could even potentially maybe even murder their wives if they wanted to and nobody would have thought twice about it. Just to show you what I mean, let me give you some quotes from some sources around this time on the issue of the role of women in ancient society and how the people viewed them. I want to do this because I hear a lot of people today say things like, "Well, the Bible just has the ancient cultures view of women." Let me read some of what the ancient culture said about that and you can come to your own conclusions.

The Greek philosopher Demosthenes writing before Paul in the fourth century BC summed up his views on women this way. (This is a view of a philosopher. This is an enlightened person.) He said, "We have harlots for the sake of pleasure. We have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation. And we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately and being faithful guardians of our household affairs." And he said, "And that's it." That's what women in his view are good for. The highest role of women is to have children and that's it. They don't do anything else. That is a philosopher writing from around this time. That is someone in an institution of higher learning.

And as you move forward in ancient history, it doesn't get much better because in the first century, moving a little ahead here, in the first century, a Jewish author named Josephus said, "The woman, the law says, is in all things inferior to man." That was a contemporary of Paul. That was someone writing at the same time as the book of Titus. And he says, women are inferior to men.

The last one here I want to quote to you is from the Gospel of Thomas. It was an apocryphal book written in the second century AD. So, it was after the book of Titus. This is even more modern than this book. And it says this, it said, "Let Mary Jesus' mother go out from us because women are not worthy of life." The Gospel of Thomas says, "Jesus said, 'See, I shall lead her so that I will make her male, that she too may become a living spirit resembling other males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.'" Isn't that terrible? It's funny that you will find some feminist authors promoting apocryphal books. I don't know if they've ever even read them before, because that's demeaning.

And I read all that to you to say, this is so interesting that Paul would put this passage right in between two lists of instructions for men. In his mind, it's like there's no huge gap. Men and women have the same standing before God. Galatians 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in

Christ Jesus.” It doesn't mean that there's not different roles for men and women. It just means that in Christ, we are all the same. Those were the greatest barriers anyone knew of in the ancient world - Jew and Greek or Gentile, slave and free, male and female. And Paul says all the barriers drop when it comes to our standing before God. We're all one in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:14 says, “For He Himself is our peace, (Christ is our peace) who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.” That's what you read here in Titus chapter 2 - Christ and broke the barrier and the dividing wall between us, so that we have the same standing before God even though we have different roles. And we're going to talk about that this morning in Titus chapter 2.

So, if you're taking notes, in Titus 2:3–5, I want you to see how the grace of God impacts two types of people in the church; the older women and the younger women. That's our passage for today, that's what we're talking about. In Titus 2:3-5, here's how the grace of God impacts two of people or people in two different stages of life. And we're going to talk about how it impacts the older women and the younger women. Those are the two groups that Paul mentions here. He talks about the older men, then he talks about these two groups before going into the younger men. And the first group we'll look at this morning is the older women of the church. Paul begins by addressing the older women. He has just addressed the older men in verse 2 and given them some instructions; given them four instructions particularly. And now, he does the same thing for the women.

And we might say that like it was with the men, it's impossible to describe the impact older women have had over the church, amen? We've all been blessed by the ministry of people in this category. It's been said that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. And it's so true. I can think right now, I gave my son my Bible that was given to me when I was eight-years-old. And on the inside cover, on the inside on the back, I had a bunch of people sign it from my church. They probably thought I was nuts. I just thought it was cool to have a bunch of signatures in my Bible. And so many of them are from the older women in the church that blessed me as a young man. They taught me in Sunday school, they did the flannel graph. Some of you guys remember the inspired flannel graphs that we had growing up. The Lord inspired those. When revival comes, they will come ... I'm just kidding.

And so, that's what Paul talks about here. If you read in verses 1 through 4, let me just read some of this again to you. In verse 1, Paul says,

1 But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. 2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and in perseverance. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the younger women.

Just to give you some context for this and walk you through a little bit of this passage, Paul starts off in verse 1 by telling Titus to speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. The word “sound” there means “healthy” or “wholesome”. And the idea is that Paul tells him to teach things which are for the health of the church, that are good for the church. Which is why he ends the chapter talking about grace, because grace is the healthiest thing you could talk about.

But he doesn't stop there. He also gives us some guidance and practical instruction. Paul says, "Speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine," then he goes into some practical things for older men, and then he addresses the older women in verse 3. There's actually a connection between these two groups of people because the term for "older women" here is *presbytis* in Greek, and the term for older men is *presbyteres*. You can just hear the common word there. They're counterparts, come from the same group. Because in both of them, it refers to people who are somewhere in their 60's or above. It's not a term that really has a definite age to it. It's kind of the phase of life when your children are grown and out of the house. That's just kind of the phase of life he's describing here. We would call them, I think the term is "empty nesters" today. People in the golden years.

And Paul says, at this stage of life, the women should do several things. They should work on several areas of their life, and you could follow along in this passage. He says, "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior." The word "reverent" there is *katasteima* in Greek, which means "priest-like" or "holy". Older women are to be holy in their behaviour like a priest. Not in a dour, gloomy sort of way, but in a serious way. They should be serious about their faith, serious about their walk with the Lord. Specifically, if you notice in the verse, it says, they should be serious about their behaviour because that is what will have the most impact on others. They shouldn't be about talk, talk, talk all the time. They should be about their actions.

I remember reading a story some time ago about an older woman who wanted to reach her husband for the Lord. And so, every time he came home from work, she had her Bible open and she preached the sermon to him. And then in the morning when he woke up, she had a sermon blaring on the radio. And as you know, that did not go over too well. Paul says, focus on behaviour.

Leading us to the next thing he says here, and that is that older women should not be malicious gossips. They shouldn't talk maliciously or with an evil intent toward people to cut them down. Younger women look up to them. A lot of people in the church look up to them and they shouldn't use their words to hurt people.

It also says they should not be enslaved to much wine, which is the next one he mentions here. They shouldn't use their newfound freedom with the kids out of the house to indulge in vices. Whether it's alcohol or something else.

I saw a statistic that said that one in four women right now in Canada are addicted to some type of psychotropic drug, antidepressant, anti-anxiety. And many of them are in this stage of life because they found themselves with lots of time on their hands and they don't know what to do with it. They're an empty nester, kids are gone from the home, husband's gone at work and they don't know what to do with their time, and so they indulge in vices. Paul says here, Christian should not do that, whatever it is. The new found freedom should be used for other things.

Which leads to one more instruction for the older women in this passage that Paul gives us here. And that is that they should be teaching what is good so that they may encourage the young women. The reason, the whole reason older women should do these things, be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, not enslaved to much wine, is so they can teach younger women

what is good and encourage them. They should do it for their sake. There's a selfless principle here. They're not doing it so they could be better people and they could live a better life. They're doing it to encourage the younger ones.

The word “encourage” here is important because it sets the tone for this. It means older women shouldn't come into a younger woman's home and say, “Wrong, wrong, wrong. You're doing it all wrong. What a terrible mother you are. What a terrible wife you are.” That's not the point of this. We could say it this way, if women's ministries discourage the younger women in the church, that ministry needs to be reevaluated. They shouldn't walk around with a clipboard making notes about all the mistakes. “House is neat and tidy today – check. The children are well behaved and happy today and smell tolerably or alright – check. Dinner's on the table at six - check.” That's not the point here. Older women should encourage the younger women. They should build him up in the faith.

Friends, you got to be able to tell people, you got to be able to disciple people and let them walk away not feeling deflated. That's ministry. If every time somebody meets with you in your home or whether you're working with him and they're crawling on the floor because you've beat them to a pulp, you're doing it wrong. Ministry is supposed to be encouraging. You fan the flames of what the Lord is doing in people's life. That's what ministry is about. You don't snuff them out.

And we're going to talk about the younger woman here in a moment. But let me just say here that no one can help the younger women in the church like the older women. Nobody can reach them and bless them and come alongside them and encourage them like they can because they know what they're going through. They've walked a mile in their shoes. They know what it's like to build a home and raise a family and be a wife and a mom. They know what it's like to wake up in the middle of the night and calm a crying baby or a crying husband. Just let that sit for a minute. You guys can talk amongst yourselves.

They know what it's like to have the “mom brain.” I've heard about that some. Go around in a fog because you have so much to do and so many little people calling for your attention. And so, Paul says that one primary role for an older woman in the church (and there's other ones), but one primary role is to teach and encourage the younger one. Come alongside them and be a blessing.

But all this is to say God has a place for women in the church. He has a place for them to serve. Society in the first century may have left them behind, but God hasn't done that. The culture may have looked at them as inferior and less important than men, but God would disagree. There's lots of ways for women, particularly older women, to serve in the church. Paul gives us just a few here. But as I was putting the sermon together, I thought of some other ones. There's all sorts of ways older women can serve. They can teach other women in the church. Not just the younger women, but they can teach other women.

First Timothy 2:12 says, “I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man.” So women can't do that. They can't teach men in the church, but that doesn't mean they can't teach anybody. It doesn't mean they can't teach other women, teach the children. They can also counsel other women. They can help them with their problems. There's a great need in the church

today for women counselors. There's a great need for other ladies to come alongside and pour into the lives of other women. As you know, it's not always easy for men to do that. That can be a little tricky, but women can do that very well. They're perfectly suited for the task. They can visit the sick, go see shut-ins and those in the hospital. They can pray, they can evangelize, they can weep with those who weep in funerals. A lot of our ladies in the church, when a funeral comes along, they make meals, they prepare things like that. They can go to the mission field, sing on the worship team, the list is endless. There is no end to the things that older women can do for the Lord in the church.

I might want to mention because this is interesting, the early church was a great example of this. Because when the church first started in the first century, the majority of those who joined it were women. Women and slaves, because those were the ones society had rejected. The first century threw them to the side, and so they were the ones the Gospel appealed to the most. And so they joined the church in droves. They flooded it.

And one of the things they did early on is to go through the streets and highways outside of town, looking for abandoned children to take in. The Romans could not abort their babies because they didn't have the technology to do that. So, they came up with just a horrible thing, they would leave babies on the side of the road for animals to eat or for other people to pick up. When they didn't want them, they literally gave birth to them and threw them away. So, oftentimes the girl babies would be picked up and turned into prostitutes. The male babies would be picked up and turned into slaves or maybe gladiators or something like that. They would be fed to the animals in the coliseum. And the Christian women in the first century, particularly the older ones, would go through the streets picking up these children and taking them home and adopting them. It's where the concept of an orphanage started.

I don't know if you know that or not, but that's a Christian idea. The church started the orphanage. It's also where things like hospitals came from. The church invented that too. The reason you still, even today, you see crosses and Christian emblems on hospitals is because we were the first ones to come up with that. But Christian women did that because it was their service to the Lord. It was their way to honour Him. Jesus saved them and now they wanted to save children from the streets. Jesus cared about them when no one else did, when society had thrown them away and they wanted to do the same thing for others. In fact, they did such a good job of this, that one pagan said, "What women these Christians have, they're amazing. They put our Roman women to shame." Another one named Celsius said, "If you want to learn the truth, don't go to the men in the universities, go to the women and listen to them teach the children, and there you will learn about this thing called Christianity."

But the point I'm making here is that women have had a huge impact on the church. I could give you the names of several famous women in the Bible. You'd see what I mean. Women like Sarah and Rachel and Rahab. Women like Ruth and Naomi and Hannah. Women like Mary and the woman at the well and Lydia, the seller of purple. And Phoebe who delivered Paul's letter to the Romans. I love that story because that letter was just massive. We've talked about that before. And you can imagine - I just imagined her as this petite little thing, carrying this ginormous 20, 30, 40-pound letter beside her on the ship. Women were at the cross when the Lord died. They were the first ones at the empty tomb. One reason we know the story of the empty tomb was true



is because in the first century, women were not allowed to testify in court. And so, for an author to say that women were the first ones at the tomb, nobody would have made that up. They were in the upper room when the apostles prayed and the Holy Spirit came down. Many of the first churches were started in the homes of women. Make no mistake, the church would not be what it is today if it were not for the ladies who were in it.

One of the ladies we could talk about, has been used in the church in modern history is Amy Carmichael. I don't know if you've heard of Amy Carmichael before, but she was born in Ireland in 1867 to a wealthy farmer who lost all he had when his business failed, so that she grew up poor with very little to live on. But after coming to faith in Christ, she went to India as a missionary where she stayed for 55 years, never leaving the country, taking in orphan girls who would have otherwise been thrown out on the street. At one point in her ministry, she was housing 100 of them almost by herself. She had some help. The people of India started calling her "amaa" or "mother". And they called her "the little rabbit" because she would bounce from girl to girl to girl all day taking care of them. She said, "I cut the toenails of a thousand orphans in India and it was my pleasure to do it. It was my service to God."

And that's the point of this passage. No matter who you are, no matter what state of life you're in, you can still serve the Lord and do something for Him. Whether it's cutting toenails or doing all these other things we've talked about, there is something for all of us to do in the church. Which leads us to a second group that's impacted by the grace of God in this passage. The first one is the older women in the church. Those who are past the age of raising children. Paul says there is so much they can do. God is not through with them yet. It brings us to the second group that's impacted by the grace of God here, and that is the younger women in the church. First, Paul tells us how the grace of God impacts the older women. Second, he tells us how it impacts the younger women as well.

There's probably no group of people - maybe aside from the younger men. But there's probably no group of people in the church that's being hit harder today than the younger women by the world. They are fed lies on a daily basis. One of the lies that they're being fed is that you can't be a true woman if you don't have a career outside the home. There was a statistic done that in the 1950s and Canada, only 25% of all women worked outside the home. But in 1990, just 40 years later, the number jumped up to 75% with many of them working fulltime jobs, which is not wrong. Let me just say that. It's not wrong for a woman to work outside the home. The excellent wife in Proverbs did that. Remember? She bought and sold the field. She made cloths and things like that and engaged in business. Lydia, the seller of purple did that in the book of Acts. There're many other women like that. But what is wrong is to say that you can't be a woman unless you work outside the home. That's wrong. The Bible doesn't say that. It says the opposite. You can be a woman by working inside the home too. You can please God by staying with your children and raising the family. In fact, if you have a young family with little kids, this is a priority for you. You're going to see that in this passage. You do need to work with them in the home. That's very important.

And if you read in verses 3 through 5, I'll just read this again to get the context of this. It says,

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

The word for “younger women” here is *neuteros*, which simply means anyone younger than the group mentioned earlier. It's a very broad term. Because women were typically married young back then - they were married as early as 13, and they could have children up into some later years. So, this covers a wide range of people. It's a broad sweeping term. And it doesn't just refer to wives and mothers, it refers to single ladies as well. It just puts everybody into the same category. And it refers to those who are around the age of child raising.

And as you can see in the passage, it gives them seven instructions here or seven things that older women should teach them. And because there's so many, we're going to go through these quickly. But Paul writes in verse 4, he says, “So that they may encourage, the older women may encourage the young women to love their husbands and love their children.” If you notice there, the common word is “love” because it's repeated twice there. Love your husbands, love your children. Which as I was studying this, I thought that was strange because women are typically very good at that. They're very affectionate, much more affectionate than men are. But when you consider how difficult parenting can be, when you consider how easy it is to become bitter, when the kids are saying, “Mommy, mommy, mommy, mommy, mommy,” all the time, you get the point here. Everybody's got a limit and a threshold, amen? And I tell my wife in the middle of the night, “They're saying, ‘Mommy,’ they're not saying, ‘daddy.’ I want to serve the children.” (They were probably saying “daddy” for like 20 minutes, I didn't hear them). But the point is when those things happen, you've got to handle it in a loving way. Love should be the tone of your home.

He also says for the older women to teach the younger women to be sensible and pure. The word “sensible” there could be rendered “self-controlled”. Having control of your emotions, having control of your passions, having control of any anxious thoughts. “Pure” means sexually pure. This is a reference to that. Young women should be sexually pure.

It also says they need to be workers at home. That's an interesting phrase because if you remember the context for this, in the first century, women had no freedom, especially younger women. If you're a young lady, a Roman wife, you would have your own quarters in the house. You would not go out of those quarters without a chaperone or a slave with you. You would not be allowed to go to meals if they were men present other than your husband. You lived a life of almost total seclusion. And then you get saved into the church and they treat you as an equal. And you could say some of them might go, “Woo-woo! I'm a Christian now, so I can do whatever I want. See you later husband, see you later kids, I'm off to the mission field. I'll be back at midnight.” And Paul says, “No, you still have to be workers at home too. You got to balance those two things. Balance the freedom with what you have to do at home.”

It says they should be kind, being subject to their own husbands. The phrase “to be subject” there is *hupotasso* in Greek, which means to put something under. It comes from two words, *hupo* –

under, and *tasso* - to put. The idea is that younger women should willingly place themselves under their husband's leadership. If you notice the tense of the verb here, it does not say, "They should be subjected." This is not a forced thing. There are religions in the world that teach that, Christianity is not one of them. This is a voluntary thing done out of a woman's freewill. She's to follow her husband's leadership.

And here's why, in verse 5, it says, "So that the word of God will not be dishonoured." That's an interesting phrase because it means that the younger women should do all of this with a higher purpose. They do it for a higher cause: "so that the word of God will not be dishonoured."

You guys know what this is like. We have a lot of young moms and young ladies in our congregation. You take the kids out of the house, you go grocery shopping and what do they do? They sit in the grocery cart like little angels. They sit there holding hands, singing hymns and doing family devotions. And one child says to the other one, "What do you think about infralapsarianism?" And the other one says, "I don't know. I really like superlapsarianism," and they have a deep conversation and end in prayer, right? No, they throw a fit in the cereal aisle. That's what they do. They punch each other to a bloody pulp. And if you're not careful when they do that, you can snap and dishonour the Word of God. I mean you can just lose your temper right there in the cereal aisle. The cereal aisle is supposed to be a happy place, there's happy boxes. Terrible things happen in the cereal aisle. But if you're not careful, you can bring shame to the name of Christ. If you blow up on your kids, it's very hard to turn to the person next to you in the grocery store and say, "I'm a Christian, can I tell you about Jesus?" They're going to say, "Look, I don't know what you got, but I don't want it." You have to be careful with that. Same thing goes if you treat your husband in a disrespectful way. If you blow up at him in front of the kids, the Word of God will be dishonoured and you don't want to do that.

Let me say it this way, this is important. A lot of moms, especially young moms, struggle with feeling they're not doing enough for the Lord. I hear about that from moms in our church. They feel like they're not doing anything important because all they do is change diapers and wipe runny noses all day long. All they do is stop fights from breaking out in the grocery store.

But Paul says, "If you're taking care of these things in here, you are doing something important. If you're doing the things in this list, you're doing enough for the Lord. Because if you're doing these things, then the Word of God will not be dishonoured among you." Do you get it? God's word will be upheld and He will be pleased with you if you focus on these things in this passage. I'm not saying you shouldn't do more if you can, more ministry, and I'm not saying you shouldn't want to. It's a good thing to want to do more ministry. That's positive. But you shouldn't feel guilty because you can't get to everything right now. This is important to God. John Wesley once said, "I learned more about Christianity from my Mother than from all the theologians in England." May your children say that about you. May your family say, "I learned so much from my mother." You got them 24 hours a day, seven days a week, make it count. Augustine said, "If I'm a child of God today and saved at all, it's because God gave me such a mother, because when everyone else gave up on me and said 'He's a lost cause,' she never did." He said, "Her prayers led me to the Lord." And may the same thing be said about the mothers in this room.

When I was in seminary, I had several part time jobs, and one of them was as a coach at an elementary school in Los Angeles. I coached basketball and football for some students in an inter-city school, and it was rough. It was a tough place. There were a lot of troubled kids, a lot of broken homes. We had a list of men that could not come on the school property because they were restraining orders from the moms. A list - not just one or two. We had drills we would do in case the helicopter flew over twice because they might be looking for a criminal, and we had to put the kids in lockdown to protect them from whatever was going on and call the police. It was a crazy place.

But I remember calling kids' parents for different things throughout the school year and I never knew what to call the moms because they kept getting divorced. Their last names kept changing. And so, whatever was on the piece of paper, I would call and ask for Mrs. Jones or whoever. And it wasn't Mrs. Jones anymore. It was a mess.

But every year at the end of the sports season, we would have an athletic banquet for the kids and give out several awards. One for the best athlete, one for the most improved, and one for the best sportsmanship, the kid with the best attitude. And it never failed that the kid with the best attitude every year had both parents in his home. Every year. Whatever else was going on in his life, however hard his year was, he had a mom who was there for him and he had a dad who was there for him.

Let me tie this into our passage. Friends, I don't know what God's going to do with your children. I don't know what His plan is for your family. That's not up to me to know. That's in the hands of God. But I do know that He won't use you to help them spiritually if you don't do these things in this passage. This is what His plan is for ministry in your kid's life. Whatever He uses, he won't use you if you're dishonouring the Word of God. If you don't honour God, He's not going to honour your efforts for them. But on the flip side, if you do honour Him and if you do obey Him, and you do the things in this list, the Lord will bless that. I don't know what that'll look like, but He will honour that in your life. He will use you in your children's life, for His Word will not return void.

I do want to say, you guys do a wonderful job of this. As I was studying this passage, I was thinking of all the faithful moms we have in this congregation. You guys are doing a fantastic job of all these things in here. But I also want to say (and I think everybody would say amen to this) this is tough stuff. I mean this is not easy. Parenting on one hand comes natural, but Christian parenting does not come natural. That's a supernatural thing.

Which is why Paul ends the chapter the way he does as I showed you earlier. If you look down in verse 11, this is why he ends the chapter this way. Where he says, in verse 11...By the way, if this stuff is countercultural to our day and age, it was really countercultural to the Roman world in the first century. Women and men did not raise their children in the first century, slaves did. You would just have kids and hand them off to the slaves and go party the rest of your life. So, this was really countercultural then...But this is why Paul says this in verse 11, he says, "For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men." The word "for" there is a preposition of reason or purpose. Paul says, "This is the reason you can do all things, all these things. You can do it with this purpose in mind because God's grace has appeared to you."

Young moms or young ladies in this room, whether you're a mom or not, if you read all of this and say, "I can't do this, there is no way, this is too hard," I want to encourage you that you can do it because God's grace has appeared to you. God's mercy has come to you. You don't have to do it alone, God will be with you every step of the way. Older women in this room, if you read all of this and say, "I can't do this either, I can't be an encouragement to others, motherhood is too hard, being a wife is too hard," God says, "No, it's not too hard because His grace has appeared." You can only do this by His grace.

Grace has been described as God's riches at Christ's expense. And you can see the acronym there - GRACE (God's Riches At Christ's Expense). And it means that all of this is available at Christ's expense. You can be a great mom and a great wife and a great woman of God because Jesus paid it all. He took care of everything at the cross to enable you to do that, so that all you have to do is receive His grace now.

During the Spanish American war, the US Colonel Theodore Roosevelt came into town one day to buy supplies for his troops (the same one who later became president). But he needed medicine and bandages and he was willing to pay out of his own pocket. So, he went to the army supply store and he pulled stuff off the shelves and he said, "Where do I pay for these things?" And the man at the desk said, "No, you don't understand, the army pays for it. It doesn't cost you a thing. All you have to do is ask." And that's very similar to a story I told you a couple of weeks ago about heaven's grocery store. But friends, I can't say this enough, God pays for this all for you. It doesn't cost you a thing. These are God's riches at Christ's expense. All you have to do is ask. It may not come right away, you may have to be patient and you may have to make some changes. But you can do all these things in here with the help of God. Let me pray for you as you do that. Let me pray for you as you come to him asking for His grace.

Father, we thank you Lord for what we've read in this passage today. Just a reminder that Your grace takes care of everything, even the intimate details of our lives, even the things that go on at home. You don't just take care of us when we come to church, You take care of us when we leave the church and go to our families and go to our husbands and wives in every stage of life we're in. Father, we thank you for that.

Thank you for the sufficiency of what Christ has done. Everything's been paid for. There's nothing left out of the work of salvation that He has done. And Lord, we rejoice in that.

And I pray for the young moms and young ladies in the church, for the older moms, older ladies as well, that You would bless them as they continue to serve in the work of the ministry. I see so much that they do here already. Lord, I just pray that this would encourage them to excel still more and keep on keeping on. Father, would You be glorified in that, in the lives of this church. And we pray this all in Christ's name, amen.