

# The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Woman of Grace: Not Slanderers—Speaking Gracefully in a Graceless World Titus 2:3b

As we open to Titus 2, at this very moment, Satan is roaming the Earth trying to mess up God's plan. His methods of attack are very focused, and are revealed in God's Word by his many names. Each of Satan's well-known names describes a facet of his evil plan. He is called:

- **Lucifer** the Cherub who fell because he proudly wanted to share in God's glory;
- **Satan** the constant Adversary of God's plans and people;
- **The Serpent from of Old** who deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden;
- **The Dragon** who relentless seeks to destroy Israel the Chosen People of God;
- **The Deceiver** who enslaves the minds and hearts of the whole world;
- **The Murderer from the Beginning** who came to kill, to steal, and destroy; and
- **The Roaring Lion** who seeks to devour the unsuspecting believer.

But today, as we gather in Christ's Church, the most unsuspecting and damaging of all his names, is also the method Satan brings perhaps greatest damage to Christ's church.

That other name of his is **The Devil**, *diabolous* or literally:

## The Slandering Accuser

God's Word shows us how Satan accuses believers before God's Throne in Job 1. Jesus stands at the Right Hand of the Father, and as our Great Intercessor and Advocate, defends us.

But sadly, Satan has enlisted many helpers, in his attack on Christ's Church. Almost all of them are unsuspecting of the terrible part they play in destroying the effectiveness of believers, church leaders, and entire churches.

In fact, after 30 plus years as a minister of God's Word I have never seen anything as deadly to the church as the Devil, the Slanderer, enlisting gossiping believers to become tools in his hands to slander other believers, tear down the Biblical leaders in Christ's church, and by their accusations, neutralize an entire local church. That danger is what leads us to Paul's words in Titus 2:3. Let's read God's amazing list of desires for all women, listen to His second expectation for the woman of grace who follows Christ:

*Titus 2:3-5 the **older women** likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things NKJV*

Remember that God has shown us what spiritual maturity looks like; and His description is not vague. A godly, spiritually mature woman can be seen in the ways she corresponds to the clear expectations that God has told us are His desires for every woman.

These areas that a woman can choose to focus upon gradually shape her life into becoming more and more a:

### Godly Woman of Influence

Titus was instructed to be sure that the women of grace are tuned to what God considers most meaningful and profitable for Christ's church. God says, be sure that each of the older women is taught that these five qualities are to become the life-long priorities for all grace-energized women.

v. 3 “...the **older women** likewise, that they be”:

1. “Reverent in behavior” as the Greek<sup>1</sup> word ***ieroprepeis katastematai*** is rendered in the NKJV, ESV, NAS, and NIV. The only church-wide curriculum for women starts with this call for all women to behave as representatives of God. This means that our God desires that every woman in Christ's church: **Live Holy in an Unholy World;**
2. “Not slanderers” as the Greek<sup>2</sup> words ***me diabolous*** are rendered in the NKJV, ESV, and NIV; and “not malicious gossips” in the NAS. God is looking for godly, mature women who will never allow their speech to get hijacked by the ultimate terrorist. God desires that all women be known as those that **Speak Gracefully in a Graceless World;**
3. **Not Given to Much Wine:** Disciplining appetites in an undisciplined world
4. **Teachers of Good Things:** Modeling Godliness in an ungodly world
5. **Admonish:** Investing in others in a detached world

That second quality, the Greek word translated “slanderers” here in Titus 2:3 is ***diabolous***, which is the very name of Satan, used of him 34 times in the New Testament. Satan has always been a false accuser; and so each time he incites a believer to do the same, they are doing Satan’s work.

Satan is the ultimate source of *all evil*, the root of *all wrong behavior*; and since the tongue is capable of causing great evil, Satan is always close at hand.

The essence of what Titus was told to teach was that godly Titus 2 women are never to surrender their tongues to the devil. That means we all need to think carefully about:

### The Power of Our Words

With this second quality for women of grace, Paul turns the spotlight on the hardest member of the body to control: our tongue. Twice in his epistles Paul targets a woman’s habits of their speech, saying it is a spiritual qualifier or disqualifier.

Though this is a universal problem we all face, Paul specifically says to women who want to serve Christ's church—“Guard those tongues”. Look back at I Timothy 3:11.

---

<sup>1</sup> Strong’s numbers 2412 and 2688

<sup>2</sup> Strong’s numbers 3661 and 1228

1 Timothy 3:11 “Women must likewise be dignified, **not malicious gossips**, but temperate, faithful in all things.” (NAS).

John MacArthur as he taught through this verse makes this concluding observation:

“Whereas men tend to be rough or violent in their actions, women have a tendency to be rough or violent in their words. Older women who find themselves with time on their hands can be tempted to allow their conversations to lead to gossip, criticism, and slander”.<sup>3</sup>

Now turn towards the end of your Bible, a few pages, to James 3. In this very first of the New Testament books written to Christ's Church, James the earthly brother of Jesus explained that our words and our talking can be either the most constructive or the most destructive of all our activities.

James tells us that a tongue out of control indicates a life out of control. He goes on to warn how huge can be the damage of uncontrolled words.

*James 3:2, 6 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. <sup>6</sup> And **the tongue is a fire**, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and **it is set on fire by hell** (NKJV).*

Note that God reveals through James, that ultimately, the source of all wickedness, especially of an uncontrolled tongue, is hell, or the Devil himself. Never, ever forget that: Satan is the one who stands at the root of all gossip, behind each lie, in the midst of all harmful talk, and around every single word of slander.

If your words are damaging the reputation and/or the ministry of another believer, you have unwittingly become a tool of the devil.

We must always remember that:

### **Satan's Goal is to Infect our Communication**

Right after James' discussion of the tongue in 3:2 and 6, he explains in v. 15-16 that our motivation for what we say can either comes from below (Satan's realm) or above (God's realm). We can tell where the words emanated from by the results of our words and actions. Note his warning in James 3:15-16:

*This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there (NKJV).*

Whenever what we say causes this list of woes from James 3:15-16: “jealousy, selfish ambition, disorder, envy and every evil practice” God hasn't prompted our words. We are not walking in the Spirit. We are not energized by His grace.

When our flesh prompts us to try to outdo someone, or show them up, sooner or later we will descend into the devil's desires.

---

<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur, *Different By Design*, (Wheaton,: Victor Books) Marriage and Divorce (electronic edition), Logos.

James goes on in v. 17-18 to frame the work of grace in our lives that God desires. We all should be asking of the Lord on a daily, then on a moment-by-moment basis for His control of our tongues. This is what the thoughts, words, and deeds of everyone who wants to please the Lord should look like:

*James 3:17-18 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup> Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (NKJV).*

To avoid being an unsuspecting tool in the hands of the devil, be sure that what you say is made up of: absolutely **pure** words, words that lead to **peaceable** responses, **gentle** words, words that don't hammer people but are **willing to yield**, and words that are **full of mercy**. This is God's desire for your words before you say them—but if your words are less than this, you will severely lessen your ministry effectiveness as a godly Titus 2 woman!

What is the antidote to bad habits of saying words that do the work of the Devil? Turn to the middle of your Bible, and find the 141<sup>st</sup> Psalm. Make sure that some of the most crucial verses about regulating your tongue are marked, highlighted, and on the list of verses you really want to memorize.

God's desire for each of us is that we all make Psalm 141:3-4 a habit; and each of us is to pause before we speak and be sure that we set a guard at the door of our mouth.

*Psalm 141:3-4 **Set a guard, O LORD**, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. 4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies.*

Now slip back to Psalm 39, where David is even more to the point. Here is what we all should cry to God:

*Psalm 39 (NKJV) To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of David. 1 I said, "I will guard my ways, **Lest I sin with my tongue**; I will **restrain my mouth with a muzzle**, While the wicked are before me."*

David was the man after God's own heart because he was willing to surrender his words to the Lord! David asked God to muzzle his mouth, guard his tongue, and use his words. Think about it, David's words in the Psalms are some of the most useful words in the world. That is what happens with a guarded, muzzled, and surrendered tongue!

But without being given over in obedience to Christ, our tongues are dangerous. So the goal of every woman of grace is to:

### **Stop any Gossip**

One common type of talk that hurts is called gossip and comes in many forms. Here are three forms of gossip that all of us, and especially those who earnestly seek to be a Titus 2 man or woman should always avoid:

- First, **malicious gossip talk** that is geared to cut, to destroy, to divide friends, break relationships, and erode trust. This is the fire that burns and destroys as James 3 spoke of.

- Secondly, avoid ***rationalized gossip talk*** which is when a person is convinced (and deceived by themselves) that they are to share this information for the “good” of the other person, often for them to “pray” about. But again, down deep just like malicious talk, this type of talk is gossip that causes harm and is empowered by the devil.
- The third and final type of malicious talking that we all need to avoid is ***“innocent” gossip***. This usually starts with proper motives and desires but gets off course with unwise sharing of sensitive information, then curiosity sets in and soon the conversation is far beyond the problem and the solution and has become malicious, slanderous, harmful gossip.

So what should we avoid? Never use our mouth in an un-regenerated way!

What should we do? Tame our tongue by the Holy Spirit as His Word richly dwells and permeates all our lives.

Why not like David in Psalm 39:1 and Psalm 141:3-4, make some plans now to change our usage of our tongues?

Here are three great ways to change:

- **1. Think first:** before starting to say something pause a few seconds and ask yourself: “Are these words true or false; exaggerated or accurate; healing or cutting; grateful or complaining?”
- **2. Talk less:** it is a biblical fact that the less you talk the wiser you appear. Plan, prepare, concentrate and enrich each opportunity to speak. Make each a time to speak a 1 Peter 4:11 moment. Listen to how Peter (the Apostle with the foot-shaped-mouth grew in his understanding of godly talk. He says at the end of his life: “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” NKJV
- **3. Start now:** like David, ask God to fit you for a word retainer, get braces put on that tongue. Don't waste your greatest tool.

Godly women, who want to please God, seek to be reverent in their behavior, and careful in all their conversations. Now back to the bigger picture. Our talk is only a reflection of the first and primary goal God desires in every woman.

Now, back to the New Testament book of Romans where Paul gives the most complete listing of:

### **The Choices of Consecration Christ Seeks Today**

As we prepare for communion, why not consider whether or not these are the choices that you are cultivating today in your spiritual life?

1. **As God's Representative:**  
**I choose to surrender to Him daily.** Romans 12:1-2 I beseech (appeal ESV/urge NAS) you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,

acceptable to God, *which* is your reasonable (spiritual worship ESV) service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (NKJV)

***Have you started a daily renewal of your surrender? As God's representative, He desires you to do so today!***

**2. As God's Representative:**

**I choose to live as the Temple of God.** I Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who* is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

***Have you started walking around as God's Holy Temple Woman, a mobile dwelling place of God? As God's representative, He desires you to do so today!***

**3. As God's Representative:**

**I choose to follow my calling in Christ:** *We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them* (Ephesians 2:10).

***Have you truly comprehended what a special calling God has given to you? As God's representative, He desires you to do so today!***

**4. As God's Representative:**

**I choose to practice the spiritual secret of putting off and putting on:** *Put off your former conduct [lifestyle], be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness* (Ephesians 4:22–24).

***Have you learned their spiritual secret of putting off the old habits and putting on the new in Christ? Are you being renewed by getting God's Word deep within your heart? As God's representative, He desires you to do so today!***

**5. As God's Representative:**

**I choose to commit to a life of truth and kindness:** “putting away lying”, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor”, “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:25, 32).

***Are you committed to honesty and kindness? Are you willing to humbly forgive others—even when ill treated? As God's representative, He desires you to do so today!***

**6. As God's Representative:**

**I choose to release all my anger and hurt to God:** “Be angry, and do not sin” ... nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor ... that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good .... And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God .... Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice (Ephesians 4:26–31).

***Have you released your anger and pride to God? As God's representative, He desires you to do so today!***

**7. As God's Representative:**

**I choose to repent of my past:** ... But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks (Ephesians 5:3-4).

***Have you repented of those old ways that grieve, displease, and quench the work of the Spirit in your life? As God's representative, He desires you to do so today!***

**8. As God's Representative:**

**I choose to resist evil influences:** Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them (Ephesians 5:11).

***Do you seek to turn away from all evil influences? As God's representative, He desires you to do so today!***

## APPENDIX:

So what can we do with these tongues?

1. SPEAK GOD'S WORD: 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
2. CONFESS OUR SINS: Psalm 32:3-5 When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah NKJV
3. SHARE WHAT GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE: Psalm 77:12 I will also meditate on all Your work, And talk of Your deeds. NKJV
4. PRAISE GOD: Luke 1:64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. NKJV
5. CONFESS JESUS: Romans 10:9-10 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. NKJV
6. SAY HEALTHY WORDS: Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. NKJV
7. BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS: 1 Peter 3:9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. NKJV

Without proper care and use, the tongue can become a lifelong scourge, a flame-throwing tool of destruction (like James 3 describes it) that blackens the foliage along the path of life.

One writer noticed a gravestone with an interesting epitaph and reflects upon it. Listen to his thoughts:

*On a windswept hill in an English countryside churchyard stands a drab, gray slate tombstone. Bleak and unpretentious, it leans slightly to one side, beaten slick and thin by the blast of time. The quaint stone bears an epitaph not easily seen unless you stoop over and look closely. The faint etchings read:*

"BENEATH THIS STONE, A LUMP OF CLAY, LIES ARABELLA YOUNG, WHO, ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH OF MAY, BEGAN TO HOLD HER TONGUE."

What an awful way to be remembered. And even more, what an incredibly wasted life. Why would such an awful commentary need to be etched in stone for Arabella Young? Because she never dealt with the powerful member of her body that resides in the mouth!

Jesus explains how important our words are. Look at Matthew 12:34:

*"Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks . NKJV*

The window on the soul is the mouth. All that lies within is reflected by our words. What can our



words show? These are the byproducts of an un-regenerated heart:

1. CURSES: Psalm 10:7 His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness. NASB
2. HATRED: Psalm 109:3 They have also surrounded me with words of hatred, And fought against me without a cause. NKJV
3. PERVERSITY Proverbs 6:12 A worthless person, a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth; NKJV
4. LIES Proverbs 12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight. NKJV
5. FOOLISHNESS: Proverbs 15:2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth Foolishness. NKJV
6. EVIL Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things. NASB
7. FLATTERY: Proverbs 26:28 A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, And a flattering mouth works ruin. NKJV
8. IDLE WORDS: Matthew 12:36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. NKJV
9. GOSSIP: Romans 1:28-30 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers ,<sup>30</sup> backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, NKJV
10. CORRUPT (ROTTEN or CUTTING) WORDS: Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. NKJV