

ENERGIZED BY GRACE

The  
Titus  
Two  
Woman

STUDY GUIDE

Dr. John S. Barnett

# Energized by Grace THE TITUS TWO WOMAN Study Guide

## Grace-Energized-Women are Reverent in Behavior EBG: Message Thirty (070513AM)

For the past twelve years it has been my joy to present on Mother's Day a lineup of the greatest mothers of the Bible. We have seen Hannah, Ruth, Elisabeth, Mary - the Proverbs 31 super-woman, and many others.

This year is completely different. The passage we are heading to is Titus two. These verses are a message from God to every single lady in this place. God has set down a pattern that every woman should strive towards. Being a Titus two woman of godliness should be the goal and desire of every mother for her daughters, of every husband for his wife, of every child for their mother, and of every believer for her own life.

### Titus Two is the Pattern God Gave

If you want to be vital in Christ's church, useful in God's Kingdom, rewarded at Christ's Bema Seat Judgment these verses are your marching orders. There is no clearer pattern for a godly woman in all of God's Word than the twelve character qualities recorded in these verses. This is what God desires, explains, and expects from obedient and godly women.

- If you are looking for a passage to study in depth that can change your life—here it is.
- If you want a special passage to memorize and meditate upon that can transform your thinking and life's direction—here it is.
- And, if you want to go through life confident that you are doing exactly what God wants you to do each day—here it is.

Most of us struggle with purpose, wondering if our days are spent wisely.

Titus two contains a lesson from God that you don't have to go away to a far away place to accomplish. You do not have to get financial support to start, you don't have to have any spectacular gifting; all you need is to love and follow the Lord and you can start down the Titus two track.

Now lest any of us men start feeling badly about such a wonderful way for women to invest their lives—there is an equally clear 12-part mandate for Titus 2 men which we will study together on Father's Day, so just hold on for that.

As we open our Bibles to Titus 2:1-8, listen to the very voice of God speaking not to a select few, but to every man, woman, and child here today.

God is asking each of us to live in such a way that our life can become a pattern of His grace that can be used to mentor, encourage, coach, tutor, teach, train and guide another's life towards Him.

There is nothing greater in life than to be useful for God!

Christ's church was born into a sin-warped, sin-darkened world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

But men and women who were gloriously saved did not automatically become great wives and mothers, or husbands and fathers. When they came to Christ and were forgiven, God graciously gave them everything they needed to become godly wives, mothers, husbands, and fathers. But, they needed something else.

These new believers needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices; and those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

Christ's method for the training of these new converts was two-fold. They gathered for a group session as an entire church body. The Scriptures were faithfully taught, and they were fed healthy doctrine for spiritual growth. That group teaching of the gathered church was vitally performed by the called and gifted pastors of Christ's church; but side-by-side with that didactic teaching of God's Word that fed Christ's flock weekly, was another equally vital ministry which we find captured for us in Titus 2.

### **Christ's Church Used Coaches in Godly Living**

Christ's church grew strong in those early years because everyone in His church knew what they were each supposed to be doing. Each man knew how a godly man was to live his daily life (Titus 2:1-2, 6-8); and each woman knew how a godly woman was to live her daily life (Titus 2:3-5).

Christ's church grew into the potent force for changing the world in the quiet nurturing sessions that Titus 2 men and women performed in practical discipleship. Just as important as the preaching and teaching of the doctrines of God's Word was the modeling and nurturing of individual saints through practical hands-on lessons in godly living.

The building blocks of Christ's church are Spirit-filled men and women whose lives are given daily as obedient servants of God. Since all of us in this auditorium are either men or women, it is imperative to know what God has to say to what pleases Him in the life of a man or woman.

God wants men and women that will mentor, nurture, and coach godly living for His church. These individuals believe that God has called them to touch one life at a time for His glory.

When God gets to pick the curriculum for His Church, what does He choose to be taught? He lays down twelve vital, godly character qualities for women and twelve vital, godly character qualities for men.

- In Titus 2:1-2 God lays down ***six non-negotiables for godly older men*** in the faith to model by their lives.
- In Titus 2:3-4 God has actually laid down ***five non-negotiables in the lives of great women*** role models.
- In Titus 2:4-5 God describes the ***seven non-negotiables that each younger woman*** needs to learn, that has already been mastered by their older women in the faith role models.
- In Titus 2:6-8 God finally sets down ***six non-negotiable character qualities that will be embraced by every young man*** who wishes to be godly and useful for Christ's church.

Our focus will be upon the character God seeks to see developing in every woman in this church.

### **Twelve Godly Characteristics of Highly Useful Women**

Women who are highly useful to God have these characteristics. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children to be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus 2 woman and the Titus 2 man.

The whole goal of a Titus 2 woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

We will examine the character God desires, calls for, and uses in women of any age. This is the lifestyle all women of any age in this room should long for, strive for, and aspire towards. Basically, a Titus 2 woman is a godly wife who loves her husband in such a profound way that he appears deeply satisfied in her love; and she is also a godly mother whose children know they are deeply loved. Look for a woman that radiates love and joy and you have the Titus 2 woman.

Think of the most loving, gracious, self-sacrificing mother you can imagine—one that knows you, loves you, helps you, understands you, encourages you, comforts you in

each failure, and rejoices in every good choice you make; you have just imagined the Titus 2 woman of Christ's church.

Every woman in this church should either be a younger woman being mentored in Titus 2:3-5, or looking for a Titus 2 mentor, be a Titus 2 woman, or be on the way to becoming one. It is Christ's method for strengthening every marriage, every family, and every life in His church!

Godly womanhood, as laid down in God's Word, is caught, not taught.

Paul did not call for Titus as the pastor to train all the women in these qualities God wanted them to cultivate; rather he called upon the godly older women of Christ's church. He singles out the women of faith, those who had already learned to love their husbands, learned to love their children, and learned to be reverent, godly, modest and wise—and charged them with seeking out and meeting with every younger woman in the church.

Paul seems to describe far more than a Bible study for those early church believers—he called for small group, practical, hands-on training sessions, and one-on-one nurturing in homes by an older-woman-in-the-faith as the norm. Older women aspired to have the joy of entering the home and life of another woman and pouring her love, her life, and most of all her godly experience into that younger woman's life, marriage, and family.

Just briefly let me describe the fantastic end results of this Titus 2 long-term, behind the scenes, encouraging, discipleship, and coaching ministry. Paul gives us--

### **The Results of Titus 2 Women in Ministry**

Titus 2 women encourage a grateful army of ***husbands who feel deeply loved by their wives.***

- What was the first thing that the Holy Spirit chose to have taught to the young married women believers? LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS.
- Can you imagine what a deep and lasting impact upon this local body of Christ's church to have men coming home to a wife who is earnestly being taught how to love her own husband?
- Such love is a powerful testimony in a culture where women are being pressed into being worldly, self-seeking, independent, and do-their-own-thing women.
- If nothing else, every family at TBC would be enriched if every younger woman was taught in a practical, simple, and personal way how to love her own husband.

Titus 2 women train younger women in one of the hardest and yet most rewarding investments in life—***children who feel deeply loved by their mothers.***

- The Holy Spirit emphasizes very clearly that the key to raising children is LOVING them.
- Titus 2 women train, teach, model, and mentor moms into the deepening of love for their children that can be felt.
- One of the most common complaints of the 21<sup>st</sup> century child is that they don't feel loved. Most mothers love their children, but many children are not feeling that love.
- Titus 2 women are coaches that tutor and mentor young moms in ways to show love that can be felt.

Titus 2 women train younger women to be ***discreet, sensible, and wise in the decisions and choices they make.***

- What a rich resource for new marriages and families to have a young woman walked through those days side-by-side with a godly, Spirit-filled woman who will regularly, personally, individually mentor, mother, coach, and cheer on younger women in skillfully living as a wife, mother, and woman of God on a day to day basis.
- Titus 2 women weren't primarily found in classrooms—they were in the kitchen with a younger woman, in the dining room, in the nursery, at the grocery store.
- Titus 2 women were hands-on tutors nurturing younger women in the laboratory of life--walking through life together praying, sharing, learning, and loving.

Titus 2 women train younger women in the ***holiness and purity that pleases God and unleashes the power of the Spirit.***

- The training that a Titus 2 older woman gives is a seven-part package, that is immensely practical not theoretical. Modesty, purity, chaste behavior must be learned, modeled, and practiced.
- God directed the power of godly, Spirit-filled women of Biblical maturity sitting over a cup of tea discussing with younger women what pleased God in dress, in behavior, conduct, and so on.
- Christ's church needed younger women who learned Biblical modesty through a godly older woman lovingly applying God's Word to daily life.

Titus 2 older women teach ***younger women the centrality in God's plan of a woman's priority being her home.***

- Homemaking is a learned art and so many women never have the hands on training that is needed.
- Life is so full that our culture has moved away from homemaking and few young women get mentored in the godly, Biblical art of home making.
- God placed the first two priorities on the Titus 2 list as loving husbands and loving children. Younger women are called to see the priority of their homes; and the only way they can learn that priority is by a long-term relationship with a godly woman that has mastered that art.

Now, let's begin a step by step look at all 12 characteristics of a Titus 2 woman. Paul lists them in the verses we already read. Here they are one-by-one. The older women are to have mastered all 12 and the younger women are trained in the last seven. First the character of the older woman in the faith is profiled.

***v. 3a "the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior" (1)***

Paul first draws a word from the Roman world to capture the entire bearing of these godly role model women in Christ's church. He uses the word that meant to operate as a priest in a temple. In the ancient world temples to gods were always outside of town. People had to stop, take a bath, change into special clothes and then walk down a "sacred way" often a mile or more to the temple. Then they were served by sacred priests who acted as representatives of the gods.

The Greek word translated "reverent" is used only here in the Bible, and it conveys the idea of priest-like. That word for 'acting as a representative of a god' is the word Paul uses to describe the devout and godly character of the Titus 2 woman. Older women are to live like holy priests serving in the presence of God. Their sacred personal devotion to the Lord has slowly come to influence every aspect of their lives.

This is the Greek word ***semnos*** meaning "august, venerable, honorable" or in the context of a local church, a woman who lives in such a godly way she can be emulated and venerated for her character. Her life is an example to the women of the flock of all ages. 1 Timothy 3:11 Likewise their wives [women] ***must be reverent*** (NKJV); 1 Timothy 3:11 Women ***must likewise be dignified*** (NAS); 1 Timothy 3:11 In the same way, their wives are to be ***women worthy of respect*** (NIV).

Paul calls all of us who will be useful in Christ's church to the same high calling. This is the same word (in basic form) used for deacons: 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise must be ***men of dignity*** (NAS); and the same basis word to describe the Titus 2 older men of renown to be followed: Titus 2:2 "Older men are to be temperate, ***dignified***" (NAS); or ***worthy of respect*** (NIV).

Paul extends this priest-like attitude for life to be the goal that all believers should seek as it says in 1 Timothy 2:2 "in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and ***dignity***" (NAS); or ***holiness*** (NIV).

This word also shows up in the guide for what a believer is to think about in Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are ***noble***—meditate on these things" (NKJV). Paul was reminding the early church believers that what they thought about and allowed to stay in their minds is what they would become.

So this consecrated, godly woman heeds what Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as [a person] thinks in his heart, so is he." The Titus 2 woman knows that whatever she reads, listens to, watches, and allows to stay in her mind is what she will become.

So a godly woman (or any believer) who allows anything, whether TV, movies, magazines, or any other media to stimulate her flesh by feeding her mind with lying, profanity, illegitimate sex, gossiping, occultic images, and so much more--will slowly have their mind depart from "noble, dignified, worthy of respect, and holiness" and soon after their actions will follow their mind away from being "reverent in behavior."

Godly older women have simply taken Romans 12:1-2 seriously.

They have presented themselves to the Lord, they have begun to live life the way God asked them to live—as a walking temple of God, as a consecrated priest of God, as a living sacrifice, and as a bondservant of the Lord.

Godly women seek to be reverent in their behavior.



## Grace-Energized-Women: No Slander and No Excess

### EBG: Message Thirty-One (070513PM)

Christ's church was born into a sin-warped, sin-darkened world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

But men and women who were gloriously saved did not automatically become great wives and mothers, or husbands and fathers. When they came to Christ and were forgiven, God graciously gave them everything they needed to become godly wives, mothers, husbands, and fathers. But, they needed something else. They needed worship services that taught them to believe correctly, and then they needed small group discipleship times to learn how to behave correctly.

These new believers needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices, and those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

And that is the vital ministry which we find captured for us in Titus two.

### Christ's Church Used Coaches in Godly Living

Christ's church grew into the potent force for changing the world in the quiet nurturing sessions that Titus two men and women performed in practical discipleship. Just as important as the preaching and teaching of the doctrines of God's Word was the modeling and nurturing of individual saints through practical hands-on lessons in godly living.

The building blocks of Christ's church are Spirit-filled men and women whose lives are given daily as obedient servants of God.

God wants men and women that will mentor, nurture, and coach godly living for His church. These individuals believe that God has called them to touch one life at a time for His glory.

For just a moment please follow along in your Bibles in Titus 2:1-8, as I again read those 12 special character traits for men and women. Then we will go back to our word-by-word look at the Titus two woman of God.

*v.1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: v.2 that the **older men** be:*

1. Sober,
2. Reverent,
3. Temperate,
4. Sound in faith,

5. [Sound in] love,
6. [Sound in] patience;

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

1. Reverent in behavior,
2. Not slanderers,
3. Not given to much wine,
4. Teachers of good things— v. 4
5. That they admonish

*the **young women***

1. To love their husbands,
2. To love their children, v. 5
3. To be discreet,
4. Chaste,
5. Homemakers,
6. Good,
7. Obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

*v. 6 Likewise exhort the **young men***

1. To be sober-minded, v. 7
2. In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works;
3. In doctrine showing integrity,
4. Reverence,
5. Incorruptibility, v. 8
6. Sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. (NKJV)

When God gets to pick the curriculum for His Church, what does He choose to be taught? He lays down twelve vital, godly character qualities for women and 12 vital, godly character qualities for men.

### **Twelve Godly Characteristics of Highly Useful Women**

Women who are highly useful to God have these characteristics. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus two woman and the Titus two man.

The whole goal of a Titus two woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

Paul did not call for Titus as the pastor to train all the women in these qualities God wanted them to cultivate; rather he called upon the godly older women of Christ's church. He singles out the women of faith, those who had already learned to love their husbands, learned to love their children, and learned to be reverent, godly, modest and wise, and charged them with seeking out and meeting with every younger woman in the church.

Now, let's begin a step by step look at all 12 characteristics of a Titus two woman. Paul lists them in the verses we already read. Here they are one-by-one.

The older women are to have mastered all 12, and the younger women are trained in the last seven.

First the godly character of the older woman in the faith is profiled. Without a reverent lifestyle behaving like a living sacrifice, dedicated to God, none of the rest even matter. That is why Paul starts here first!

*v. 3a "the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior" (1)*

Paul first draws a word from the Roman world to capture the entire bearing of these godly role model women in Christ's church. The Greek word translated "reverent" is used only here in the Bible, and it conveys the idea of priest-like. That word for "acting as a representative of a god" is the word Paul uses to describe the devout and godly character of the Titus two woman. Older women are to live like holy priests serving in the presence of God. Their sacred, personal devotion to the Lord has slowly come to influence every aspect of their lives.

So a godly woman (or any believer) won't allow anything to stimulate their flesh away from God; and they insist on only feeding their mind with what encourages and increases being "reverent in behavior."

Godly older women have simply taken Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, and Galatians 2:20 seriously.

- Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 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
- 1 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? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. NKJV
- Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." NKJV

They have presented themselves to the Lord, they have begun to live life the way God asked them to live—as a walking temple of God, as a consecrated priest of God, as a living sacrifice, and as a bondservant of the Lord.

### **Godly Women Seek to be Reverent in Their Behavior**

*v. 3b “not slanderers” (2)*

Next Paul turns the spotlight on the hardest member of the body to control, according to James, the tongue. Twice in his epistles Paul targets a woman’s habits of her 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. 1 Timothy 3:11 “In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything” (NIV).

“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.”

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 dangerous effects of uncontrolled words. James 3:2, 6 “For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. 6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.” (NAS)

Note that the source of all wickedness, especially of an uncontrolled tongue, is hell; and it is Satan who is at the root of all gossip, all harmful talk, and all slander. If you are damaging the reputation and ministry of others, you are a tool of the devil.

Right after James’ discussion of the tongue he explains that our motivation either comes from below (Satan’s realm) or above (God’s). We can tell by the byproduct of our words and actions. When what we say causes this list of woes from James 3:15-16: “jealousy, selfish ambition, disorder, envy, and every evil practice” or as one man puts it, “Whenever you’re trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others’ throats.”

In fact the word “slanderers” here in Titus 2:3 is *diabolos*, the very name of Satan used of him 34 times in the New Testament. Satan has been a false accuser and so each time he incites a believer to do so, they are doing Satan’s work. Satan is the ultimate source of all evil, the root of all wrong behavior; and since James says the tongue is capable of causing great evil, Satan is always close at hand.

**Godly Titus Two Women Never Are to Surrender Their Tongues to the Devil**

Stop, and as the Psalmist says, set a guard at the door of your mouth (Psalm 141:3). Be sure that what you say is absolutely true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report before you say it—or you will severely lessen your ministry effectiveness as a godly Titus two woman.

Remember that it has been estimated that from the first "Good morning" to the last "Good night," the average person engages in thirty conversations a day. Each day, his words could make a book of 50-60 pages-the equivalent of more than one hundred books a year of 200 pages each.

Our tongue is an intriguing study of great contrasts. Think of that object resting in your mouth just now.

To the doctor it is a two ounce slab of mucous membrane containing a world of inter-related muscles and nerves. That is the physiological tongue.

To our Body it is a vital organ that must work properly if we are to eat, chew, taste, swallow, and talk. That is the helpful tongue.

To other people the tongue is the primary avenue of communication. It gives us the ability to inflect sounds and articulate words distinctly. It gives us a vehicle to communicate our thoughts. That is the essential tongue.

Yes, without the tongue -

- No teacher could guide their pupils.
- No coach could prepare his team.
- No mother could softly sing her baby to sleep.
- No leader could motivate his group adequately.
- No pastor could bring comfort to heavy hearts.
- No issues could be discussed and resolved.

In fact, without the communication of conversation our whole planet would be reduced to a mere roar of unintelligible grunting and groaning. It is rare that we stop to reflect on how vital this little muscle in our mouth really is. But without being given over in obedience to Christ, our tongues are dangerous.

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 two man or woman, should always avoid: malicious talk that is geared to cut, to destroy, to divide friends, break relationships, and erode trust. This is the fire James 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 unregenerated 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, make some plans now to change our usage of our tongues?

Here are three great ways to change:

- Think first: before starting to say something pause a few seconds and ask are these words--true or false; exaggerated or accurate; healing or cutting; grateful or complaining?
- 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 as 1 Peter 4:11 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
- 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 seek to be reverent in their behavior, and are careful in all their conversations.**

*v. 3c “not given to much wine” (3)*

Paul here focuses upon the self-controlled moderation that is to characterize women of every age in Christ's church.

Godly women are Spirit-controlled in every part of their life. They resist excess in any area of daily life. They are not slaves to any substance, to any amusement, to any fashion, or to any attitude that does not please their Master in Heaven.

Most women in the early church were formerly pagans. Drunkenness was the norm for many women in that society. Drinking was the best way to forget about the problems of being a “slave” to a pagan man who looked upon his wife as a convenience that bore him legitimate children and enhanced his reputation in the community. Because this life was all there is to a pagan, hopelessness led to drunkenness. Paul said that prior to salvation they all were “without hope and without God (Ephesians 2:12).

Coming to Christ changed everything, but old habits are hard to break. The old ways of their husbands would come back, old pains from emotional and physical abuse would resurface, and the temptation to slip back to the intemperance of slavery to wine would grow strong. Lack of physical control of any appetite points to a spiritual immaturity. Both Timothy and Titus were told to beware of women returning to their old habits in this realm of drinking.

Today “not given to much” goes far beyond merely wine. There are so many forms of alcohol never imagined in the Biblical times that can be abused, plus drugs (both acceptable and unacceptable kinds) that can be abused, tobacco that can be abused,, wonderful varieties of food that can be abused, beautiful varieties of fashionable clothing that change with every season that can be abused, housing options, exercise options, recreation options—all that can be abused and become addictions.

There is a generation of believers who have never tasted a drop of alcohol and pride themselves in that choice—while overeating with daily regularity; and both are condemned by God in Proverbs 23:19-21 side-by-side.

Because of Romans 14:15-21 and I Corinthians 8:9-13, we see that though the Bible never forbids wine drinking, our liberty is limited by the consciences of other believers and our testimony to the world. The lesson of temperance is consistency.

We must be cautious of any intemperance; and “not be given to” too much of anything, be it the use of money, the enjoyment of leisure, or the establishment of a house to live in. Whatever we do is to be tempered by the glory of God. He must be the object and focus of all we do. 1 Corinthians 10:31 “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (NKJV)

Modern society has elevated fashion almost to the point of idolatry. Clothing stores, newspaper and magazine advertising, and television commercials are like giant billboards that continually proclaim, “We covet clothes.”

Expensive, often ostentatious jewelry for both men and women is becoming more and more prevalent as a means to flaunt material prosperity and glorify self. We are continually goaded to put our bodies and apparel on parade.”

Godly women are Spirit-controlled in every part of their life. They resist excess in any area of daily life. They are not slaves to any substance, any amusement, any fashion, or any attitude that does not please their Master in Heaven.

**Godly Women Seek to be Reverent in Their Behavior, Careful in All Their Conversations, and Never Enslaved to Anything but Christ**

*v. 3d “teachers of good things” (4)*

Paul starts and ends this third verse with the same thought. Godly women show-and-tell. They live what they teach. They train others in the pattern they have learned. Their walk speaks louder than their talk. Their life is under God's control in all areas: their tongues, their appetites, and their habits. They do not overindulge themselves, they are not overweight gluttons, they are not pleasure-hungry, they are not malicious talkers. These godly older women were noble in everything and in the way they lived life they taught by their actions what is good! Titus 2:3 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. NIV

Paul always stressed preaching and teaching what he was already living. In his instructions to Timothy he said, 1 Timothy 4:16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. NASB

Titus was to encourage these older women to develop a ministry of teaching younger women what is good. Younger women with children were to keep their primary focus at home (Titus 2:4-5), but the older women would do well to reach outside their homes and share what they had learned with those who would profit from it most.

A godly woman teaches by her life what is good in God's sight. She carefully chooses the "better part" as Mary did over Martha. Titus two women see every area of their lives as an open book that should and does teach Christ's gracious Lordship. They can say as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. NKJV

And who is an older woman? Technically, in this passage it was a woman who was past raising her children. Some commentators even say the age of sixty, as Paul does in the widow's list of 1 Timothy 5. But in reality there is no chronological age given. For every woman in this church there are some older and some younger. To those older, you are to look and see if they are an example of Christ—if they are, ask them to show you what they have learned and how they do it. For those who are younger, you are to seek to get into their lives and help them bring every area of their lives under the gracious Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Every young lady and woman in this church should have as their highest desire the goal of being first a Titus two student of some godly older-in-the-faith woman. And, the highest honor, the greatest goal in the life of every older woman in this church is to have the honor of being that older-woman-in-the-faith. If you have children, that is where you must start. If they are grown and gone, ask God to begin filling your lives with younger women into whom you can prayerfully pour the love and wisdom of Christ gleaned from His Word and by your years of walking in the Spirit!

Every godly woman has the opportunity to teach the younger generation of women in the church. This instruction is to occur in informal settings, such as one on one, small groups, or women's Bible studies. And this instruction is both by word and example.



Many young women today were not raised under a biblical family model. That's a challenge for the older women in the church.

**Godly women seek to be reverent in their behavior, careful in all their conversations, never enslaved to anything but Christ, and teaching by example the way to follow Christ.**

*v.4a "that they admonish" (5)*

In teaching what is good they "encourage the young women" (Titus 2:4). This opening phrase of Titus 2:4 "that they admonish" is one Greek word in Paul's letter, the word is *sophronizo* and means, "to train someone in self-control, restore to senses, admonish and exhort earnestly."

"You will note the similarity of this form to characteristics of elders, "prudent" (1 Tim. 3:2), and older men, "sensible" (Titus 2:2). Older women are to train the younger women to learn the art of self-restraint. This training process requires that you older women be committed to being responsible, confrontive, and affirming in an ongoing relationship with a younger woman."

The first four spiritual qualities are all present to make this quality work. God wants a godly woman whose life speaks louder than her words. A woman whose character is noticed prompts other women to examine their own lives and seek to emulate her joy, her peace, her walk in the Spirit in evident and practical ways. The Titus two older woman-in-the-faith's life is a pattern for others to use in shaping their own lives.

This one word is variously rendered into four different English words by the top four versions: "teach" (KJV); "admonish" (NKJV); "train" (NIV); and "encourage" (NAS). The context and the word imply that this was to be a process of teaching, explaining, encouraging, training, and holding the young wives to a standard that was unfamiliar to them and yet vital for the success of their marriages and families.

One of the strongest forces for spiritual ministry in the local church lies with the older believers. Those who are retired have time for service. It is vital that we mobilize and use these important people. In my own 30 years of pastoral ministry, I have been constantly helped and encouraged by godly older saints who knew how to pray, teach God's Word, visit, troubleshoot, and help edify Christ's church.

So the older-in-the-faith, godly women of the church were:

- To behave like holy priestesses of the Almighty God,
- To show restraint and discipline of appetites and words,
- To live what they speak so that the younger women want to learn from them how to live and please God in their lives and families.

So what was their very first lesson? Loving husbands God's way!

*v. 4b “the young women to love their husbands” (6)*

Among the Bible believing women of the first century, there was a big challenge in “loving” their husbands. For various reasons and in various degrees those women found themselves with either minimal or no “feelings of love” for their husbands. Believing wives almost always want to obey the Lord, thus they submit and fulfill their responsibilities to their husbands—but often only dutifully and not lovingly. It is not that loving your husband is a virtue, Paul says that not loving him in a way that he can feel is a sin!

In Paul’s day, men and women were saved out of a culture where romantic love usually did not exist in marriages. Wives were only seen as the trusted keepers of the home and bearers of the children. Emotional love, psychological needs, and sexual desires were satisfied outside of marriage by most husbands. The opportunities for illicit sex in the Roman world were endless. For most women this was in some ways a relief as they did not have to “perform” sexually on a regular basis for their husbands. But the emotional super-glue that the marital relationship produces was thus absent. Salvation stopped the immorality in most believing men’s lives back then, but salvation did not make them or their wives instantly close, intimate, and life-sharing friends and lovers.

Just as modern pre-marital moral laxity has scarred many young couples into a troubled, often superficial marital relationship, so were most of the marriages of the New Testament church. What was Paul’s Spirit prompted answer? What was to be the way to solve the distant, detached, and constantly tempted husband daily buffeted with the overpowering allurements of the flagrantly immoral Roman culture?

Christ led Paul to deploy a legion of older-in-the-faith, godly women to go from house to house, become a close and trusted friend of those young wives, and train them in how to become their husband’s best, closest, dearest, and most intimate friends.

Physical or sexual love without romance is soon empty and meaningless; and as Solomon (who had a lot of experience) said, soon becomes “Like gravel in the mouth” (Proverbs 20:17). Paul knew that to protect those newly believing husbands and fathers from the tidal waves of temptation, they must have a vibrant, attractive, satisfying emotional and physical relationship with their wife. Husbands who are drawn to think about and want to see their wife throughout a day away from home are protected from attraction and distraction by a wicked world about them. Loving, caring, romantic wives are trained not born.

The key to understanding this bold new dimension of the early church’s training is in the word Paul uses for love. Every believer has already repeatedly been commanded to “love” with agape love, which is an action. We are commanded to act in a loving way towards each other, our saved and unsaved friends, and even our enemies. This agape love is not a feeling, it is an action. Paul explains agape love in Ephesians 5:25 and Colossians 3:19 as a husband acting towards his wife in the same self-sacrificial way as Jesus loving the church.

Women were also commanded to obediently submit respectfully to their own husbands (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18). Peter adds that they were to cultivate a gentle and quiet spirit that was beautiful to God and of immense value in the marriage (1 Peter 3:4). This was the reciprocal relationship of a godly marriage on a behavioral level. The commanded attitudes and behavior of believers in marriage is the foundation and the formula for a Christian marriage. But soon it gets back to dutiful, obedient, often unemotional, and detached relationships. So Paul says that it was imperative to go further. Titus is given the key to flourishing marriages and homes—train the younger women in how to cultivate a loving friendship (phileo) with their husbands. This is emotional love.

Agape love is never used in the Bible to describe sexual love or responsibility because emotional love can't be commanded. The beautiful, intoxicating love that God designed for marriages to have sexually is emotional and those emotions can't be commanded. We can't make someone feel a certain way; we can command them to "do" something but not "feel" a certain way. Genuine, Biblical, marital, sexual love is emotional intimacy in the highest degree. God commands willful, agape love; but the emotional phileo love of friendship and sexual intimacy can't be commanded—it must be learned.

When the younger women saw how the older women loved, respected, admired, and were best friends with their husbands—they were drawn to see that close and intimate friendships with husbands were possible and very profitable for daily life. They learned how to encourage their own husband, how to build him up, how to surprise him with their affections, and how to cultivate a life-long growing and deepening friendship.

The best way to calm a home and to fill a home with joy and peace is to have a husband and wife who are best friends--intimately, emotionally, and spiritually.

What are some practical steps a Titus two woman mentoring a younger woman in the faith would teach? Here would be some wonderful starters:

1. Decide that you will make your own husband your number one most important human relationship of life over your parents, brothers, sisters, and friends.
2. Begin to seek your husband's friendship and love ahead of all other human relationships, including your children.
3. Begin examining your lifestyle and schedule to see if you are intentionally "spoiling your husband rotten" if you are doing so as a way of life, then you can be sure that you are his best friend and are truly "loving" your husband.

Here are some habits to cultivate to keep on in your love for your own husband:

- Pray for your husband daily.
- Plan for him daily things like: special acts of kindness, special dinners, special times alone, special meals alone, early bedtimes for the children, going to bed at the same time.

- Prepare for him daily: prepare your heart with being clothed with God's love; prepare the house; prepare your appearance; prepare your greeting; set the table; clear out all visitors; stay off the phone; pray for his arrival.
- Please him daily.
- Protect your time with him.
- Physically love him, let him know that you are available at any time that would please him.
- Positively respond to him.
- Praise him.
- Pray without ceasing.

"Younger women" refers to those women who are able to bear children or are still rearing children. Since women can bear children well into their forties and the main duties of raising a child last for about twenty years, a woman under sixty could be considered young in the biblical sense (1 Tim. 5:9). What qualities ought to characterize her life? Love their husbands: One word in the Greek text, *philandros*, is translated "love their husbands." Paul used the same terms to describe godly widows (1 Tim. 5:9). It means to be a one-man woman, totally devoted to one's husband. I've had women tell me that their husbands are no longer lovable. But having that attitude is disobedience to the clear Word of God. To help your attitude, keep in mind that loving your husband doesn't mean you'll always feel the rush of emotion that characterized your love at the beginning of your relationship. A recent cover story in Time magazine explained that those initial feelings change in a couple of years because of chemical changes and mellow into something deeper (Paul Gray, "What Is Love?" [15 Feb. 1993]:47-51). Marriage is a contented commitment that goes beyond feelings to a devotedness—to a level of friendship that is deep and satisfying. If you don't love your husband, you need to train yourself to love him. Serve him kindly and graciously day by day and soon you will make such a great investment in him, you will say to yourself, I've put too much of myself into this guy not to love him! It is a sin to disobey this command.

The godly older women have the responsibility of teaching the younger women how to be successful wives, mothers, and housekeepers; and the younger women have the responsibility of listening and obeying. The Christian home was a totally new thing, and young women saved out of paganism would have to get accustomed to a whole new set of priorities and privileges. Those who had unsaved husbands would need special encouragement.

The greatest priority in a home should be love. If a wife loved her husband and her children, she was well on the way to making the marriage and the home a success. In our Western society, a man and a woman fall in love and then get married; but in the East, marriages were less romantic. Often the two got married and then had to learn to love each other. (Eph. 5:18–33 is probably the best Scripture for a husband and wife who really want to love each other in the will of God.)

## **Grace-Energized-Women: Teach and Model Godliness**

### **EBG: Message Thirty-Two (070520AM)**

When the Gospel of the life-changing grace of Jesus Christ entered the Roman world of the New Testament, the condition of family life was very bleak. Paganism had all but erased the plans God had left for marriage and the family.

When Christ's church entered the world sharing His grace, life was very dark. Christian marriages and homes were started in a sin-warped, sin-darkened world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

Men didn't know about their role as men in the home and church; and women didn't understand their gender-specific roles in the home and at church.

Husbands had never heard about servant leadership, and women had never had gracious, Spirit-energized submission modeled for them by their mothers or anyone else they knew.

The grace that Titus 2:1-13 offered empowered the believers to overcome every level of culture in the New Testament world that was completely antagonistic to the Christian home.

- First, the Old Testament Jewish culture had moved away from God's plan for marriage and the home by expanding the divorce provisions of Deuteronomy 24 to include anything a husband didn't like. By Christ's day divorce was commonplace and expected. Many men felt women were only an object to be used. A common prayer that has survived through the centuries contained the following words that reflected the perception of women held in those days: "God, I thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman." Grace taught them to deny this error.
- Next, the secular Greek culture that had influenced the world before the New Testament times had decimated women. In Greek society men were allowed to have concubines and consorts and maintained wives for legitimate heirs. Culturally across the pagan world, women were considered to be little more than servants[1]. Grace taught them to deny this error.
- Finally, the first century Roman society, built upon the Greek society, plunged the family even deeper into darkness. Divorce became widespread, and as affluence increased, family life decreased. Many women of the Roman world chose to not have children because it ruined the looks of their bodies. Grace taught them to deny this error.

So what plan did God have to penetrate such an antagonistic culture? How would God get His gospel to the furthest corners of the Roman World of Paul's day? The plan was simple. God said His saving grace would change people from the inside out. Then His grace taught, modeled, and exhibited by Paul and Titus would produce mature believers.

Steeped in such a family-unfriendly culture, men and women who were gloriously saved did not automatically become great wives and mothers, or husbands and fathers. When they came to Christ and were forgiven, God graciously gave them everything they needed to become godly wives, mothers, husbands, and fathers. But, they needed something else. They needed worship services that taught them to believe correctly, and then they needed mature believers to disciple them in how to behave correctly.

Then mature godly women would each find a younger woman in the church and spend time with her teaching her how to change her attitude, her marriage, and her family.

These new believers needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices; and those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

Modeling seems to be among the big dreams of many young ladies in our culture today. But the best and most rewarding modeling career is with God. The spiritual shape of a woman is what matters eternally, not her physical shape. And, with godly modeling the rewards last forever!

And that is the vital spiritual mentoring ministry which we find captured for us in Titus two.

### Christ's Church Used Coaches in Godly Living

Christ's church grew into the potent force for changing the world in the quiet, nurturing sessions that Titus two men and women performed in practical discipleship. Just as important as the preaching and teaching of the doctrines of God's Word was the modeling and nurturing of individual saints through practical hands-on lessons in godly living.

For just a moment please follow along in your Bibles in Titus 2:1-8, as I again read those 12 special character traits for men and women. Then we will go back to our word-by-word look at the Titus two woman of God.

*v. 1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: v. 2 that the **older men** be:*

1. Sober,
2. Reverent,
3. Temperate,
4. Sound in faith,
5. [Sound in] love,
6. [Sound in] patience;

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

1. Reverent in behavior,
2. Not slanderers,
3. Not given to much wine,
4. Teachers of good things— v. 4
5. That they admonish

*the young women*

1. To love their husbands,
2. To love their children, v. 5
3. To be discreet,
4. Chaste,
5. Homemakers,
6. Good,
7. Obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

*v. 6 Likewise exhort the young men*

1. To be sober-minded, v. 7
2. In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works;
3. In doctrine showing integrity,
4. Reverence,
5. Incorruptibility, v. 8
6. Sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. (NKJV)

When God gets to pick the curriculum for His Church, what does He choose to be taught? He lays down--

### **The Twelve Characteristics of Women Highly Useful to God**

Women who are highly useful to God have these characteristics. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus two woman and the Titus two man.

The whole goal of a Titus two woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

Paul did not call for Titus as the pastor to train all the women in these qualities God wanted them to cultivate; rather he called upon the godly older women of Christ's church. He singles out the women of faith, those who had already learned to love their husbands, learned to love their children, and learned to be reverent, godly, modest and wise, and charged them with seeking out and meeting with every younger woman in the church.

The older women are to have mastered all 12 and the younger women are trained in the last seven.

*v. 3a "the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior"* (1) Living as a Priest for God.

First the godly character of the older woman in the faith is profiled. Without a reverent lifestyle behaving like a living sacrifice, dedicated to God, none of the rest even matter. That is why Paul starts here first!

Paul first draws a word from the Roman world to capture the entire bearing of these godly role model women in Christ's church. The Greek word translated "reverent" is used only here in the Bible, and it conveys the idea of priest-like. That word for 'acting as a representative of a god' is the word Paul uses to describe the devout and godly character of the Titus two woman. Older women are to live like holy priests serving in the presence of God. Their sacred, personal devotion to the Lord has slowly come to influence every aspect of their lives.

Godly older women have simply taken Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, and Galatians 2:20 seriously.

Bodies presented as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, not conformed to this world, but with transformed and renewed minds, in bodies that are temples of the Holy Spirit glorifying God in your body and spirit, which are God's; no longer living for me, but Christ living through me.

They have presented themselves to the Lord, they have begun to live life the way God asked them to live—as a walking temple of God, as a consecrated priest of God, as a living sacrifice, and as a bondservant of the Lord.

Godly women Living as a Priest for God;

*v. 3b "not slanderers" (2) with Guarded Tongues*

Next Paul turns the spotlight on the hardest member of the body to control, according to James, the tongue. Twice in his epistles Paul targets a woman's habits of her 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. 1 Timothy 3:11 "In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything." (NIV)

James 3:2-6 tells us that a tongue out of control indicates a life out of control; and both can cause much destruction. James goes on to note that the source of all wickedness, especially of an uncontrolled tongue, is hell; and it is Satan who is at the root of all gossip, all harmful talk, and all slander. If you are damaging the reputation and ministry of others, you are a tool of the devil.



In fact the word “slanderers” here in Titus 2:3 is diabolos, the very name of Satan used of him 34 times in the New Testament. Satan has been a false accuser and so each time he incites a believer to do so, they are doing Satan’s work. Satan is the ultimate source of all evil, the root of all wrong behavior; and since James says the tongue is capable of causing great evil, Satan is always close at hand.

Godly Titus two women never are to surrender their tongues to the devil.

They are prompted by the Holy Spirit to make sure that what they say is absolutely true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report before they say it—lest they discredit their ministry effectiveness as a godly Titus two woman.

One common type of talk that hurts is called gossip and comes in many forms that all of us, and especially those who earnestly seek to be a Titus two man or woman, should always avoid: malicious talk, rationalized gossip/talk, and “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, make some plans now to change our usage of our tongues?

Here are three great ways to change:

- Think first: before starting to say something pause a few seconds and ask are these words--true or false; exaggerated or accurate; healing or cutting; grateful or complaining?
- 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 as 1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.
- 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, living as a Priest for God, with guarded tongues.

#### *v. 3c “not given to much wine” (3) and No Excesses*

The third godly characteristic Paul focuses upon is the self-controlled moderation that is to characterize women of every age in Christ's church. Godly women are Spirit-controlled in every part of their life. They resist excess in any area of daily life. They are not slaves to any substance, to any amusement, to any fashion, or to any attitude that does not please their Master in Heaven.

Most women in the early church were formerly pagans. Drunkenness was the norm for many women in that society. Drinking was the best way to forget about the problems of being a “slave” to a pagan man who looked upon his wife as a convenience that bore him legitimate children and enhanced his reputation in the community. Because this life was all there is to a pagan, hopelessness led to drunkenness. Paul said that prior to salvation they all were “without hope and without God (Ephesians 2:12).

Coming to Christ changed everything, but old habits are hard to break. The old ways of their husbands would come back, old pains from emotional and physical abuse would resurface, and the temptation to slip back to the intemperance of slavery to wine would grow strong. Lack of physical control of any appetite points to a spiritual immaturity. Both Timothy and Titus were told to beware of women returning to their old habits in this realm of drinking.

Today “not given to much” goes far beyond merely wine. There are so many forms of alcohol never imagined in the Biblical times that can be abused, plus drugs (both acceptable and unacceptable kinds) that can be abused, tobacco that can be abused,, wonderful varieties of food that can be abused, beautiful varieties of fashionable clothing that change with every season that can be abused, housing options, exercise options, recreation options—all that can be abused and become addictions.

There is a generation of believers who have never tasted a drop of alcohol and pride themselves in that choice—while overeating with daily regularity; and both are condemned by God in Proverbs 23:19-21 side-by-side.

Because of Romans 14:15-21 and I Corinthians 8:9-13, we see that though the Bible never forbids wine drinking, our liberty is limited by the consciences of other believers and our testimony to the world. The lesson of temperance is consistency.

We must be cautious of any intemperance; and “not be given to” too much of anything, be it the use of money, the enjoyment of leisure, or the establishment of a house to live in. Whatever we do is to be tempered by the glory of God. He must be the object and focus of all we do. 1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. NKJV

“Modern society has elevated fashion almost to the point of idolatry. Clothing stores, newspaper and magazine advertising, and television commercials are like giant billboards that continually proclaim, “We covet clothes.”

Expensive, often ostentatious jewelry for both men and women is becoming more and more prevalent as a means to flaunt material prosperity and glorify self. We are continually goaded to put our bodies and apparel on parade.

Godly women are Spirit-controlled in every part of their life. They resist excess in any area of daily life. They are not slaves to any substance, any amusement, any fashion, or any attitude that does not please their Master in Heaven.

Godly women live as a priest for God; with guarded tongues; and no excesses. Godly women seek to be reverent in their behavior, careful in all their conversations, and never enslaved to anything but Christ.

*v. 3d “teachers of good things” (4) with visible integrity*

The fourth type of godly behavior in Titus two women is spiritual integrity--godly women live what they teach. They train others in the pattern they have learned. Their walk speaks louder than their talk.

Their life is daily placed under God's control in all areas: their tongues, their appetites, and their habits. They do not overindulge themselves, they are not overweight gluttons, they are not pleasure-hungry, and they are not malicious talkers.

These godly older women were noble in everything, and in the way they lived life they taught by their actions what is good!

Titus 2:3 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. NIV

Paul always stressed preaching and teaching what he was already living. In his instructions to Timothy he said:

1 Timothy 4:16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. NASB

Titus was to encourage these older women to develop a ministry of teaching younger women what is good.

Younger women with children were to keep their primary focus at home (see Titus 2:4-5), but the older women would do well to reach outside their homes and share what they had learned with those who would profit from it most.

A godly woman teaches by her life what is good in God's sight. She carefully chooses the “better part” as Mary did in contrast to Martha. Titus two women see every area of their lives as an open book that should and does teach Christ's gracious Lordship. They can say as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 11:1 “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” NKJV

And who is an older woman? Technically, in this passage it was a woman who was past raising her children. Some commentators even say the age of sixty, as Paul does in the widow's list of I Timothy 5. But in reality there is no chronological age given.

For every woman in this church there are some older and some younger. To those older, you are to look and see if they are an example of Christ—if they are, ask them to

show you what they have learned and how they do it. For those who are younger, you are to seek to get into their lives and help them bring every area of their lives under the gracious Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Every young lady and woman in this church should have as their highest desire the goal of being first a Titus two student of some godly older in-the-faith woman. And, the highest honor, the greatest goal in the life of every older woman in this church is to have the honor of being that older woman-in-the-faith.

If you have children, that is where you must start. If they are grown and gone, ask God to begin filling your lives with younger women into whom you can prayerfully pour the love and wisdom of Christ gleaned from His Word and by your years of walking in the Spirit!

Every godly woman has the opportunity to teach the younger generation of women in the church. This instruction is to occur in informal settings, such as one on one, small groups, or women's Bible studies. And this instruction is both by word and example. Many young women today were not raised under a biblical family model. That's a challenge for the older women in the church.

Godly women seek to be reverent in their behavior, careful in all their conversations, never enslaved to anything but Christ, and teaching by example the way to follow Christ.

Godly women live as a priest for God; with guarded tongues; and no excesses; with visible integrity.

*v.4a "that they admonish" (5) as earnest mentors*

This one word is variously rendered into four different English words by the top four versions: "teach" (KJV); "admonish" (NKJV); "train" (NIV); and "encourage" (NAS). The context and the word imply that this was to be a process of teaching, explaining, encouraging, training, and holding the young wives to a standard that was unfamiliar to them and yet vital for the success of their marriages and families.

One of the strongest forces for spiritual ministry in the local church lies with the older believers. Those who are retired have time for service. It is vital that we mobilize and use these important people. In my own 30 years of pastoral ministry, I have been constantly helped and encouraged by godly older saints who knew how to pray, how to teach God's Word, visit, troubleshoot, and help edify Christ's church.

In teaching what is good they "encourage the young women" (Titus 2:4). This opening phrase of Titus 2:4 "that they admonish" is one Greek word in Paul's letter, the word is *sophronizo* and means, "to train someone in self-control, restore to senses, admonish and exhort earnestly."

“You will note the similarity of this form to characteristics of elders, “prudent” (1 Tim. 3:2), and older men, “sensible” (Titus 2:2). Older women are to train the younger women to learn the art of self-restraint. This training process requires that you older women be committed to being responsible, confrontive, and affirming in an ongoing relationship with a younger woman.”

The first four spiritual qualities are all present to make this quality work. God wants a godly woman whose life speaks louder than her words. A woman whose character is noticed prompts other women to examine their own lives and seek to emulate her joy, her peace, her walk in the Spirit in evident and practical ways. The Titus two older woman-in-the-faith’s life is a pattern for others to use in shaping their own lives.

So the older-in-the-faith, godly women of the church were:

- To behave like holy priestesses of the Almighty God,
- To show restraint and discipline of appetites and words,
- To live what they speak so that the younger women want to learn from them how to live and please God in their lives and families.

So what was their very first lesson? Training younger women in loving their own husbands!

Godly women live as a priest for God; with guarded tongues; and no excesses; with visible integrity; as earnest mentors

*v. 4b “the young women to love their husbands” (6) Wives who are their husband’s best friend*

A Christian home in a pagan culture was a radically new thing.

Young women saved out of paganism needed to get accustomed to a whole new set of priorities and privileges; and those who had unsaved husbands would need special encouragement.

The Titus two Models had the responsibility of training the younger women how to be successful wives, mothers, and housekeepers; and the younger women had the responsibility of listening and obeying.

Among the Bible believing women of the first century, there was a big challenge in “loving” their husbands. For various reasons and in various degrees those women found themselves with either minimal or no “feelings of love” for their husbands. Believing wives almost always want to obey the Lord, thus they submit and fulfill their responsibilities to their husbands—but often only dutifully and not lovingly. It’s not just that loving your husband is a virtue, Paul says that not loving him in a way that he can feel, is a sin!

In Paul's day, men and women were saved out of a culture where romantic love usually did not exist in marriages. Wives were only seen as the trusted keepers of the home and bearers of the children. Emotional love, psychological needs, and sexual desires were satisfied outside of marriage by most husbands. The opportunities for illicit sex in the Roman world were endless. For most women this was in some ways a relief as they did not have to "perform" sexually on a regular basis for their husbands. But the emotional super-glue that the marital relationship produces was thus absent. Salvation stopped the immorality in most believing men's lives back then, but salvation did not make them or their wives instantly close, intimate, and life-sharing friends and lovers.

Just as modern pre-marital moral laxity has scarred many young couples into a troubled, often superficial marital relationship, so were most of the marriages of the New Testament church. What was Paul's Spirit prompted answer? What was to be the way to solve the distant, detached, and constantly tempted husband daily buffeted with the overpowering allurements of the flagrantly immoral Roman culture?

Christ led Paul to deploy a legion of older-in-the-faith, godly women to go from house to house, become a close and trusted friend of those young wives, and train them in how to become their husband's best, closest, dearest, and most intimate friends.

Physical or sexual love without romance is soon empty and meaningless; and as Solomon (who had a lot of experience) said, soon becomes "Like gravel in the mouth" (Proverbs 20:17). Paul knew that to protect those newly believing husbands and fathers from the tidal waves of temptation, they must have a vibrant, attractive, satisfying emotional and physical relationship with their wife. Husbands who are drawn to think about and want to see their wife throughout a day away from home, are protected from attraction and distraction by a wicked world about them. Loving, caring, romantic wives are trained not born.

The key to understanding this bold new dimension of the early church's training is in the word Paul uses for love. Every believer has already repeatedly been commanded to "love" with agape love, which is an action. We are commanded to act in a loving way towards each other, our saved and unsaved friends, and even our enemies. This agape love is not a feeling, it is an action. Paul explains agape love in Ephesians 5:25 and Colossians 3:19 as a husband acting towards his wife in the same self-sacrificial way as Jesus loving the church.

Women were also commanded to obediently submit respectfully to their own husbands (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18). Peter adds that they were to cultivate a gentle and quiet spirit that was beautiful to God and of immense value in the marriage (1 Peter 3:4). This was the reciprocal relationship of a godly marriage on a behavioral level. The commanded attitudes and behavior of believers in marriage is the foundation and the formula for a Christian marriage. But soon it gets back to dutiful, obedient, often unemotional, and detached relationships. So Paul says that it was imperative to go further. Titus is given the key to flourishing marriages and homes—train the younger women in how to cultivate a loving friendship (phileo) with their husbands. This is emotional love.

Agape love is never used in the Bible to describe sexual love or responsibility because emotional love can't be commanded. The beautiful, intoxicating love that God designed for marriages to have sexually is emotional and those emotions can't be commanded. We can't make someone feel a certain way; we can command them to "do" something but not "feel" a certain way. Genuine, Biblical, marital, sexual love is emotional intimacy in the highest degree. God commands willful, agape love; but the emotional phileo love of friendship and sexual intimacy can't be commanded—it must be learned.

When the younger women saw how the older women loved, respected, admired, and were best friends with their husbands, they were drawn to see that close and intimate friendships with husbands were possible and very profitable for daily life. They learned how to encourage their own husband, how to build him up, how to surprise him with their affections, and how to cultivate a life-long growing and deepening friendship.

"Younger women" refers to those women who are able to bear children or are still rearing children. Since women can bear children well into their forties and the main duties of raising a child last for about twenty years, a woman under sixty could be considered young in the biblical sense (1 Tim. 5:9).

What qualities ought to characterize her life? Love their husbands: One word in the Greek text, philandros is translated "love their husbands." Paul used the same terms to describe godly widows (1 Tim. 5:9). It means to be a woman totally devoted to one's husband. Some women say that their husbands are no longer lovable; but having that attitude is disobedience to the clear Word of God. To help your attitude, keep in mind that loving your husband doesn't mean you'll always feel the rush of emotion that characterized your love at the beginning of your relationship. Marriage is a contented commitment that goes beyond feelings to a devotedness—to a level of friendship that is deep and satisfying. If you don't love your husband, you need to train yourself to love him. Serve him kindly and graciously day by day and soon you will make such a great investment in him, you will say to yourself, I've put too much of myself into this guy not to love him! It is a sin to disobey this command.

The best way to fill a home with joy and peace is to have a husband and wife who are best friends--intimately, emotionally, and spiritually.

What are some practical steps a Titus two woman mentoring a younger woman in the faith would teach? Here would be some wonderful starters:

- Decide that you will make your own husband your number one most important human relationship of life over your parents, brothers, sisters, and friends.
- Start to seek your husband's friendship and love ahead of all other human relationships, including your children.
- Begin examining your lifestyle and schedule to see if you are intentionally "spoiling your husband rotten" if you are doing so as a way of life, then you can be sure that you are his best friend and are truly "loving" your husband.

Here are some habits to cultivate to keep on in your love for your own husband:

- Pray for your husband daily.
- Plan for him daily things like: special acts of kindness, special dinners, special times alone, special meals alone, early bedtimes for the children, going to bed at the same time.
- Prepare for him daily: prepare your heart with being clothed with God's love; prepare the house; prepare your appearance; prepare your greeting; set the table; clear out all visitors; stay off the phone; pray for his arrival.
- Please him daily.
- Protect your time with him.
- Physically love him, let him know that you are available at any time that would please him.
- Positively respond to him.
- Praise him.
- Pray without ceasing

The classic book on Christian marriage by Ed Wheat summarized the marriage God wants us to have in four rules to be followed contained in the acronym BEST. For the best marriage possible live God's way by a series of small choices: Blessings, Edifying, Sharing, Touching. Wheat defines these areas as:

- Blessing: means to speak well of your husband or wife, show kindness towards them, express gratitude and thankfulness for all they do, and pray for God's richest blessings upon them.
- Edifying: means to build them up. A husband does this by praying for his wife; and the wife does this by seeking to respond in a positive way towards her husband.
- Sharing: means always looking for how to do things together like—listening to each other, admiring each others accomplishments, learning more about each other's likes and dislikes, investigating ways to please each other, and finally reporting on your day to each other so they share your life.
- Touching: means to just like to be as close to the one you love as is physically possible. Either remember what you were like when you were dating your wife, or notice some young couple headed towards marriage. They intentionally just can't stay apart, they laugh, talk, look at each other, hold hands every moment possible, sit as close together as possible, and so on. At that stage they can face any problem and go on because they are so strengthened by the warmth and depth of their love.

God commands us in Proverbs to be intoxicated by the love of our partner (Proverbs 5:18-19). If you are married and not intoxicated by the love of your partner, you are missing the best marriage possible.

Go back and by God's grace rekindle the blessing, edifying, sharing, and touching that always builds a strong, close, encouraging partnership for life. Be a beacon of Christ's



love reflecting to an empty and hopeless world that true love is possible and can be shared for as long as you live.

The greatest priority in a home should be love. If a wife loved her husband and her children, she was well on the way to making the marriage and the home a success. In our Western society, a man and a woman fall in love and then get married; but in the East, marriages were less romantic. Often the two got married and then had to learn to love each other. (Eph. 5:18-33 is probably the best Scripture for a husband and wife who really want to love each other in the will of God.)

Godly women live as a priest for God; with guarded tongues; and no excesses; with visible integrity; as earnest mentors of-- wives who are their husband's best friend.

---

[1] Demosthenes (384 BC to 322 BC) wrote, "We have courtesans 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 for our household affairs?" The Biblical family also faced the challenge of feminism as "women desired to do everything men did, some women went into wrestling, sword fighting, and various other pursuits traditionally considered to be uniquely masculine, and increasingly took the initiative in getting a divorce". MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians 5*, electronic edition (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

## **Grace-Energized-Wives Love Their Husbands**

### **EBG: Message Thirty-Three (070527AM)**

We were saved by God's grace; and we are kept by God's grace; and we live in a way that pleases God and earns His rewards—energized by His grace.

These past few weeks we have been looking at God's high calling for women in His Church, and sometimes it may seem that living that way is impossible—and that is the truth. Titus two women live a humanly impossible life. They must be energized by God's grace to live that way!

So step back and survey the whole scope of Christ's New Testament church and His plan for us. As believers this morning we are on the journey of new beginnings through Christ—energized each step of the way by grace.

Titus 2 is a road map for all who want their life to count. It is God's pathway of disciplines to choose each day in the power of the Spirit of grace.

God's plan to work in the world is His church[1]. Christ's church may be described as a group of people, energized by grace, doing the impossible for the glory of God. A key insight into God's plan to reach the world through Christ's church is in Titus chapter 2.

The verses of this chapter contain a call to First Century men and women energized by grace to live an extraordinary spiritual life in a very unspiritual culture.

When grace energizes us we want to deny ungodliness in any form we find it cropping up in our lives. When God's grace energizes us we want to mortify lust in any form in our lives.

When we study this idea of the older-in-the-faith, godly, Titus two woman, we are describing a woman who has chosen to learn from God how to live her life day-by-day and step-by-step in a way that pleases God. Women energized by grace are useful to God.

When the Gospel of Jesus Christ entered the Roman world of the New Testament the landscape was very bleak. Christ's church was born into a sin-warped, sin-darkened world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

But men and women who were gloriously saved did not automatically become great wives and mothers, or husbands and fathers. When they came to Christ and were forgiven, God graciously gave them everything they needed to become godly wives, mothers, husbands, and fathers. But, they needed something else. They need worship services that taught them to believe correctly, and then they needed small group discipleship times to learn how to behave correctly. Correct behavior is behavior energized by grace.

Titus two describes how God works in the life of a believer. When we were saved and the gospel of grace began in our lives, the evidence is seen in the sanctification process. Grace always teaches genuine believers how to say no to sin in any form.

The Titus Two woman is an imperfect person, saved by God, and energized by His grace to live an exemplary life as described in Titus 2:3-4. So we could easily say that:

- Women energized by grace—are reverent in their behavior,
- Women energized by grace—are not slanderers,
- Women energized by grace—are not given to much wine,
- Women energized by grace—are teachers of good things, and
- Women energized by grace—are discipling younger women.

Those new believers, fresh out of paganism, needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices and those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

And that is the vital ministry which we find captured for us in Titus 2.

### **Christ's Church Used Grace Energized Coaches in Godly Living**

Just as important as the preaching and teaching of the doctrines of God's Word was the modeling and nurturing of individual saints through practical hands-on lessons in godly living.

The building blocks of Christ's church are Spirit-filled men and women whose lives are given daily as obedient servants of God.

God wants men and women that will mentor, nurture, and coach godly living for His church. These individuals believe that God has called them to touch one life at a time for His glory.

For just a moment please follow along in your Bibles in Titus 2:1-8, as I again read those special character traits for men and women.

*v.1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: v.2 that the [grace energized] older men be:*

1. Sober,
2. Reverent,
3. Temperate,
4. Sound in faith,
5. [Sound in] love,
6. [Sound in] patience;

*v. 3 the [grace energized] older women likewise, that they be*

1. Reverent in behavior,
2. Not slanderers,
3. Not given to much wine,
4. Teachers of good things v. 4
5. That they admonish

*the [grace energized] young women*

1. To love their husbands,
2. To love their children, v. 5
3. To be discreet,
4. Chaste,
5. Homemakers,
6. Good,
7. Obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

*v. 6 Likewise exhort the [grace energized] young men*

1. To be sober-minded, v. 7
2. In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works;
3. In doctrine showing integrity,
4. Reverence,
5. Incorruptibility, v. 8
6. Sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. (NKJV)

When God gets to pick the curriculum for His Church, what does He choose to be taught? He lays down 12 vital, godly character qualities for women and 12 vital, godly character qualities for men.

Women energized by grace who have these characteristics are highly useful to God. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus 2 woman and the Titus 2 man.

The whole goal of a Titus two woman is to train younger women in biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

***v. 3a "the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior" (1)*** Women energized by grace live like holy servants of God.

Paul starts first using the word translated "reverent" that conveys the idea of 'acting as a representative of a god'. That is how Paul describes the devout and godly character of the Titus two woman. Older women are to live like holy priests serving in the presence

of God. Their sacred, personal devotion to the Lord has slowly come to influence every aspect of their lives.

Godly older women have simply taken Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, and Galatians 2:20 seriously.

***Bodies presented as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, not conformed to this world, but with transformed and renewed minds, in bodies that are temples of the Holy Spirit glorifying God in your body and spirit, which are God's; no longer living for me, but Christ living through me.***

They have presented themselves to the Lord, they have begun to live life the way God asked them to live—as a walking temple of God, as a consecrated priest of God, as a living sacrifice, and as a bondservant of the Lord.

**Women energized by grace live like holy servants of God.**

**v. 3b “not slanderers” (2)** Women energized by grace guard their tongues.

Godly Titus two women never are to surrender their tongues to the devil. They are prompted by the Holy Spirit to make sure that what they say is absolutely true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report before they say it—lest they discredit their ministry effectiveness as a godly Titus two woman.

They **think first**: before starting to say something, pause a few seconds and ask if these words are pleasing to God. They also **talk less**, making each a time to speak as Peter said, speaking as the oracles of God. And they start that practice **now**. Don't waste your greatest tool.

**Women energized by grace live like holy servants of God and guard their tongues.**

**v. 3c “not given to much wine” (3)** Women energized by grace are not enslaved to anything but Christ.

Godly women are Spirit-controlled in every part of their life. They resist excess in any area of daily life. They are not slaves to any substance, to any amusement, to any fashion, or to any attitude that does not please their Master in Heaven.

**Women energized by grace live like holy servants of God, guard their tongues—and women energized by grace are not enslaved to any lust.**

**v. 3d “teachers of good things” (4)** Women energized by grace have visible integrity.

Titus Two women have spiritual integrity--godly women live what they teach. They train others in the pattern they have learned. Their walk speaks louder than their talk.

These godly older women were noble in everything and in the way they lived life they taught by their actions what is good!

**Women energized by grace live like holy servants of God, guard their tongues, are not enslaved to any lust—and women energized by grace have visible integrity.**

**v.4a “that they admonish” (5)** Women energized by grace are earnest mentors.

This one word is variously rendered into four different English words by the top four versions: “teach” (KJV); “admonish” (NKJV); “train” (NIV); and “encourage” (NAS). The context and the word imply that this was to be a process of teaching, explaining, encouraging, training, and holding the young wives to a standard that was unfamiliar to them and yet vital for the success of their marriages and families.

One of the strongest forces for spiritual ministry in the local church lies with the older believers. Those who are retired have time for service. It is vital that we mobilize and use these important people. In my own 30 years of pastoral ministry, I have been constantly helped and encouraged by godly older saints who knew how to pray, teach God's Word, visit, troubleshoot, and help edify Christ's church.

**Women energized by grace live like holy servants of God, guard their tongues, are not enslaved to any lust, have visible integrity—and women energized by grace become earnest mentors of younger women.**

**v. 4b “the young women to love their husbands” (6)** Women energized by grace love their husbands.

A Christian home in a pagan culture was a radically new thing.

Young women saved out of paganism needed to get accustomed to a whole new set of priorities and privileges; and those who had unsaved husbands would need special encouragement.

The Titus two models had the responsibility of training the younger women how to be successful wives, mothers, and housekeepers; and the younger women had the responsibility of listening and obeying.

Among the Bible-believing women of the first century, there was a big challenge in “loving” their husbands. For various reasons and in various degrees those women found themselves with either minimal or no “feelings of love” for their husbands.

Those believing wives in the early church, like those today, almost always want to obey the Lord, thus they submit and fulfill their responsibilities to their husbands—but often only dutifully and not lovingly. It's not just that loving your husband is a virtue; Paul says that **not loving him** in a way that he can feel *is a sin*!

The key to understanding this bold new dimension of the early church's training is in the word Paul uses for love. Every believer has already repeatedly been commanded to "love" with agape love which is an action. We are commanded to act in a loving way towards each other, our saved and unsaved friends, and even our enemies. This agape love is not a feeling, it is an action. Paul explains agape love in Ephesians 5:25 and Colossians 3:19 as a husband acting towards his wife in the same self-sacrificial way as Jesus loving the church.

Women were also commanded to obediently submit respectfully to their own husbands (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18). Peter adds that they were to cultivate a gentle and quiet spirit that was beautiful to God and of immense value in the marriage (1 Peter 3:4). This was the reciprocal relationship of a godly marriage on a behavioral level. The commanded attitudes and behavior of believers in marriage is the foundation and the formula for a Christian marriage. But soon it gets back to dutiful, obedient, often unemotional, and detached relationships. So Paul says that it was imperative to go further. Titus is given the key to flourishing marriages and homes—train the younger women in how to cultivate a loving friendship (*phileo*) with their husbands. This is emotional love.

Agape love is never used in the Bible to describe sexual love or responsibility because emotional love can't be commanded. The beautiful, intoxicating love that God designed for marriages to have sexually is emotional and those emotions can't be commanded.

We can't make someone feel a certain way; we can command them to "do" something but not "feel" a certain way. Genuine, Biblical, marital, sexual love is emotional intimacy in the highest degree. God commands willful, *agape* love; but the emotional *phileo* love of friendship and sexual intimacy can't be commanded—it must be learned.

When the younger women saw how the older women loved, respected, admired, and were best friends with their husbands, they were drawn to see that close and intimate friendships with husbands were possible and very profitable for daily life. They learned how to encourage their own husband, how to build him up, how to surprise him with their affections, and how to cultivate a life-long growing and deepening friendship. What was the first lesson Paul asks to be taught to the younger women?

*One word in the Greek text, **philandrois** is translated "love their husbands." It means to be a woman totally devoted to one's husband. Some women say that their husbands are no longer lovable; but having that attitude is disobedience to the clear Word of God.*

*To help your attitude, keep in mind that loving your husband doesn't mean you'll always feel the rush of emotion that characterized your love at the beginning of your relationship. Marriage is a contented commitment that goes beyond feelings to a devotedness—to a level of friendship that is deep and satisfying.*

*If you don't love your husband, you need to train yourself to love him. Serve him kindly and graciously day by day and soon you will make such a great investment in him, you*

*will say to yourself, I've put too much of myself into this guy not to love him! It is a sin to disobey this command. [2]*

The best way to fill a home with joy and peace is to have a husband and wife who are best friends--intimately, emotionally, and spiritually.

In Paul's day, men and women were saved out of a culture where romantic love usually did not exist in marriages. Wives were only seen as the trusted keepers of the home and bearers of the children. Emotional love, psychological needs, and sexual desires were satisfied outside of marriage by most husbands. The opportunities for illicit sex in the Roman world were endless.

For some women in the Roman world this was a relief as they did not have to "perform" sexually on a regular basis for their husbands. But the emotional and relational super-glue that the sexual dimension of the marital relationship produced was thus absent. God designed marriage in the Garden of Eden to cause a man to "cleave" to his wife, which literally means to be glued together.

Salvation stopped the immorality in most believing men's lives back then, but salvation did not make them or their wives instantly close, intimate, and life-sharing friends and lovers.

Just as modern pre-marital moral laxity has scarred many young couples into a troubled, often superficial marital relationship, so were most of the marriages of the New Testament church. What was Paul's Spirit prompted answer? What was to be the way to solve the distant, detached, and constantly tempted husband daily buffeted with the overpowering allurements of the flagrantly immoral Roman culture?

Christ led Paul to deploy a legion of older-in-the-faith, godly women energized by grace to go from house to house, become a close and trusted friend of those young wives, and train them in how to become their husband's best, closest, dearest, and most intimate friends.

Physical or sexual love without romance is soon empty and meaningless; and as Solomon (who had a lot of experience) said, soon becomes "Like gravel in the mouth" (Proverbs 20:17). Paul knew that to protect those newly believing husbands and fathers from the tidal waves of temptation, they must have a vibrant, attractive, satisfying emotional and physical relationship with their wife.

Husbands who are drawn to think about and want to see their wife throughout a day away from home are protected from attraction and distraction by a wicked world about them. Paul told Titus that to fill the church with loving, caring, romantic wives who love their husbands in this Biblical way came through the example and training of the godly, older, grace energized women who faithfully taught and modeled that only God's grace can enable these younger women to act consistently that way.



What are some practical steps a Titus two woman mentoring a younger woman in the faith would teach? Here are some simple habits that a godly older woman actually sat down and taught my own wife when we were newlyweds living in California.

First, this godly Titus two woman sat Bonnie down and said there are three specific choices that make a wonderful start:

1. **Decide that you will make** your own husband your number one most important human relationship of life over all others including your parents, brothers, sisters, and friends.
2. **Start to seek your husband's friendship** and love ahead of all other human relationships, including your children.
3. **Begin examining your lifestyle** and schedule to see if you are intentionally "spoiling your husband rotten" if you are doing so as a way of life, then you can be sure that you are his best friend and are truly "loving" your husband.

Then she said let me explain what you can do to maintain such a high calling from God to love your husband. I still have the actual notes Bonnie was given of simple but powerful ways to cultivate and grow her love for me.

These truths worked and they may also help each of you in your love for your own husband:

1. **Pray** for your husband daily.
2. **Plan** for him daily things like: special acts of kindness, special dinners, special times alone, special meals alone, early bedtimes for the children, going to bed at the same time.
3. **Prepare** for him daily: prepare your heart with being clothed with God's love; prepare the house; prepare your appearance; prepare your greeting; set the table; clear out all visitors; stay off the phone; pray for his arrival.
4. **Please** him daily.
5. **Protect** your time with him.
6. **Physically** love him, let him know that you are available at any time that would please him.
7. **Positively** respond to him.
8. **Praise** him.
9. **Pray** without ceasing.

One of my dear friends has a course he teaches to mentor couples in Biblical love and respect. He always reminds them that each time a wife acts this way there is a spiritual deposit in her account in the Bank of Heaven. Women are rewarded for such love poured out upon their own husbands[4].

God commands us in Proverbs to be intoxicated by the love of our partner (Proverbs 5:18-19). If you are married and not intoxicated by the love of your partner, you are missing the best marriage possible.

Go back and by God's grace rekindle the blessing, edifying, sharing, and touching that always builds a strong, close, encouraging partnership for life. Be a beacon of Christ's love reflecting to an empty and hopeless world that true love is possible and can be shared for as long as you live.

The greatest priority in a home should be love. If a wife loved her husband and her children, she was well on the way to making the marriage and the home a success. In our Western society, a man and a woman fall in love and then get married; but in the East, marriages were less romantic. Often the two got married and then had to learn to love each other. (Eph. 5:18-33 is probably the best Scripture for a husband and wife who really want to love each other in the will of God.)

Godly women live as a priest for God, with guarded tongues and no excesses, with visible integrity, as earnest mentors of--wives who are their husband's best friend.

---

[1] Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (I Thessalonians 4:1). This mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). The message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible. But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** is spelled out in Titus 2:11-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

[2] John MacArthur, *Different By Design*, (Wheaton,: Victor Books) Marriage and Divorce (electronic edition), Logos.

[3] Adapted from Elizabeth George, *A Woman after God's Own Heart*, Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1997, chapters 7, 10, and 11.

[4] The classic book on Christian marriage by Ed Wheat summarized the marriage God wants us to have in 4 rules to be followed contained in the acronym BEST. For the best marriage possible live God's way by a series of small choices: Blessings, Edifying, Sharing, Touching. Wheat defines these areas as: **Blessing**: means to speak well of your husband or wife, show kindness towards them, express gratitude and thankfulness for all they do, and pray for God's richest blessings upon them. **Edifying**: means to build them up. A husband does this by praying his wife; and the wife does this by seeking to respond in a positive way towards her husband. **Sharing**: means always looking for how to do things together like—listening to each other, admiring each others accomplishments, learning more about each other's likes and dislikes, investigating ways to please each other, and finally reporting on your day to each other so they share your life. **Touching**: means to just like to be as close to the one you love as is physically possible. Either remember what you were like when you were dating your wife, or notice

some young couple headed towards marriage. They intentionally just can't stay apart, they laugh, talk, look at each other, hold hands ever moment possible, sit as close together as possible, and so on. At that stage they can face any problem and go on because they are so strengthened by the warmth and depth of their love.

## Grace-Energized-Mothers

### EBG: Message Thirty-Four (070610AM)

Ministry in Christ's church was never easy, even from the start. As we open Paul's letter to Pastor Titus, missionary church-planter to Crete—we look at the description of the cultural background of the congregation Titus served two thousand years ago.

*Titus 1:12-13 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith (NKJV)*

Wow! Just think of what a miracle it was to find a group of believers saved out of such a godless society. They came from centuries of culture dominated by **total** ('always') **untrustworthiness** ('liars'), **total out-of-control living** ('evil beasts'), and the **total undisciplined pursuit of personal lust-filled appetites** ('lazy gluttons').

Again we see from these two verses that when the Gospel of Jesus Christ entered the Roman world of the New Testament the landscape was very bleak. Christ's church was born into a sin-warped, sin-darkened world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

*Paul here quoted a line from a poem by Epimenides, a poet and philosopher who had lived in Crete 600 years earlier. The quotation reveals basic character flaws in the Cretans, giving them a bad reputation for lying, violence, and laziness. The reputation of the Cretans was so bad that the verb form of their name (kretizo) was used by the Greeks to indicate lying. Paul applied this familiar phrase to the false teachers.<sup>[1]</sup>*

But men and women who were gloriously saved did not automatically become great wives and mothers or husbands and fathers. When they came to Christ and were forgiven, God graciously gave them everything they needed to become godly wives, mothers, husbands, and fathers. But, they needed something else. They needed worship services that taught them to believe correctly, and then they needed small group discipleship times to learn how to behave correctly. Correct behavior is behavior energized by grace.

I really believe that this insight into the Cretan culture can stir our hearts to glorify the amazing grace and saving power of God.

- If the Gospel of Christ can reach into a culture of people who were the descendents of the wicked, pagan Old Testament Philistines (as in Goliath and David) and build them into grace-energized servants of Christ's church—**He can work with anyone.**
- If God can make saints out of people who had so descended in their personal character until Paul describes them with this trio of disparaging words "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons"—**He can change anyone no matter how weak, how wicked, how undisciplined.**

This letter to Titus should encourage every one of us that God is so wonderful, His grace is so powerful, and we are so in need of His work in our lives. The greatest truth is that He can change us no matter how bad we've been, and no matter how much baggage we have brought into our new life with Him.

The Cretan church was saved, bought from the slave market of sin (redeemed), but still had clinging to their lives the garbage of their culture. They had generations of bad habits, false thinking, and warped lives.

What was the plan God had in mind to transform these very un-saintly people? The same plan He has for all of us this morning. Save them by His grace and sanctify them by His Word.

As I worked over this morning's passage for the past two weeks I kept thinking about what the church in Crete must have looked like. Can you imagine congregation after congregation around that island of Crete that Titus had to visit? Each one had some form of the unpleasant odors of un-disposed of remnants of fleshly garbage. Each church had newly saved saints who were in varying degrees former totally untrustworthy liars, former totally out-of-control evil beasts, and former totally undisciplined, lazy gluttons!

Just like someone who smokes that can't smell the stale odor of smoke that reeks from all their clothing, car or home—so these former pagans couldn't smell all their fleshly habits that needed change. Like garbage left to rot smells until it is disposed of and cleansed away, so Titus was to start a spiritual search and dispose mission into the lives of the Cretans.

God wanted to shine the spotlight of His Word into their lives corporately, and then individually. As any garbage was exposed it was to be denied, and the area exposed to that garbage cleansed and freshened by the power of the sanctifying Spirit of God through His Word. That is the essence of Titus 2:12-14.

*Titus 2:12-14 **teaching** us that, **denying** ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,<sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,<sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. NKJV*

Two words stand out in v. 12. The word God chose for "teaching" is the word **paideuo** which speaks of training a child using discipline as needed. God wants us to be instructed, taught, trained, and whatever else is needed until we say no to sin.

The word "denying" is **arneomai** and means 'to refuse, reject, not accept, not take an offer of'. This is the word used for Peter's denials of the Lord after Gethsemane (Matthew 26:70, 72); and it is the same word for Moses when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Heb. 11:24). God wants us to not accept any stinking

garbage from the world, He wants us to refuse anything that will foul the fragrance of the worship we are to offer.

The mission Paul sent Titus out to do was to take the new believers and have them scrape off their lives anything that clung to them of the old life and mortify, sanctify, and purify away anything that was not pleasing to God.

The Cretans as new believers were out of whack in one way or another and smelled bad spiritually--their lives, their marriages, and their homes. And that is just the type of material God can use for His marvelous work of salvation. What they needed was long-term sanctification. They were just children-in-the-faith in need of a long bath in God's Word, administered by mothers and fathers-in-the-faith!

This need for removing remnants of garbage that stinks confronted me on Thursday night. I walked into our house for the first time in ten days and it smelled like a dumpster. I prowled around looking for where that horrible smell was coming from. Trash cans were checked, pantry potato bags, fruit bowl, and all came up clear. Then I saw a dark circle on the floor in front of the fridge. When I pulled open the door of that trusted 12 year old appliance there was the finest collection of colorful molds and layers of decay available anywhere in the city. Our compressor had died, and the result was a stinking mess. But because I value that appliance I had only one choice—to get rid of the garbage.

For the next six hours I bagged, hauled, washed, scraped, bleached and scrubbed that old friend in the kitchen until it was pure white again and mold and stink free. Refrigerators have no smell of their own; they just hold objects that begin to smell if allowed to. All it needed was to be washed and renewed and it would be back as good as new.

When Titus came to Crete to pastor Christ's church, it was sometime in the early 60's AD. As he arrived, the churches were filled with spiritual lives that smelled like a dumpster. The old rotted flesh of their former ways stood in the way of their progress in Christ. They were bought and paid for but needed the washing of sanctification through God's Word.

There were stinking lives, stinking marriages, and stinking families. Paul proposed to Titus a two-part plan: regular systematic teaching in the church gatherings and private one-on-one discipling sessions for focused applications of the sanctifying Word.

When we study this idea of the older-in-the-faith godly, Titus 2 woman we are describing a woman who has chosen to learn from God how to live her life day-by-day and step-by-step in a way that pleases God. Women energized by grace are useful to God.

Titus 2 describes how God works in the life of a believer. When we were saved and the gospel of grace began in our lives, the evidence is seen in the sanctification process.

Grace always teaches genuine believers how to say "no" to sin in any form. When God gets to pick the curriculum for His Church, what does He choose to be taught? He lays down godly character qualities He wants in women.

For just a moment please follow along in your Bibles in Titus 2:3-5, as I again read those special character traits for women.

*v. 3 the [grace energized] **older women** likewise, that they be*

1. Reverent in behavior,
2. Not slanderers,
3. Not given to much wine,
4. Teachers of good things— v. 4
5. That they admonish

*the [grace energized] **young women***

1. To love their husbands,
2. To love their children, v. 5
3. To be discreet,
4. Chaste,
5. Homemakers,
6. Good,
7. Obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Women energized by grace who have these characteristics are highly useful to God. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God.

### **Christ's Church Used Grace Energized Coaches in Godly Living**

The whole goal of a Titus 2 woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

The Titus Two woman is an imperfect person, saved by God, and energized by His grace to live an exemplary life as described in Titus 2:3-4. As we have already learned in v. 3 we can summarize that:

- Women energized by grace—are reverent in their behavior,
- Women energized by grace—are not slanderers,
- Women energized by grace—are not given to much wine,
- Women energized by grace—are teachers of good things, and
- Women energized by grace—are discipling younger women.

Those new believers, fresh out of paganism needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices; and

those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

And that is the vital ministry which we find captured for us in Titus 2.

God wants men and women that will mentor, nurture, and coach godly living for His church. These individuals believe that God has called them to touch one life at a time for His glory.

*v. 4b “the young women to love their husbands” (6) Wives energized by grace love their husbands.*

Wives energized by grace are first of all “lovers of their husbands.”

A Christian home in a pagan culture was a radically new thing.

Those believing wives in the early church like those today, almost always want to obey the Lord, thus they submit and fulfill their responsibilities to their husbands—but often only dutifully and not lovingly. It’s not just that loving your husband is a virtue; Paul says that not loving him in a way that he can feel—is a sin!

Go back and by God’s grace rekindle the blessing, edifying, sharing, and touching that always builds a strong, close, encouraging partnership for life. Be a beacon of Christ’s love reflecting to an empty and hopeless world that true love is possible and can be shared for as long as you live.

*v. 4c “to love their children” (7) Mothers energized by grace love their children.*

Mothers energized by grace are secondly “lovers of children.”

This characteristic is also one word in the Greek text, *philoteknos* and it means to be a lover of children. As we see in 1 Timothy 2:15, this is a woman’s highest calling. “God doesn’t want all women to be mothers or they would be. Those women who have no children mean a great deal to God’s kingdom because He has given them freedom to serve in unique ways. God wants women who are mothers to love their children, which involves making personal sacrifices for the benefit of their children. Remember, loving your children is not merely expressing love your children can feel, it is also pouring yourself into your child’s life so that he or she grows up to love Christ.”

Almost all mothers in the world have the same maternal instinct of love, nurture and protection for their babies. It causes great and widespread public indignation when a mother is found abandoning, or even worse, harming her child. That is built into almost every mom. But there is also an equally widespread reality. From time to time it becomes so very hard to take care of children that a mom no longer “feels” positive feelings towards her children.



In the Roman world, those feelings arose from having to bear children as a “duty” for the husbands, or from having no life outside the home being acceptable so there was never a moment of rest from the constant demands and pressures of the children, or even more prevalent, the Roman world’s sweeping women’s liberation movement had infected many women with the sense that they should get out and make a place for themselves in a male-dominated world.

Things haven’t changed much in twenty-centuries, have they? Those same pressures that were brought into homes and marriages in Paul’s day, are still in various degrees with us now. And, the basic emotional make-up of people is pretty similar around the world, as well as throughout history. So how did God instruct Paul to prepare Christ’s church for these great social challenges and family pressures? Again, Titus 2 has the solution. God says that the way that tired, burned out, and depressed mothers get relief is from the faithful army of Titus 2 grace-energized role models.

In new marriages or when children first come to a home, busyness and activity reach a high pitch as the tasks of homemaking and child care increase. Is it possible that being loving can get crowded out? Don’t forget the love that motivated the marriage and the desire for children. Don’t let all the tasks (even though some are very irritating) ruin the love relationship.

Within the church today, older women rarely become active role models for the younger women. In fact, the honor due our elders in the church is often absent. Age groups are isolated from each other, causing people to feel that little can be learned from one another. It is unfortunate when patterns in society become patterns for the church. The church must encourage intergenerational caring and sharing. There are times when the kitchen provides an eloquent pulpit for the application of biblical truth!

What are some of the lessons these in-Spirit prompted in-home mentors would teach? Just a few might be:

1. Explain to them that negative feelings towards your own children in some circumstances are normal, even for a mature and godly woman.
2. Remind them that God planned for younger women in His church to need the mentoring of older women.
3. Show them how families are vulnerable to cultural trends that seep in slowly, and how these trends can devastate a Biblical family life.
4. Teach them the Biblical perspective of motherhood with children being gifts from the Lord and our highest duty to raise for the God’s glory.
5. Assure them that we do not have any unique challenges, just the same old struggles that God’s Word has clearly said would need to be faced and dealt with God’s way.

Why did Paul stress that young Christian women should love their husbands and families? While such teaching may appear too obvious for mention, there are forces at work in today’s world that undermine even that very basic part of family life.

Women are being told that their interests or desires come first, that they must seek what makes them happy before they can be good wives and mothers. While women should be encouraged to use their gifts and abilities, each Christian woman must align her priorities with God's wisdom, not the world's values. She must love her husband and her children, accepting the sacrifices that love brings. God will honor those who value what He values.

Women who were new Christians were to learn how to have harmony in the home by watching older women who had been Christians for some time. We have the same need today. Younger wives and mothers should learn to live in a Christian manner—loving their husbands and caring for their children—by observing exemplary women of God. If you are of an age or position where people look up to you, make sure that your example motivates younger believers to live in a way that honors God.

The Bible clearly explains and illustrates this love that was modeled by Christ. This special "phileo" love is demonstrated by Jesus Himself. This type of close, companionship and friendship, emotional love is how Christ's relationship is described with Lazarus (John 11:3) and with "the disciple He loved" named John (John 20:2). This is also the word used in Revelation 3:19 for Christ's love for true saints in His church.

Jesus demonstrated His love to Lazarus and all who saw that friendship knew how close they were. The same was seen in Christ's closeness to the Apostle John. That is how Jesus loves us, and wants us to know He loves us, feeling His closeness, and enjoying His friendship.

And that "phileo" love that is emotional, close, and visible is what the Lord asks from grace-energized mothers towards their children.

Here are ten practical "love gifts" that mothers energized by grace can offer that can be felt; in other words practical ways a Titus 2 mentor encourages a younger mother in loving her children.

1. Give them a heart that prays.
2. Give them a heart that serves and meets their needs with love: a regular schedule of nutritious meals, clean clothes, clean bodies, adequate sleep and rest.
3. Give them a heart that rejoices and is filled with happiness. Psalm 113:9 describes a "joyful" mother.
4. Give them a heart that gives like Christ's (Mark 10:45): because love gives (John 3:16); because love is generous (II Cor. 9:6); because love expects nothing back (Luke 6:35).
5. Give them a heart that plays and is full of fun.
6. Give them a heart that celebrates all their special days (Matthew 5:41); and since we have to do all those things in the family, why not make them special!
7. Give them a heart that prefers your family first (Titus 2:4 says they are your first priority).

8. Give them a heart that is focused (Matthew 6:24).
9. Give them a heart that is present and attentive (Psalm 119:10 'my whole heart').
10. Give them a heart that trusts in the Lord (Isaiah 26:3 'perfect peace...trusts').

---

<sup>[1]</sup> Barton, Bruce B. ; Veerman, David ; Wilson, Neil S.: *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 1993 (Life Application Bible Commentary), S. 260

## Grace-Energized-Mothers Love Their Children

### EBG: Message Thirty-Five (070610PM)

Women energized by grace love their children. That is what Titus 2:4 says. We are going to see how to love children with love they can feel. But before we do that we need to ask why are we even here tonight? Why do we even sacrifice another hour-plus to gather in this building and study God's Word? The answer is that we desire to be a faithful part of Christ's church!

You see, you and I are part of something big, something grand, something that dwarfs all our broken down cars, lost jobs, bad health, work pressures, social problems, or even personal loneliness. This evening through Jesus Christ, you and I are a part of what God has chosen as His priority in the universe. We are in partnership with GOD. Think of that. You and I are equity holders in something that will never end, never fail, never decay--we are a vital part of Christ's church!

God's plan to work in the world is through His church. Why not remind yourself of that by looking at three passages of Scripture with me tonight. In fact you may even want to pencil in three words on the pages of your Bibles.

The first word is MISSION.

- Each of us in Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as "Pleasing God" (I Thessalonians 4:1). "Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God" (NKJV).
- Our mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as "the Gospel of Grace" (Acts 20:24). "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God (NKJV). This message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible.
- But the most amazing part is that God's plan to do all this through us is by **a method** spelled out in Titus 2. Paul summarized this plan as men and women energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

Titus 2:15-1 (NKJV)

*15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*

*14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

*13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

*12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*

*11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,*

*10 not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*

*9 Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back,*

*8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*

*7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,*

*6 Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded,*

*5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*

*4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,*

*3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—*

*2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;*

*1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:*

If you want a summary of our lives as believers it would be: We were saved by God's grace; we are kept by God's grace; and we live in a way that pleases God and earns His rewards—**energized by His grace**.

God's plan to work in the world is His church[1]. Christ's church may be described as a group of people, energized by grace, doing the impossible for the glory of God. A key insight into God's plan to reach the world through Christ's church is in Titus chapter 2.

The verses of this chapter contain a call to first century men and women energized by grace to live an extraordinary spiritual life in a very unspiritual culture.

When grace energizes us, we want to deny ungodliness in any form we find it cropping up in our lives. When God's grace energizes us, we want to mortify lust in any form in our lives.

The Cretan church was saved, bought from the slave market of sin (redeemed), but still had clinging to their lives the garbage of their culture. They had generations of bad habits, false thinking, and warped lives.

What was the plan God had in mind to transform these very un-saintly people? The same plan He has for all of us today. Save them by His grace and sanctify them by His Word.

As long as the power was on in their lives, as long as they operated energized by grace, the old ways, the lusts of the flesh, and all the manifestations of pride were held back. But whenever the power was interrupted and they did not walk in the Spirit, the old, corrupt ways of the flesh would spring to life.

As I worked over this passage for the past two weeks I kept thinking about what the church in Crete must have looked like. Can you imagine congregation after congregation around that island of Crete that Titus had to visit? Each one probably had at least one person not walking in the Spirit, not energized by grace to deny ungodliness, and so the unpleasant odors of un-disposed remnants of fleshly garbage would be present.

It's just like someone who smokes and can't smell the stale odor of smoke that reeks from all their clothing, car, or home. So these former pagans couldn't smell all their fleshly habits that needed change.

Like garbage left to rot smells until it is disposed of and cleansed away, so Titus was to start a spiritual search and dispose mission into the lives of the Cretans.

God wanted to shine the spotlight of His Word into their lives corporately and then individually. As any garbage was exposed it was to be denied, and the area exposed to that garbage cleansed and freshened by the power of the sanctifying Spirit of God through His Word.

The mission Paul sent Titus out to do was to take the new believers and have them scrape off their lives anything that clung to them of the old life, mortify, sanctify, and purify away anything that was not pleasing to God.

The Cretans, as new believers, needed long-term sanctification. They were just children-in-the-faith in need of a long bath in God's Word, administered by mothers and fathers-in-the-faith!

This need for removing remnants of garbage that stinks confronted me on Thursday night. I walked into our house for the first time in ten days and it smelled like a dumpster. I prowled around looking for where that horrible smell was coming from. Trash cans, pantry potato bags, and fruit bowl were all checked, and came up clear. Then I saw a dark circle on the floor in front of the fridge. When I pulled open the door of that trusted 12-year-old appliance, there was the finest collection of colorful molds and

layers of decay available anywhere in the city. Most of the refrigerant compressor had died, thus the temperature had risen, and all the microbes always lurking around food had sprung to life. Normally they are abated by the low temperatures and can't grow or reproduce. But the moment that the coldness was limited, decay set in at warp speed; and the result was a stinking mess. But because I value that appliance, I had only one choice—to get rid of the garbage.

For the next six hours I bagged, hauled, washed, scraped, bleached, and scrubbed that trusty, white fridge in the kitchen until it was pure white again, and mold and stink-free. Refrigerators have no smell of their own; they just hold objects that begin to smell if allowed to. All it needed was to be washed and renewed and it would be back as good as new.

When Titus came to Crete to pastor Christ's church, it was sometime in the early 60's AD. As he arrived, the churches were filled with spiritual lives that smelled like a dumpster. The old, rotted flesh of their former ways stood in the way of their progress in Christ. They were bought and paid for but needed the washing of sanctification through God's Word.

There were stinking lives, stinking marriages, and stinking families. Paul proposed to Titus a two-part plan: regular systematic teaching in the church gatherings and private one-on-one discipling sessions for focused applications of the sanctifying Word.

As believers we are on the journey of new beginnings through Christ—energized each step of the way by grace.

Titus two is a road map for all who want their life to count. It is God's pathway of disciplines to choose each day in the power of the Spirit of grace.

### **Christ's Church Used Grace Energized Coaches in Godly Living**

The Titus Two woman is an imperfect person, saved by God, and energized by His grace to live an exemplary life, as described in Titus 2:3-4. So we could easily say that:

- Women energized by grace—are reverent in their behavior,
- Women energized by grace—are not slanderers,
- Women energized by grace—are not given to much wine,
- Women energized by grace—are teachers of good things, and
- Women energized by grace—are discipling younger women.

Those new believers, fresh out of paganism, needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices, and those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

*v. 4b “the young women to love their husbands” (6) Wives energized by grace love their husbands.*

Wives energized by grace are first of all “lovers of their husbands.”

Titus two women understand that there are three specific life-long priorities that make a wonderful start:

1. Decide that you will make your own husband your number one most important human relationship of life over all others, including your parents, brothers, sisters, and friends.
2. Start to seek your husband's friendship and love ahead of all other human relationships, including your children.
3. Begin examining your lifestyle and schedule to see if you are intentionally “spoiling your husband rotten.” If you are doing so as a way of life, then you can be sure that you are his best friend and are truly “loving” your husband.

Wives energized by grace become a beacon of Christ's love reflecting to an empty and hopeless world that true love is possible and can be shared for as long as you live.

*v. 4c “to love their children” (7) Mothers energized by grace love their children.*

Mothers energized by grace are secondly “lovers of children.”

This characteristic is also one word in the Greek text, “philoteknos,” and it means to be a lover of children.

From time to time it becomes so very hard to take care of children that a mom of any century in history no longer “feels” positive feelings towards her children.

So how did God instruct Paul to prepare Christ's church for these great social challenges and family pressures? Again, Titus 2 has the solution. God says that the way that tired, burned out, and depressed mothers get relief is from the faithful army of Titus 2 grace-energized role models.

The Bible clearly explains and illustrates this love that was modeled by Christ. This special phileo love is demonstrated by Jesus Himself. This type of close companionship and friendship, emotional love is how Christ's relationship is described with Lazarus (John 11:3) and with “the disciple He loved” named John (John 20:2). This is also the word used in Revelation 3:19 for Christ's love for true saints in His church.

Jesus demonstrated His love to Lazarus, and all who saw that friendship knew how close they were. The same was seen in Christ's closeness to the Apostle John. That is how Jesus loves us and wants us to know He loves us, feeling His closeness, and enjoying His friendship.



And that phileo love that is emotional, close, and visible is what the Lord asks from grace-energized mothers towards their children.

### **Give the Priceless Gift of Love to Your Children**

Do your loved ones in your family feel your love?

Just as many husbands think that their wives admire other men more than them as they relate how, “So-and-so’s husband does this and that with his children or for his wife.” Those men do not feel the respect and admiration of their wives.

Likewise, many wives feel that their husbands think other women are either better at caring for their husbands, prettier, or better at caring for their families than they are. Those women do not feel the love of their husbands.

But most importantly for Titus two mothers energized by grace, we need to consider that many kids hurt because they sense that their parents don’t even like them. Some ways a lack of love can harm your child.

- A struggling student watches his parents gloat about his sister’s straight A’s.
- A boy strikes out in a softball game and notices his father’s disappointment.
- An overweight daughter is told, “Stop snacking so much if you even care about your looks.”

This absence of loving approval can lead to untold pain; whereas loved ones who feel approval and love face the daily challenges in their world with eagerness and confidence. Look with me for a moment at how Paul cultivated this type of love with a needy young man named Timothy. The mighty pastor of the church at Ephesus was also a young man with many physical and emotional needs. Paul disciplined Timothy with love that could be seen and felt.

### **Paul Loved His “Son” Timothy**

Paul loved his “son” in the faith. So as our example, how was his “love” for Timothy, his “son” in the faith expressed? One of the most beautiful testimonies to the power of encouragement (or affirmation) in the New Testament is in the life of the Apostle Paul. If you turn to I Timothy 1, listen as Paul explained to Timothy that he was:

- ‘a true son’ (I Timothy 1:2); “To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord” (NKJV);
- he told Timothy he was ‘an example to the flock’ (I Timothy 4:12) “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (NKJV);
- that he ‘had a gift’ (I Timothy 4:14) “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership”

NKJV and needed to 'stir it up' (II Timothy 1:6) "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (NKJV).

- and he reminded him of his incredible spiritual heritage 'and that from a child' (II Timothy 3:15) "and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (NKJV).
- Paul was careful to not 'belittle Timothy for his weaknesses' (1 Timothy 5:23) "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities" (NKJV), and 'his frequent tears' (2 Timothy 1:4) "greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy" (NKJV).
- Rather, he told Timothy he had a "treasure" entrusted him (I Timothy 6:20) "O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—(NKJV), and that he should never stop no matter what lay ahead because he was 'gifted' and that God was 'going to use him and reward him' (2 Timothy 4:8) "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing (NKJV).

So Paul loved Timothy with love he could feel. Paul "affirmed" Timothy, and used tender and encouraging words to help him as his son in the faith Timothy. These exhortations were tenderly given to a struggling man.

### **Practice Ways to Make your Love Felt**

Make sure your loved ones in your family feel your love. To help them receive and be touched by your love, we can try to use those several key ingredients that we see in Paul's ministry to Timothy. These small choices always help us to communicate affirmation and encouragement.

1. We love our children in a way that can be felt when we use meaningful touches with them.

That is what Jesus did (Mark 10:16) when he blessed the children. He was always touching those He ministered to. He could have healed them with a word; eight times in Mark alone Jesus touched those He served. So should we! The act of touch is a key to communicating warmth and affirmation. It is even essential to physical health. Be generous with your hugs.

2. We love our children in a way that can be felt when we prepare special words for them.

Remember how we saw that Paul used tender and encouraging words to help his son in the faith Timothy. He doesn't belittle him for his weaknesses and tears. We should always remember that hugs aren't enough.

Tell your children how you feel about them! Those who are left to fill in the blanks often feel worthless and insecure. At best, only confusion can come from silence. Far too many of us are really not that encouraging.

It's not that we have a critical spirit. Rather, we just say nothing. Our loved ones are not mind readers. We can do better than just expecting them to know we are in their corner, loving and admiring them silently. They need to hear it! Make an effort to catch them doing something good, right, thoughtful, considerate, well done, etc. and point it out. Highlight it! "Hey, you really handled that situation very well."

3. We love our children in a way that can be felt when we attach high value to them.

Remember what we saw in Paul, how he told Timothy he had a "treasure" entrusted him; and that he was "gifted"; and that God was "going to use him." So should we also tell the ones we love about the qualities you admire in them.

One of the best ways to do this with children is to liken them to a physical object (like calling your daughter a "pearl" or "precious jewel").

With your husband this is communicated by saying your husband is such a "wonderful dad, husband, friend" or such a "faithful leader, provider, diligent, hard-working, thoughtful, etc."

With your wife this comes in the form of "you are so beautiful I think about you all day long; I can't wait to see you; I know how hard you work all day and can't wait to get home to help you; there are so many things I want to talk over with you; I'd rather spend an evening walking and talking with you than anything else, even sports, friends, golf, etc."

4. We love our children in a way that can be felt when we picture a bright future for them.

Paul told Timothy about a "crown" that was awaiting him as he ran the "race" set before him; and that the Lord was going to "reward" him. So we also should express what God can do with them as they follow Him in their life.

---

[1] Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (I Thessalonians 4:1). This mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). The message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible. But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** is spelled out in Titus 2:11-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

# Husbands Loved by Grace-Energized-Wives

## EBG: Message Thirty-Six (070617AM)

I'd like to go back with you to the beginning and together see God's original intent and plan for men who would become husbands and fathers, as seen in Adam.

As you turn to Genesis 2, we see God's original plan for husbands and fathers. Because as we honor fathers today all across our land, we can also remember that Father's Day is all about God's original design for husbands and wives, before the fall, before the warping that sin has caused.

In creation God designed men to be incomplete without the woman that He made for them. When Paul instructed wives to be trained in how to love their husbands, it was a reflection upon God's original plan for marriage. Our study in Titus is just a reminder that when Christ's church has husbands loved by grace-energized wives, those wives are just following God's plan He laid out from the beginning. God made the first woman Eve to become Adam's close and cherished companion, friend, and completer.

Father's Day is a grand opportunity to go back to see God's design as He formed the first father in Genesis 2:18.

As we turn there, think of all that has happened from Genesis 1:1. God has made the entire universe and crowned it with His last creation, in His image, called a man.

Then, God finds the first thing in the entire universe that was not good—it is right here in verse 18. God states that man should not be alone. So God crowns the creation of man with the creation of woman.

Watch this great event unfold in Genesis 2:18-25 (NKJV). There is a wealth of marriage-changing truth in these few words from God. Look at each piece.

*v. 18 And the Lord God said, "It is **not good that man should be alone**; I will make him **a helper comparable to him**."*

### Men Need Close Companionship

First, v.18a say literally "**not good is man's aloneness**." That is as clear as can be. Aloneness, solitary living is not good. One of the deepest pains sociologists have measured in society is living an isolated and lonely life. They report that such people ache with a deep pain they can't even fully describe. Adam ached and God observed and announced the solution for this great need.

Next, in v. 18b is God's plan, "**I will make him a helper comparable to him**." Notice God's first reference to woman is by the title of 'helper'. English just doesn't convey

what that Hebrew word means; hence it is not seen as a great title. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines help as a noun meaning "one that helps, especially a relatively unskilled worker who assists a skilled worker, usually by manual labor." That definition in English is what has fueled the misconceptions of the inferiority of women and wives. If that definition doesn't capture the world's view of us quaint people called Bible-believing Christian's marriages, then I don't know what does.

But that English definition is exactly not what **'helper'** meant to God. The Hebrew word God chose means something grand, literally it describes a person "who assists another to reach complete fulfillment". When the same word is used in other places in the Old Testament, it is used of someone who went and rescued another person. Now there we have it.

God made woman to come to man's rescue and save him from his lonely existence. Eve was designed to rescue Adam from not only loneliness, but also to completely fulfill Adam.

Then, God continues with another word that captures even more of the beauty of marriage. This helper was "**comparable**" to Adam. This suitable or comparable helper was literally "corresponding to" Adam. Man before woman had some missing pieces in the puzzle of his life and God said that was not good. So Eve was the one who provided the missing pieces to Adam's life. Husbands by God's design are incomplete until they receive that one God designed to correspond to them.

God promised that He would design her exactly to specifications for Adam. And that is the plan of God for marriage. Eve was to fulfill a God-designed necessary role that rescued Adam from missing his fulfillment—and in that process of being God's special creation for man, Eve also found her completion and fulfillment. Marriage was such an incredibly designed wonder of God!

### God Designed the Missing Piece to Adam's Puzzle

From the start each partner was unique, each partner was vital, each partner was distinct, and each had a God designed role that provided immense satisfaction, fulfillment, and completion. So Genesis next records the performance of this promise God made.

*v. 21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man **He made** into a woman, and **He brought her to the man**.*

What an incredible moment. God removes part of Adam (a rib) and made woman out of it. The Hebrew word for "**made**" is "fashioned" and literally means "to build or rebuild so as to cause to flourish." The missing piece of Adam's life that caused him loneliness was not good.

But when that missing part of his life was taken by God and fashioned, that missing piece of life's puzzle flourished into Eve. Adam's rib under God's design sprang to life as Eve. She was his helper, his rescuer, his completer, his satisfier, and the one who fulfilled every dimension of his life as a man.

To make creation good, God had to form a creature that was incredibly like man as well as incredibly unlike man. Note the wonders of Eve's creation:

- Eve was made **for** Adam.
- Eve was literally made **from** Adam ("bone of his bone").
- Eve was brought **to** Adam.
- Eve was named **by** Adam.

There was an incredible equality about them: both were made by God, and both were made in the image of God. They were made to complement one another, but not to compete with one another.

Note Adam's response. God brought her to him. And every man or woman enjoying the privilege of marriage should at that statement lift their heart in gratitude to the Lord. He designed the woman you have joined your life with, to be your helpmate, that corresponds to every missing piece of the puzzle of your life. He gave you a partner, soul-mate, and best friend designed to be all that is needed to have a life-long fulfillment.

*v. 23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."*

Adams exclaims that his wife Eve was made by God, given to him by God, specially designed, and intentionally made for his needs, as he was for hers.

Note once again in the last part of v. 22 that God personally brought Eve to Adam. You will start a whole new chapter of your marriage and open an entirely new dimension to your relationship when you realize that God Himself designed your husband or wife just for YOU! All of the differences you share in perspective, in taste, in personality, in mood, and in ability are all placed there by God for His glory and for your good.

### **Women are Different by God's Design**

Your wife is different from you as a husband because God made her different and wanted her different. The more you realize that truth and thank God for it, the sooner you will stop resenting those differences and resisting those differences; and start seeing her as the counterpart to your life that, by God's grace, will help form you into what God wants you to be.

The passage continues on into the traditional marriage passage, but for us today we are going to focus on the wonderful need from Creation for husbands to be loved by their God-designed wives, who were designed to rescue husbands from loneliness.

Adam's role designed by God was to initiate, lead, protect, provide, cherish, and husband his wife.

Eve's role designed by God was to respond to Adam's initiatives, follow Adam's lead, comfort him as he protected her, receive Adam's provision, and love him in all his dimensions as her husband.

The story of the fall is all about Eve's first time to reverse her role. When Eve initiated disobedience to God and Adam responded, sin, sorrow, and death were the result.

But back to the original plan that it was "not good for the man to be alone"—when Titus came to minister on Crete, he faced many men who were alone while they were married.

Their life was unshared, their initiatives were not fully responded to, their leadership was not fully followed, and their marriages and homes were, as a result, far from God's plan.

So God prompted Paul to write some words that can reach across the centuries and revitalize any marriage, any family, and any home. The key is found in the call for not only Spirit-prompted **agape** love that is within the heart of every born-again believer but God also wanted each marriage and family to be trained in **phileo** love. God wants wives to practice the constant improvement of an emotional love of friendship, of companionship, and of **a shared life with their husbands**.

This love that glues husbands to their wives is a love that is chosen, and a love that is modeled, and a love that can be learned.

Paul commanded Titus to gather a group of grace-energized-women to be God's servants and deploy them as trainers in the ancient art of becoming husband lovers. That was the first order of their curriculum.

### Give Your Husband Your Deepest Love

Today, if you are married and want to give the best gift possible to your husband—give him not only your Spirit-prompted, sacrificial **agape** love that serves him and submits to him but give him also your emotional love that makes him become and stay your very best friend in all the world.

In fact, if you want to impact the rapidly-turning-pagan culture around us (much like that of Crete in Paul's day), remember and heed the first thing Paul told them to do, which was to love your husband in a way that can be felt.

**v. 4b “the young women to love their husbands”**

*Wives energized by grace are first of all “lovers of their husbands.”*

Titus two women understand that there are three specific life-long priorities that make a wonderful start. Why not quietly in your heart, ask the Lord if you have made these choices. Have you become, from the depths of your heart, a woman who loves your husband as your very best friend in all the world? To check and see if you have, remember that this type of love is built upon small choices that slowly become life-dominating priorities. Here they are:

1. Grace-energized-wives **decide that they will make** their husband the number one most important human relationship of life over all others, including parents, brothers, sisters, and friends.
2. Grace-energized-wives **start seeking their husband’s friendship** and love ahead of all other human relationships, including their children.
3. Grace-energized-wives **begin examining their lifestyle** and schedule to see if they are intentionally “spoiling their husband rotten.” If you are doing so as a way of life, then you can be sure that you are his best friend and are truly “loving” your husband.

Grace-energized-wives become a beacon of Christ's love, reflecting to an empty and hopeless world that true love is possible and can be shared for as long as you live.

This special day that we honor and remember fathers, if you are married and have a husband, why not at this moment in your heart decide, start, and begin these three choices.

And, why not prayerfully tell your husband today (sometime during the service if you are sitting next to him or after the service), that you are going to rekindle, renew, and deepen the love God has called you to have and feel and show to your husband.

That will probably be the greatest gift you could ever give him for any Father’s Day ever. The way to accomplish such an incredible gift is right here in God's Word.

**v. 4c “to love their children”** Grace-energized-mothers love their children.

This characteristic is also one word in the Greek text, **philoteknos**, and it means to be a lover of children.

Secondly, grace-energized-mothers love their children. That is what Titus 2:4 says. And this love is **phileo** love that can be felt. That is a grace-energized-mother’s special ministry in Christ's church[1]!

From time to time it becomes so very hard to take care of children that a mom of any century in history no longer “feels” positive feelings towards her children.



So how did God instruct Paul to prepare Christ's church for these great social challenges and family pressures? Again, Titus two has the solution. God says that the way that tired, burned out, and depressed mothers get relief is from the faithful army of Titus two grace-energized role models.

The Bible clearly explains and illustrates this love that was modeled by Christ. This special **phileo** love is demonstrated by Jesus Himself. This type of close, companionship and friendship, emotional love is how Christ's relationship is described with Lazarus (John 11:3) and with "the disciple He loved" named John (John 20:2). This is also the word used in Revelation 3:19 for Christ's love for true saints in His church.

Jesus demonstrated His love to Lazarus and all who saw that friendship knew how close they were. The same was seen in Christ's closeness to the Apostle John. That is how Jesus loves us and wants us to know He loves us, feeling His closeness and enjoying His friendship.

And that **phileo** love that is emotional, close, and visible is what the Lord asks from grace-energized mothers towards their children.

### Give the Priceless Gift of Love to Your Children

Do your loved ones in your family *feel* your love?

Just as many husbands think that their wives admire other men more than them as they relate how, "So-and-so's husband does this and that with his children or for his wife." Those **men do not feel the respect and admiration** of their wives.

Likewise, many wives feel that their husbands think other women are either better at caring for their husbands, prettier, or better at caring for their families than they are. Those **women do not feel the love** of their husbands.

- But most importantly for Titus two mothers energized by grace, we need to consider that many kids hurt because they sense that their parents don't even *like* them.

This absence of loving approval can lead to untold pain; whereas loved ones who feel approval and love face the daily challenges in their world with eagerness and confidence.

Do you remember how Paul cultivated this type of love with a needy young man named Timothy? The mighty pastor of the church at Ephesus was also a young man with many physical and emotional needs. Paul disciplined Timothy with love that could be seen and felt.

### Paul Loved His "Son" Timothy

Paul loved his “son” in the faith. So as our example, how was his “love” for Timothy his “son” in the faith expressed? One of the most beautiful testimonies to the power of encouragement (or affirmation) in the New Testament is in the life of the Apostle Paul. If you read Paul’s letters to Timothy you can hear Paul tenderly encouraging Timothy.

So Paul loved Timothy, with love he could feel. Paul “affirmed” Timothy and used tender and encouraging words to help him as his son in the faith Timothy. These exhortations were tenderly given to a struggling man.

### **Practice Ways to Make your Love Felt**

Grace-energized-mothers make sure their loved ones feel their love. To help them receive and be touched by your love, we can try to use those several key ingredients that we see in both Christ’s and Paul’s ministry. These small choices always help us to communicate affirmation and encouragement.

#### **1. Grace-energized-mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they use meaningful touches with them.**

That is what Jesus did (Mark 10:16) when he blessed the children; He was always touching those He ministered to. He could have healed them with a word. Eight times in Mark alone Jesus touches those He served. So should we! The act of touch is a key to communicating warmth and affirmation. It is even essential to physical health. Be generous with your hugs.

#### **2. Grace-energized-mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they prepare special words for them.**

Remember how we saw that Paul used tender and encouraging words to help his son in the faith Timothy. He doesn’t belittle him for his weaknesses and tears. We should always remember that hugs aren’t enough.

Tell your children how you feel about them! Those who are left to fill in the blanks often feel worthless and insecure. At best, only confusion can come from silence. Far too many of us are really not that encouraging.

It’s not that we have a critical spirit. Rather, we just say nothing. Our loved ones are not mind readers. We can do better than just expecting them to know we are in their corner, loving and admiring them silently. They need to hear it!

Grace-energized-mothers make an effort to catch them doing something good, right, thoughtful, considerate, well done, etc., and point it out. Highlight it! "Hey, you really handled that situation very well."

#### **3. Grace-energized-mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they attach high value to them.**

Remember what we saw in Paul, how he told Timothy he had a “treasure” entrusted him; and that he was “gifted,” and that God was “going to use him”. Grace-energized-mothers tell their children the qualities they admire in them.

**4. Grace-energized-mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they picture a bright future for them.**

Paul told Timothy about a “crown” that was awaiting him as he ran the “race” set before him; and that the Lord was going to “reward” him. So we also should express what God can do with them as they follow Him in their life.

Grace-energized-mothers explain to their children how they can become the greatest servant of the Lord in whatever field God has gifted them. Explain why you think their gifts and character traits will be useful throughout their lives. Avoid the overuse of negative admonitions; use Biblical affirmations to inspire confident dependence upon God.

**5. Grace-energized-mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they make a commitment to walk through life with them.**

Stand by your loved one through the months and years ahead to help make your words of affirmation become a reality. Express ways you want to be a deeper part of their life (monthly dates, weekly prayer studies, nightly prayer times, ongoing shared prayer list, etc.)

Don’t quit as soon as you miss a scheduled time because of a conflict or your loved one hurts, or discourages you or your child fails in some area. What words rang in Christ’s disciples ears from the “Great Commission”? For the rest of their life they heard Him say, “I am with YOU always!”

**6. Grace-energized-mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they make a commitment to pray through life with them.**

*Grace-energized-mothers pray for their children.* Let them know you’ve done so. Start a life-long prayer list with specific areas that you have learned from them need prayer, and then PRAY. Ask for updates. Celebrate answers. Pray together.

If you are not praying for them each day, who is? Regardless of the age, they need you to lift them up before the Lord in prayer each day. Think about their day. Think about their setting. Think about the people they will be with. Pray about these situations. We need all the help we can get, and much of what happens to us or to our children in this life is beyond our control. John 17 is Christ’s model prayer for us to treasure just as His disciples did back then as they heard Him pray for THEM.

That is giving them a ***heart that prays***.

7. **Grace-energized-mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they become a student of their child's life.**

Jesus started His ministry with the Twelve by one simple plan in Mark 3:14, "and He ordained 12 that **they should be with Him**". Watch them, share their ups and downs; know where they are in their spiritual life, their school life, work life, home life. Find out who they are close to and who they are not close to—and why.

- **Take an interest in whatever seems to interest your children.** Get into his or her world.
- **Be lovingly persistent in communicating with your children.** That is, keep trying to set up times when meaningful communication can occur.
- **Share activities.** Go to the grocery store, try a family time camping together, or even just ask them to do what you are doing with you (cooking, yard work, running errands). It is always loving to want them, include them, and ask for them to spend time with you.
- **Take the initiative in asking your children questions.** Have an endless learning time asking about what they think, what they feel, what they like or don't like—and why. Learn their favorite flavor, favorite food, favorite activity, dreamed of place to go, and so much more. Write it down afterward to see what you remembered, and ask again until you do remember. Then surprise them with something they like!
- **Listen to your children with full attention.** Let them see your eyes light up when they talk to you.

8. **Grace-energized-mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they meet their needs with love:** through a regular schedule of nutritious meals, clean clothes, clean bodies, adequate sleep and rest. Give them a **heart that serves**. And as we do so, we add to that more gifts:

- Give them a **heart that rejoices** and is filled with happiness. Psalm 113:9 describes a "joyful" mother.
- Give them a **heart that gives** like Christ's (Mark 10:45): because love gives (John 3:16); because love is generous (II Cor. 9:6); because love expects nothing back (Luke 6:35).
- Give them a **heart that plays** and is full of fun.
- Give them a **heart that celebrates** all their special days (Matthew 5:41); and since we have to do all those things in the family, why not make them special!
- Give them a **heart that prefers your family first** (Titus 2:4 says they are your first priority).
- Give them a **heart that is focused** (Matthew 6:24).
- Give them a **heart that is present** and attentive (Psalm 119:10 'my whole heart').
- Give them a **heart that trusts** in the Lord (Isaiah 26:3 'perfect peace trusts').[3]

Dorothy Patterson, one of the authors of *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, puts the issue into focus:

“A mother builds something far more magnificent than any cathedral the dwelling place for an immortal soul. No professional pursuit so uniquely combines the most menial tasks with the most meaningful opportunities.”[4]

### Mothers Energized by Grace Cultivate Spiritual Assets

A servant of God has her heart set on spiritual treasures and measures life by the acquisition of spiritual assets rather than merely physical assets. Do you keep track of your **Spiritual Assets**? Often we know our house value, our retirement investment value, the worth of our collections and treasures, but do you keep an inventory of spiritual assets? What are some of our spiritual assets?

These are things like:

- Knowing **where your kids are reading in God's Word** so they remember when they grow up and leave home that you always cared how they were doing spiritually.
- Asking your husband or wife each week **what they are finding in God's Word** that is helping them to make it through the day. And, actually remembering what they said the last time because you care. This is a spiritual treasure because it forges a strong bond in your hearts of a shared spiritual walk.
- Finding and learning scripture **memory verses that you share in common with your loved ones** are a spiritual treasure—not hundreds or even dozens, but a handful that you all have learned and share in common. What a treasure to quote them around the living room when the power goes out, or when an ice storm cancels church, or when you are traveling, to have this body of Scripture that you together as a couple and a family learned is a true spiritual treasure. Some of the more valuable passages are Psalm 23, the love chapter--I Corinthians 13, the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, and key verses on the tongue and faith in James.
- Collecting **testimonies of salvation** is a record of each person's greatest treasure, isn't it? The only thing that lasts forever from this world will be people and whatever we send up to Heaven before we leave. So, who are you taking to Heaven with you? Have you heard, understood, and savored the testimonies of your family? Can you tell your husband's or wife's testimony? How about your children? What an incredible treasure is our salvation. Take a spiritual inventory of the status of each soul around you in those you love.
- Recording and remembering those **spiritual milestones**, have you started on this spiritual asset yet? Do you record your loved ones salvation date, baptism date, when they started the habit of personal devotional quiet times, what they are doing in that QT? Have you started yet to celebrate each other's spiritual birthdays? Do you keep a record of, share and celebrate any souls led to Christ by you or by loved ones, and then uphold them by prayer? Who can your family say that you, as a family, are “taking to Heaven”?

- Finally, one of the great spiritual treasures is a ***lifelong prayer journal***. Even if you've never started, it is never too late to start watching God at work through prayer. Any type of list will do, just date it, hold onto it, and be specific enough in your requests—and there you have it—an actual record of the God of Heaven moving in and through your life by prayer. A list of family needs, specific challenges, hurdles, obstacles, great goals, and so on are all prayed over. Also, the verses for Christ's formation in the lives of those you love are always such a tool. Just a sheet of paper, dated, written out, and prayed over faithfully until it wears out and then a new one started will harvest great spiritual gains and treasures.

### **Mothers Energized by Grace Cultivate Habits that Demonstrate their Love**

1. *Mothers Energized by Grace love their children anyway.* Yes I know you love them. Most of us parents adore our children — most of the time. Yet some parents have a way of regularly communicating to their children that they do not measure up. I'm thinking now about the young girl who grew up in a family where she was seen as the dunce. Now as a young woman, she continues to experience the same from her family. Children need parents who will believe in them and, no matter what, will love them anyway.
2. *Mothers Energized by Grace prepare their children for the battleground, not the playground.* Some parents constantly buy their children toys, gadgets, candy, McDonalds, etc. The kids then get into their high school years and the pampering continues. Only now, the toys are much more expensive. What does that communicate to these children? Meanwhile, other parents prepare their children for life on the battleground where a spiritual battle is taking place. These parents realize that children need more than toys. They need to be equipped for life so that they will survive the difficulties and trials they will face.
3. *Mothers Energized by Grace deal with their own issues.* There are no perfect human beings. Yet, if you don't deal with your own issues (your sins, your insecurities, your feelings of inadequacy, etc.), these can impact your children. They may end up having to deal with some of the very issues you would never grapple with.
4. *Mothers Energized by Grace take every opportunity to remind them of who they are in Christ.* They will, most likely, receive many false messages about their identity. They will be told that their worth is based upon their academic record, their physical attractiveness, their charm, their ability to make money, etc. You bless your children when you help them grow up with a sense of their real identity.
5. *Mothers Energized by Grace bless your children by giving them you.* Jesus called the 12 to spend time with Him (Mark 3:14) and that was the great expression of His love. So should we commit to spend time with those we love. There is no substitute for your presence in their lives. Your regular, consistent, emotional and physical presence means so much. I have known a few parents who seem to see their child as one more

activity on the list of things to be done for the day. Yet one senses there is no real connection between parent and child. Being attentive and giving one-on-one time are priceless gifts to children.

6. *Mothers Energized by Grace say only what communicates value, respect, and love.* Choose to never say or do anything that will humiliate. Sometimes, families will tell embarrassing, humiliating, stories about their children. The child is embarrassed at this but then the parent says, "I'm just kidding." (In other words, "Since I think this is funny, you shouldn't let this bother you.") Listen, we all do things in our families that are silly, stupid, mindless, careless, etc. I have found that it is much better for me to tell about something silly or stupid that I did — not my children. Children need to know that homes are safe places where one's mistakes are not announced to the world.

7. *Mothers Energized by Grace want to be their child's greatest encourager.* Far too many parents are really not that encouraging. It's not that they have a critical spirit. Rather, they just say nothing. Children are not mind readers. We can do better than just expecting them to know we are in their corner. They need to hear it! Make an effort to catch them doing something good, right, thoughtful, considerate, well done, etc. and point it out. Highlight it! "Hey, you really handled that situation very well."

8. *Mothers Energized by Grace Give them what they need not what they want.* Many of us are very busy people. We have a lot going on. So often parents will feel guilty about how busy they are and so decide to give them a new "toy." Yet we do our children no favors when we give them most everything they want. The point is this: Too many children grow up getting all the things they want while little attention is given to what they really need. Think about what your children really need if they are going to make it in this difficult world as obedient children of a loving God.

9. *Mothers Energized by Grace Give their children something to look forward to when they come home. Give them a beautiful home to look forward to. That's home — not house. Anyone with enough money can build a beautiful house. Our children need beautiful homes. Homes that are filled with warmth, laughter, and love. Beautiful homes are places where children can catch a glimpse of the loving God in the love of their parents. These homes remind kids that no matter how bad the day is at school or with friends, they can always come home.*

For a Christian mother, another core responsibility is to care for her children. Children are to be a priority in her life. In many developed countries of the world today, an anti-birth, anti-child mentality permeates society. Bible-believing Christians, however, must affirm the paramount value of children and motherhood[6].

---

[1] Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (I Thessalonians 4:1). This mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message**

Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). The message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible. But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** is spelled out in Titus 2:11-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

[2] These ideas are adapted from *The Blessing* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986, Nashville) and *The Blessing Workbook* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993, Nashville) by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Ph.D.

[3] Adapted from Elizabeth George, *A Woman after God's Own Heart*, Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1997, chapters 7, 10, and 11.

[4] Dorothy Patterson, "The High Calling of Wife and Mother in Biblical Perspective," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 367.

[5] Posted by Jim Martin at January 16th, 2007 online at <http://www.godhungry.org/?p=592>

[6] Alexander Strauch, *Men and Women Equal Yet Different*. Littleton, Colorado: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1999, pp. 66-68.



# Bitterness Hinders Grace-Energized Wives and Mothers

EBG: Message Thirty-Seven (070624AM)

God's high calling for grace-energized women is to love their husbands and children. To most of us mature 21<sup>st</sup> century believers that may sound **wonderful**. To them it must have sounded **impossible**.

The Cretans of Paul's day lived in an ego-centered, selfish society that knew and cared little about forgiveness. Roman society became so decadent that it saw forgiving people as weak and unforgiving ones as strong. Cretans celebrated vengeful gods and exalted as heroes those who took vengeance on others. The result was a society so much like America today--filled with bitterness, vengeance, anger, hate, and hostility.

More and more we see people seeking vengeance either outside or inside the bounds of the law. Just this week a crowd in Austin, Texas, dragged a man from his car and beat him to death for a crime they mistakenly thought he had committed. This pervasive unwillingness to forgive in our society is also the leading cause of the breakups in family relationships. [1]

## Bitterness Pervaded the World of the Bible

God wanted the lost pagans living on Crete to see their changed lives and be confronted with living examples of Jesus Christ. Society was to be flooded at every level with the irrefutable proof of changed lives.

Paul sent the details for the invasion of this strategic island in his letter to Titus. We have been studying these admonitions in Titus 2. These life-truths have always deeply impacted any society. When the Gospel, that brings this impossible life into the heart of a newly saved individual, starts to work through Christ's church, the world takes notice.

God has always worked out His plan in this world through individual believers who struggle[2] through life. One of the struggles believers have always faced while seeking to follow the Lord is bitterness.

The key passage in the New Testament that warns about bitterness is Ephesians 4:30, Let's go there.

- *Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. NKJV*

The immeasurable power of God is stopped when His people disobey. God's grace teaches us to deny ungodliness, but when we resist that grace, our sin grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit[3].

So Paul says grieve not the Spirit, don't quench Him, because apart from God's power nothing can be done that will last. Just as the congregations back then were told to deny ungodliness in any form, so must we also today.

Bitterness is a very deadly, fast-growing, and easily spread form of spiritual cancer.

### **Grace-Energized Lives Are Hindered by Bitterness**

In the New Testament each time the word bitterness is used it always is a form of the Greek word ***pic***. This word means just what the tool by the similar sounding word comes from, "to prick or cut." This Greek word used for bitterness implies something that pricks or punctures and penetrates deeply.

This verse is fascinating for two reasons:

- First, bitterness is the very first sin that is listed after Paul warns about the horrible dangers of grieving the Holy Spirit of God as a believer. Bitterness is FIRST in that list; never forget that.
- Second, the verse on the other side of the warning (v. 29) is all about corrupt words (one of the danger signs of a bitter person is that they say rotten things about others).

At the heart of bitterness is a hurt that is internalized and not forgiven.

Perhaps the strongest warning Jesus ever gave to his disciples was in Matthew 18—he warned that the results of a bitter and unforgiving heart were grave. For a moment turn there to Matthew 18:21-35, and listen to the gravity of Christ's warning.

- *Matthew 18:21-35 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.24 "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.26 "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 27 "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. 28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'29 "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'30 "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.31 "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.32 "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I*

*forgave you all that debt because you begged me.<sup>33</sup> 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'<sup>34</sup> "And his master was angry, and delivered him **to the torturers** until he should pay all that was due to him.<sup>35</sup> **"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."** NKJV*

Did you catch that? Jesus just told believers that we would trap ourselves in the prison house and find ourselves in solitary confinement, tortured by the poisonous and sharp cutting edge of bitterness, if we hold onto an unforgiving spirit that always leads to bitterness.

### **Bitterness Leads to Intense Inner Torment**

Jesus said that we hand ourselves over to the torturers (v. 34) when we embitter our hearts against someone. Those who live in the gall of bitterness imprison themselves in an emotional concentration camp and become the victims of immense internal torment.

Nurturing bitterness is as foolish as drinking poison or diving into a dark pit. Our refusals to forgive wall us into solitary confinement, and bitterness becomes our tormentor. Jesus warns that any believer is a candidate for this unspeakable emotional and mental torment when bitterness-producing un-forgiveness is practiced.

Do you see now why Paul lists bitterness first in the lineup of Spirit-grievers? Do you see why he says "put away ALL bitterness"? He says it is so deadly, so painful, so quick to spread that it must be dealt with right away.

A bitter person is cut and punctured by the words or actions of others. Those wounds untreated by the healing grace of a tender-hearted, forgiving attitude become a source of malignant poison. So this wound infects the wounded person with bitterness, a hurtful condition that touches every part of their life. As Hebrews 12 warns us, bitterness spreads throughout a person's life until everything in them gets defiled by bitterness.

- *Hebrews 12:15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; NKJV*

One of the telltale signs of a wife or mother being hindered in living out her grace-energized role is when she feels "hurt" by her husband or children. Those hurts can quickly get infected and become resentful feelings which always grow into bitterness.

### **Say NO to Bitterness Daily**

- ***Bitterness imprisons a believer's emotions.*** Failing to forgive another will imprison a believer in their past. Bitterness nurtures pain and keeps it alive, never allowing the wound to heal. The longer the hurt is dwelt upon, the more our

anger is fed, resentment grows, and joy is extinguished. Forgiveness energized by grace opens our prison doors and sets us free from our past.

- ***Bitterness poisons a believer's life.*** Bitterness is not just a sin; it is an infection that poisons our speech making it biting, cutting, sarcastic, and slanderous. Bitterness poisons our emotions making them violent, unpredictable, intolerant, vengeful, and ungodly. Bitterness poisons all relationships making them void of affection, devoid of love, and emptied of kindness. The writer of Hebrews warns, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled" (Heb. 12:15). Forgiveness energized by grace replaces bitterness with love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22-23).
- ***Bitterness opens believer's lives to Satan.*** When Paul warned believers about improper anger he mentioned Satan's horrible presence in Ephesians 4:26-27, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." When Paul similarly charged the Corinthians he again joins Satan's destructive influence upon believers who leave open this strategic door as he wrote, "Whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:10-11). The Bible clearly warns that unforgiving-based bitterness offers the most ground that Satan gains in our lives. Forgiveness energized by grace bars that avenue of demonic attack.
- ***Bitterness closes a believer's life to God.*** Remember how soberly Christ spoke in the Sermon on the Mount? "If you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matt. 6:14-15). Jesus was not saying that believers lose the completed, past forgiveness of salvation. He was warning that bitterness robs them of their ongoing relational forgiveness with God the Father. We cannot be right with God when unforgiving of others. Forgiveness energized by grace always restores us to the place of maximum blessing, returning us to purity and the joy of fellowship with God.

God wants believers to avoid bitterness so much that He constantly emphasizes the importance of forgiveness in Scripture. There are no less than 75 different word pictures about forgiveness in the Bible. [4]

### Spotting Signs of Bitterness

What are the warning signs of bitterness? As I list off some of the most common signs of bitterness, ask yourself as a wife or mother (and anyone else) if you are showing any of these signs of bitterness.

It is really not that complicated to recognize that bitterness has set in. Let's think of some of the characteristics of a bitter person:

- They show a lack of concern for others. A bitter person cares very little about anybody else.
- They're very sensitive and touchy. For instance, if a bitter person walks into a room where two other people are talking, and those people get quieter as he walks in, the bitter person thinks, "They're talking about me."
- They tend to avoid meeting new people, show little or no gratitude at all, and usually speak words of empty flattery or harsh criticism.
- They hold grudges against people, often for a long, long time. They find it extremely difficult to forgive.
- They often have a stubborn or sulking attitude.
- They end up experiencing mood extremes - very high and happy one minute, and the next thing you know, they're so low they can reach up and touch bottom.
- Bitterness can be called the seed of Hell because one of the worst things about bitterness is that it doesn't stop. It keeps getting worse. It may only start as a little seed of hurt, but then it grows and festers into a very dangerous thing. **[5]**

Bitterness is one of the more deadly cancers of the spiritual life of the believer. If you are infected by bitterness, get out of your self-imposed prison now, don't stay in a moment longer. Paul said that the Spirit of God, in the power of Christ's cross can set you free. The escape route has been marked for us by the One who should have had all the reasons in the world to be bitter but was not.

### **Getting Out of The Bitterness Trap**

Have you ever noticed that line in the Lord's Prayer? Often we have said it so many times we skip right over it. "Forgive us God the way we have forgiven others." God wants us to forgive others and not cultivate bitterness. Forgiving others isn't denying that they hurt us, or ignoring it either. Getting out of the bitterness trap starts by honestly confronting hurts in our life—and energized-by-grace doing something about each one!

Here are some basic steps.

1) ***Make a list of the people who've hurt you.*** This is always easiest for us because that is what we remember the best—the offenses others commit against us. Just jot names and things they have done to hurt you. Here are some typical hurts: "My parents didn't keep their promises." "They gave more love and affection to other members of the family." "My dad took out his bad temper on me." "My wife tries to make me into something I'm not." "My friend wasn't there when I needed him," etc.

2) ***Make another list of the things you have done to hurt them.*** Whoa, this is the hard part. Pride effectively edits our memories of the wrongs we do by shifting the blame, hiding our guilt, and so on. Our flesh likes our faults to stay hidden from others, so pray and ask God to shine the light of the Spirit upon your heart and expose ways you have harmed others.

One of the hardest things to do is to really clear the debts between parents and children. You could put down things like: laziness, ungratefulness (when was the last time you ever thanked your parents - just called them and thanked them?), deceitfulness (what have you done behind their backs to make them distrust you?), etc.

Making a list of those I have wronged is vital. Only when we agree with God about our sin and see it as He sees it—can we be forgiven (1 John 1:9). One of the results of making such a list is that we find that in most of the ways that we have been hurt, we hurt others. My pride maximizes others' faults and minimizes mine. This exercise will bring reality into focus.

3) ***Take a good look at how you have hurt the Lord.*** Now we are at the most important place in our grace-energized journey out of bitterness. This is the most life-changing step. Get down on your face before God and ask Him to reveal all the ways you have hurt Him. God's Word says He is grieved when we sin. Do we miss that terrible truth? Spurgeon said, ***“For it is an inexpressibly delightful thought, that He who rules heaven and earth, and is the creator of all things, and the infinite and ever blessed God, condescends to enter into such infinite relationships with his people that his divine mind may be affected by their actions.”***

Each area the Spirit convicts you about, revealing where you have grieved God, confess and forsake, making no excuses to God. God said Christ's blood cleanses away our sins not our excuses. We are transformed as we see that though God has been deeply hurt (grieved), He loves and forgives us and NEVER gets embittered towards us.

People closest to us can hurt us the most—right? Now as a believer, think about who knows every thought, hears every word, feels every emotion we have ever had. God does, right? We have the potential to hurt God so much, and we do. Yet He forgives. Because He forgives, He demands that we must do so also to all who hurt us.

The Bible says that “The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain.” (Genesis 6:6) The phrase “heart filled with pain” literally means “to have difficulty in breathing.” God made this beautiful creation and then He sees people not only hating and killing each other, but hating Him, too. And all that hurt goes deep, deep into His heart. We forget that God has a perfect memory. We only see a little bit - He sees it all, continuously. We only live a short time - He lives forever. When God looked at the world He made, He gasped with pain and horror. It hurt Him.

4) ***Pray, and ask the forgiveness of God and man.*** Now comes the simplest and hardest part of our task. Get alone with your list of how you hurt God and others and ask God to work in your heart. One by one confess them to God, then ask for and receive His forgiveness for every thing you have listed (and more as He reminds you). Then you need to tear up that list and get rid of it. Just doing that is a picture of how God wipes out, erases, washes clean, and removes our sins. Then you need to get in

touch with those you have hurt and, either by letter, email, phone, or in person, ask for their forgiveness.

5) ***Destroy your files.*** Finally, there is one more vital step to take. There is still a copy of that list, it is in your mind. God says that He can also wipe that file clean. Hebrews 9:14 and 10:22 say that the blood of Christ, through the Eternal Spirit will purge your conscience from things that defile and will allow you to get close to the Lord with a pure heart, confident you are right with Him, and as much as is possible with others.

Open the filing cabinets of your mind, take out all the files, and get rid of them. Tear up your list and burn it. You must release it all to God. Forgiveness is opening the filing cabinet before God and clearing the debts. "I'm not going to hold this against them. I'm not even going to keep a record of it."

No record. That's what God does with you. Do you want Him to remember and recall all the debts He has cleared you of? You do the same.

The Bible says, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." (Matt. 6:14-15)

It's a choice you must make in response to God's offer of forgiveness to you. What will you do? **[6]**

Communion is our declaration that we have chosen to be forgiving of others, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. The best thing we could ever do is come to the cross, seek His mercy and grace. Cling to the cross where He died in our place.

Lives energized-by-grace deny this form of ungodliness and walk in the Spirit with a forgiving and tender heart.

---

[1] Adapted from MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians 4*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

[2] The reality of our new life in Christ is that it is a struggle. When Paul wrote to Titus, he had already described himself as a fellow-struggler through this world (Romans 15:30; I Timothy 6:12; II Timothy 4:7). Paul calls born-again believers under the guidance of the Spirit of God ***sunagonidzomai*** or in English "fellow-strugglers".

[3] Just as the armies of Israel were defeated because of Achan's hidden sin, and the ministry of the churches of Asia Minor were halted because of the un-forsaken sins of each congregation—so the early church was forced to see that when God's Spirit is grieved and quenched, the power of the saints to live the impossible life wanes.

[4] These points adapted, paraphrased, and drawn from MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians 4*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

[5] This list was drawn from an article called **HURT AND BITTERNESS** by Winkie Pratney.

[6] This list was quoted and paraphrased from an article called **HURT AND BITTERNESS** by Winkie Pratney.

## Grace-Energized Mothers Deal with Bitterness

### EBG: Message Thirty-Eight (070624PM)

The decline and fall of the human race is set forth in Romans 1.

Curiously, right in between all of those dreadful sins is one that seems to have always stood in the way of mothers loving their children to the max. Here it is in Romans 1:26-30.

- *Romans 1:26-30 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. 28 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; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, **disobedient to parents**, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; NKJV*

You can see not much has changed in two thousand years; the same old sins are still swirling around and the same challenges face each of us.

God wanted the lost pagans living on Crete to see their changed lives and be confronted with living examples of Jesus Christ. Society was to be flooded at every level with the irrefutable proof of changed lives.

### Grace-Energized Wives and Mothers Have Two Qualities Everyone Can See

So Paul told all the grace-energized wives and mothers in the church to have two qualities everyone could detect. Listen again to them in Titus two:

- *Titus 2:4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, NKJV*

For a believer both sacrificial giving, (agape) love is commanded as well as emotional, caring, friendship (phileo) love. We have been studying these admonitions in Titus 2. These life-truths have always deeply impacted any society. When the Gospel that brings this impossible life into the heart of a newly saved individual starts to work through Christ's church, the world takes notice.

So what would hinder these grace-energized mothers from loving their children? As we saw last time, the most formidable hindrance may be bitterness, but the most common



hindrance may be selfishness. One hindrance that is always with us is our flesh that wants to go its way instead of God's. That is the hindrance of selfishness.

### Grace-Energized Wives and Mothers Are Hindered by Selfishness

God has high standards. He says "nothing" can be done that is eternal, nothing enduring, nothing that pleases Him can be done energized by self.

- *Philippians 2:3-4 Let **nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit**, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.<sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*  
NKJV

He only blesses, accepts, and desires grace-energized love. Only love for husbands and children that is energized by grace is acceptable and glorifying to Him.

Each of us was born selfish. Babies cry for their own needs, not others. Toddlers do not wage battles for others, it is their own space, their own toys, and their own sinful desire for attention that prompts the terrible two's.

Watching most teenagers is a study in the art of self-absorption as their life is consumed by the upkeep of their little world. And sadly, physical maturity does not end this spiritual problem.

Adults retain most of the selfish desires of childhood and youth, they just are able to mask them better the older they get. A basic description of most adults in America would be that they are individuals who have these priorities: the satisfaction of **their own** personal needs and desires, the maintenance of **their own** good feelings about themselves, and the preservation of **their own** personal rights.

As we turn to II Timothy 3, we find a "prophecy" of what the world will be like in the "last days". Our present-day pleasure seeking, self-serving culture closely and ominously mirrors Paul's warnings of the "last days":

- *2 Timothy 3:1-7 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* NKJV

To the hedonistic culture of Roman Crete, and to the equally pleasure-seeking and narcissistic culture of today, God gives the same message. We are to be self-denying, others-ahead-of-ourselves-choosing believers.

That self-sacrificing lifestyle is never easy, always strange to the culture, and constantly glorifying to God. God made happiness, peace, and joy to grow only along the narrow pathway of grace-energized self-denial.

When wives and mothers heed this call for grace-energized love for their husbands and children, they begin down that narrow pathway of self-denial. Grace-energized love for husbands and children leads to the deepest happiness, joy, and fulfillment.

But when God's pathway of self-denial is not followed, His admonitions unheeded, and life gets "graceless" without the grace of God energizing a life, marriage, and family, there is only emptiness, frustration, and sorrows.

How is this grace-energized emotional love for your husband and children cultivated? Paul explains that in Romans 12:10.

- *Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; NKJV*

Love is encouraged when selfishness is mortified.

Selfishness will hinder, thwart, and stifle this grace-energized love God wants from wives and mothers.

But selfishness isn't the biggest hindrance. We already saw the one that is far more deadly, and it is called bitterness. As we have studied, bitterness is a deadly cancer that grows rapidly and produces a deadly poison that paralyzes a believer's love, robs their joy, and ends their peace. It zaps their spiritual strength and removes God's blessing from their lives. So at all costs, avoid bitterness.

### **Spotting Signs of Bitterness**

What are the warning signs of bitterness? As I list off some of the most common signs of bitterness, ask yourself as a grace-energized wife or mother (and everyone else listening, are you showing any of these signs of bitterness?

It is really not that complicated to recognize that bitterness has set in. Let's think of some of the characteristics of a bitter person:

- They show a lack of concern for others. A bitter person cares very little about anybody else.

- They're very sensitive and touchy. For instance, if a bitter person walks into a room where two other people are talking, and those people get quieter as he walks in, the bitter person thinks, "They're talking about me."
- They tend to avoid meeting new people, show little or no gratitude at all, and usually speak words of empty flattery or harsh criticism.
- They hold grudges against people, often for a long, long time. They find it extremely difficult to forgive.
- They often have a stubborn or sulking attitude.
- They end up experiencing mood extremes - very high and happy one minute, and the next thing you know, they're so low they can reach up and touch bottom.
- Bitterness can be called the seed of Hell because one of the worst things about bitterness is that it doesn't stop. It keeps getting worse. It may only start as a little seed of hurt, but then it grows and festers into a very dangerous thing. **[1]**

Bitterness is one of the more deadly cancers of the spiritual life of the believer. If you are infected by bitterness, get out of your self-imposed prison now, don't stay in a moment longer. Paul said that the Spirit of God, in the power of Christ's cross can set you free. The escape route has been marked for us by the One who should have had all the reasons in the world to be bitter but was not.

### **Getting Out of the Bitterness Trap**

Have you ever noticed that line in the Lord's Prayer? Often we have said it so many times we skip right over it. "Forgive us God the way we have forgiven others". God wants us to forgive others and not cultivate bitterness. Forgiving others isn't denying that they hurt us or ignoring it either. Denial is mindless foolishness. God wants us to face real problems with real solutions from His Word.

Getting out of the bitterness trap starts by honestly confronting hurts in our life—and as those energized-by-grace, doing something about each hurt-induced wound!

Here are some basic steps.

1) ***Make a list of the people who've hurt you.*** This is always easiest for us because that is what we remember the best—the offenses others commit against us. Just jot names and things they have done to hurt you. Here are some typical hurts: "My parents didn't keep their promises." "They gave more love and affection to other members of the family." "My dad took out his bad temper on me." "My wife tries to make me into something I'm not." "My friend wasn't there when I needed him," etc.

2) ***Make another list of the things you have done to hurt them.*** Whoa, this is the hard part. Pride effectively edits our memories of the wrongs we do by shifting the blame, hiding our guilt, and so on. Our flesh likes our faults to stay hidden from others, so pray and ask God to shine the light of the Spirit upon your heart and expose ways you have harmed others.

One of the hardest things to do is to really clear the debts between parents and children. You could put down things like: laziness, ungratefulness (when was the last time you ever thanked your parents - just called them and thanked them?), deceitfulness (what have you done behind their backs to make them distrust you?), etc.

Making a list of those I have wronged is vital. Only when we agree with God about our sin, and see it as He sees it, can we be forgiven (1 John 1:9). One of the results of making such a list is that we find that in most of the ways that we have been hurt, we hurt others. My pride maximizes others' faults and minimizes mine. This exercise will bring reality into focus.

3) ***Take a good look at how you have hurt the Lord.*** Now we are at the most important place in our grace-energized journey out of bitterness. This is the most life-changing step. Get down on your face before God and ask Him to reveal all the ways you have hurt Him. God's Word says He is grieved when we sin. Do we miss that terrible truth? Spurgeon said, ***“For it is an inexpressibly delightful thought, that He who rules heaven and earth, and is the creator of all things, and the infinite and ever blessed God, condescends to enter into such infinite relationships with his people that his divine mind may be affected by their actions.”***

Each area the Spirit convicts you about, revealing where you have grieved God, confess and forsake, making no excuses to God. God said Christ's blood cleanses away our sins not our excuses. We are transformed as we see that though God has been deeply hurt (grieved), He loves and forgives us and NEVER gets embittered towards us.

People closest to us can hurt us the most—right? Now as a believer think about who knows every thought, hears every word, feels every emotion we have ever had. God does, right? We have the potential to hurt God so much, and we do. Yet He forgives. Because He forgives He demands that we must do so also to all who hurt us.

The Bible says that “The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain.” (Genesis 6:6) The phrase “heart filled with pain” literally means ‘to have difficulty in breathing’. God made this beautiful creation, and then He saw people not only hating and killing each other, but hating Him, too. And all that hurt goes deep, deep into His heart. We forget that God has a perfect memory. We only see a little bit - He sees it all, continuously. We only live a short time - He lives forever. When God looked at the world He made, He gasped with pain and horror. It hurt Him.

4) ***Pray, and ask the forgiveness of God and man.*** Now comes the simplest and hardest part of our task. Get alone with your list of how you hurt God and others and ask God to work in your heart. One by one confess them to God, then ask for and receive His forgiveness for every thing you have listed (and more as He reminds you). Then you need to tear up that list and get rid of it. Just doing that is a picture of how God wipes out, erases, washes clean, and removes our sins. Then you need to get in

touch with those you have hurt and, either by letter, email, phone, or in person, ask for their forgiveness.

5) ***Destroy your files.*** Finally, there is one more vital step to take. There is still a copy of that list, it is in your mind. God says that He can also wipe that file clean. Hebrews 9:14 and 10:22 say that the blood of Christ, through the Eternal Spirit will purge your conscience from things that defile, and will allow you to get close to the Lord with a pure heart, confident you are right with Him, and as much as is possible with others.

Open the filing cabinets of your mind, take out all the files, and get rid of them. Tear up your list and burn it. You must release it all to God. Forgiveness is opening the filing cabinet before God and clearing the debts. "I'm not going to hold this against them. I'm not even going to keep a record of it."

No record. That's what God does with you. Do you want Him to remember and recall all the debts He has cleared you of? You do the same.

The Bible says, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." (Matt. 6.14-15)

It's a choice you must make in response to God's offer of forgiveness to you. What will you do? **[2]**

### **Christ's Church Needs Grace-Energized Wives and Mothers**

The Titus Two woman is an imperfect person, saved by God, and energized by His grace to live an exemplary life as described in Titus 2:3-4. So we could easily say that:

- Grace-energized women—are reverent in their behavior,
- Grace-energized women —are not slanderers,
- Grace-energized women—are not given to much wine,
- Grace-energized women —are teachers of good things, and
- Grace-energized women—are discipling younger women.

Those new believers, fresh out of paganism needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices; and those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

Women energized by grace love their children. That is what Titus 2:4 says. We are going to see how to love children with love they can feel this evening. But before we do that we need to ask why are we even here tonight? Why do we even sacrifice another hour-plus to gather in this building and study God's Word? The answer is that we desire to be a faithful part of Christ's church[3]!

If you want a summary of our lives as believers it would be: We were saved by God's grace; we are kept by God's grace; and we live in a way that pleases God and earns His rewards—**energized by His grace**.

God's plan to work in the world is His church. Christ's church may be described as a group of people, energized by grace, doing the impossible for the glory of God. A key insight into God's plan to reach the world through Christ's church is in Titus chapter two.

The verses of this chapter contain a call to First Century men and women energized by grace to live an extraordinary spiritual life in a very unspiritual culture.

When grace energizes us, we want to deny ungodliness in any form we find it cropping up in our lives. When God's grace energizes us, we want to mortify lust in any form in our lives.

The Cretan church was saved, bought from the slave market of sin (redeemed), but still had clinging to their lives the garbage of their culture. They had generations of bad habits, false thinking, and warped lives.

What was the plan God had in mind to transform these very un-saintly people? The same plan He has for all of us today. Save them by His grace and sanctify them by His Word.

As long as the power was on in their lives, as long as they operated energized by grace the old ways, the lusts of the flesh, and all the manifestations of pride were held back. But whenever the power was interrupted and they did not walk in the Spirit—the old corrupt ways of the flesh would spring to life.

As believers this morning we are on the journey of new beginnings through Christ—energized each step of the way by grace.

#### ***v. 4b “the young women***

***to love their husbands” (6)*** Wives energized by grace love their husbands.

*Wives energized by grace are first of all “lovers of their husbands.”*

***v. 4c “to love their children”*** Grace-energized-mothers love their children.

This characteristic is also one word in the Greek text, ***philoteknos***, and it means to be a lover of children.

Secondly, grace-energized mothers love their children. That is what Titus 2:4 says. And this love is ***phileo*** love that can be felt. That is a grace-energized-mother's special ministry in Christ's church[4]!

From time to time it becomes so very hard to take care of children that a mom of any century in history no longer “feels” positive feelings towards her children.

So how did God instruct Paul to prepare Christ's church for these great social challenges and family pressures? Again, Titus two has the solution. God says that the way that tired, burned out, and depressed mothers get relief is from the faithful army of Titus two grace-energized role models.

The Bible clearly explains and illustrates this love that was modeled by Christ. This special **phileo** love is demonstrated by Jesus Himself. This type of close, companionship and friendship, emotional love is how Christ's relationship is described with Lazarus (John 11:3) and with “the disciple He loved” named John (John 20:2). This is also the word used in Revelation 3:19 for Christ's love for true saints in His church.

Jesus demonstrated His love to Lazarus and all who saw that friendship knew how close they were. The same was seen in Christ's closeness to the Apostle John. That is how Jesus loves us and wants us to know He loves us, feeling His closeness and enjoying His friendship.

And that **phileo** love that is emotional, close, and visible is what the Lord asks from grace-energized mothers towards their children.

### Give the Priceless Gift of Love to Your Children

Do your loved ones in your family *feel* your love?

Just as many husbands think that their wives admire other men more than them as they relate how, “So-and-so’s husband does this and that with his children or for his wife.” Those **men do not feel the respect and admiration** of their wives.

Likewise, many wives feel that their husbands think other women are either better at caring for their husbands, prettier, or better at caring for their families than they are. Those **women do not feel the love** of their husbands.

- But most importantly for Titus two mothers energized by grace , we need to consider that many kids hurt because they sense that their parents don’t even *like* them.

This absence of loving approval, can lead to untold pain; whereas loved ones who feel approval and love face the daily challenges in their world with eagerness and confidence.

Do you remember how Paul cultivated this type of love with a needy young man named Timothy? The mighty pastor of the church at Ephesus was also a young man with many physical and emotional needs. Paul discipled Timothy with love that could be seen and felt.

## Paul Loved His “Son” Timothy

Paul loved his “son” in the faith. So as our example, how was his “love” for Timothy his “son” in the faith expressed? One of the most beautiful testimonies to the power of encouragement (or affirmation) in the New Testament is in the life of the Apostle Paul. If you read Paul’s letters to Timothy, you can hear Paul tenderly encouraging Timothy.

So Paul loved Timothy with love he could feel. Paul “affirmed” Timothy and used tender and encouraging words to help him as his son in the faith Timothy. These exhortations were tenderly given to a struggling man.

## Practice Ways to Make your Love Felt

Grace-energized mothers make sure their loved ones feel their love. To help them receive and be touched by your love, we can try to use those several key ingredients that we see in both Christ’s and Paul’s ministry. These small choices always help us to communicate affirmation and encouragement.

1. **Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they use meaningful touches with them.**

That is what Jesus did (Mark 10:16) when he blessed the children, He was always touching those He ministered to. He could have healed them with a word, eight times in Mark alone Jesus touched those He served. So should we! The act of touch is a key to communicating warmth and affirmation. It is even essential to physical health. Be generous with your hugs.

2. **Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they prepare special words for them.**

Remember how we saw that Paul used tender and encouraging words to help his son in the faith Timothy. He doesn’t belittle him for his weaknesses and tears. We should always remember that hugs aren’t enough.

Tell your children how you feel about them! Those who are left to fill in the blanks often feel worthless and insecure. At best, only confusion can come from silence. Far too many of us are really not that encouraging.

It’s not that we have a critical spirit. Rather, we just say nothing. Our loved ones are not mind readers. We can do better than just expecting them to know we are in their corner, loving and admiring them silently. They need to hear it!

Grace-energized-mothers make an effort to catch them doing something good, right, thoughtful, considerate, well done, etc. and point it out. Highlight it! "Hey, you really handled that situation very well."



**3. Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they attach high value to them.**

Remember what we saw in Paul, how he told Timothy he had a “treasure” entrusted him; and that he was “gifted”; and that God was “going to use him”. Grace-energized mothers tell their children the qualities they admire in them.

**4. Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they picture a bright future for them.**

Paul told Timothy about a “crown” that was awaiting him as he ran the “race” set before him; and that the Lord was going to “reward” him. So we also should express what God can do with them as they follow Him in their life.

Grace-energized mothers explain to their children how they can become the greatest servant of the Lord in whatever field God has gifted them. Explain why you think their gifts and character traits will be useful throughout their lives. Avoid the overuse of negative admonitions; use Biblical affirmations to inspire confident dependence upon God.

**5. Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they make a commitment to walk through life with them.**

Stand by your loved one through the months and years ahead to help make your words of affirmation become a reality. Express ways you want to be a deeper part of their life (monthly dates, weekly prayer studies, nightly prayer times, on going shared prayer list, etc.)

Don’t quit as soon as you miss a scheduled time because of a conflict, or your loved one hurts or discourages you, or your child fails in some area. What words rang in Christ’s disciples ears from the “Great Commission”? For the rest of their life they heard Him say, “I am with YOU always!”

**6. Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they make a commitment to pray through life with them.**

*Grace-energized mothers pray for their children.* Let them know you’ve done so. Start a life-long prayer list with specific areas that you have learned from them need prayer, and then PRAY. Ask for updates. Celebrate answers. Pray together.

If you are not praying for them each day, who is? Regardless of the age, they need you to lift them up before the Lord in prayer each day. Think about their day. Think about their setting. Think about the people they will be with. Pray about these situations. We need all the help we can get, and much of what happens to us or to our children in this life is beyond our control. John 17 is Christ’s model prayer for us to treasure, just as His disciples did back then as they heard Him pray for THEM.

That is giving them a ***heart that prays***.

7. **Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they become a student of their child's life.**

Jesus started His ministry with the Twelve by one simple plan in Mark 3:14, "and He ordained 12 that ***they should be with Him***". Watch them, share their ups and downs; know where they are in their spiritual life, their school life, work life, home life. Find out who they are close to and who they are not close to—and why.

- **Take an interest in whatever seems to interest your children.** Get into his or her world.
- **Be lovingly persistent in communicating with your children.** That is, keep trying to set up times when meaningful communication can occur.
- **Share activities.** Go to the grocery store, try a family time camping together, or even just ask them to do what you are doing with you (cooking, yard work, running errands). It is always loving to want them, include them, and ask for them to spend time with you.
- **Take the initiative in asking your children questions.** Have an endless learning time asking about what they think, what they feel, what they like or don't like—and why. Learn their favorite flavor, favorite food, favorite activity, dreamed of place to go, and so much more. Write it down afterward to see what you remembered, and ask again until you do remember. Then surprise them with something they like!
- **Listen to your children with full attention.** Let him or her see your eyes light up when they talk to you.

8. **Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they meet their needs with love:** a regular schedule of nutritious meals, clean clothes, clean bodies, adequate sleep and rest. Give them a ***heart that serves***. And as we do so we add to that more gifts:

- Give them a ***heart that rejoices*** and is filled with happiness. Psalm 113:9 describes a "joyful" mother.
- Give them a ***heart that gives*** like Christ's (Mark 10:45): because love gives (John 3:16); because love is generous (II Cor. 9:6); because love expects nothing back (Luke 6:35).
- Give them a ***heart that plays*** and is full of fun.
- Give them a ***heart that celebrates*** all their special days (Matthew 5:41); and since we have to do all those things in the family, why not make them special!
- Give them a ***heart that prefers your family first*** (Titus 2:4 says they are your first priority).
- Give them a ***heart that is focused*** (Matthew 6:24).
- Give them a ***heart that is present*** and attentive (Psalm 119:10 'my whole heart').
- Give them a ***heart that trusts*** in the Lord (Isaiah 26:3 'perfect peace, trusts').[6]

Dorothy Patterson, one of the authors of *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, puts the issue into focus:

“A mother builds something far more magnificent than any cathedral the dwelling place for an immortal soul. No professional pursuit so uniquely combines the most menial tasks with the most meaningful opportunities.”[7]

### Grace-Energized Mothers Cultivate Spiritual Assets

A servant of God has their heart set on spiritual treasures and measures life by the acquisition of spiritual assets rather than merely physical assets. Do you keep track of your **Spiritual Assets**? Often we know our house value, our retirement investment value, the worth of our collections and treasures—but do you keep an inventory of spiritual assets? What are some of our spiritual assets?

These are things like:

- Knowing **where your kid's are reading in God's Word** so they remember when they grow up and leave home that you always cared how they were doing spiritually.
- Asking your husband or wife each week **what they are finding in God's Word** that is helping them to make it through the day. And, actually remembering what they said the last time because you care. This is a spiritual treasure because it forges a strong bond in your hearts of a shared spiritual walk.
- Finding and learning scripture **memory verses that you share in common with your loved ones** is a spiritual treasure. Not hundreds or even dozens, but a handful that you all have learned and share in common. What a treasure to quote them around the living room when the power goes out, or an ice storm cancels church, or when you are traveling. To have this body of Scripture that you together as a couple and a family learned is a true spiritual treasure. Some of the more valuable passages are Psalm 23, the love chapter--I Corinthians 13, the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, and key verses on the tongue and faith in James.
- Collecting **testimonies of salvation** is a record of each person's greatest treasure, isn't it? The only thing that lasts forever from this world will be people and whatever we send up to Heaven before we leave. So, who are you taking to Heaven with you? Have you heard, understood, and savored the testimonies of your family? Can you tell your husband's or wife's testimony? How about your children? What an incredible treasure is our salvation! Take a spiritual inventory of the status of each soul around you in those you love.
- Recording and remembering those **spiritual milestones**, have you started on this spiritual asset yet? Do you record your loved ones' salvation date, baptism date, when they started the habit of personal devotional quiet times, what they are doing in that QT? Have you started yet to celebrate each other's spiritual birthdays? Do you keep a record of, share and celebrate any souls led to Christ by you or by loved ones, and then uphold them by prayer? Who can your family say that you as a family are “taking to Heaven”?

- Finally, one of the great spiritual treasures is a ***lifelong prayer journal***. Even if you've never started, it is never too late to start watching God at work through prayer. Any type of list will do, just date it, hold onto it, and be specific enough in your requests—and there you have it—an actual record of the God of Heaven moving in and through your life by prayer. A list of family needs, specific challenges, hurdles, obstacles, great goals, and so on are all prayed over. As well the verses for Christ's formation in the lives of those you love are always such a tool. Just a sheet of paper, dated, written out and prayed over faithfully until it wears out and then a new one started, will harvest great spiritual gains and treasures.

### **Grace-Energized Mothers Cultivate Habits that Demonstrate Their Love**

1. *Mothers Energized by Grace love their children anyway.* Yes, I know you love them. Most of us parents adore our children — most of the time. Yet some parents have a way of regularly communicating to their children that they do not measure up. I'm thinking now about the young girl who grew up in a family where she was seen as the dunce. Now as a young woman, she continues to experience the same from her family.

Children need parents who will believe in them and no matter what will love them anyway.

2. *Mothers Energized by Grace prepare their children for the battleground, not the playground.* Some parents constantly buy their children toys, gadgets, candy, McDonalds, etc. The kids then get into their high school years and the pampering continues. Only now, the toys are much more expensive. What does that communicate to these children? Meanwhile, other parents prepare their children for life on the battleground where a spiritual battle is taking place. These parents realize that children need more than toys. They need to be equipped for life so that they will survive the difficulties and trials they will face.

3. *Mothers Energized by Grace deal with their own issues.* There are no perfect human beings. Yet if you don't deal with your own issues (your sins, your insecurities, your feelings of inadequacy, etc.), these can impact your children. They may end up having to deal with some of the very issues you would never grapple with.

4. *Mothers Energized by Grace take every opportunity to remind them of who they are in Christ.* They will, most likely, receive many false messages about their identity. They will be told that their worth is based upon their academic record, their physical attractiveness, their charm, their ability to make money, etc. You bless your children when you help them grow up with a sense of their real identity.

5. *Mothers Energized by Grace bless your children by giving them you.* Jesus called the 12 to spend time with Him (Mark 3:14) and that was the great expression of His love. So should we commit to spend time with those we love. There is no substitute for your presence in their lives. Your regular, consistent, emotional and physical presence

means so much. I have known a few parents who seem to see their child as one more activity on the list of things to be done for the day. Yet one senses there is no real connection between parent and child. Being attentive and giving one-on-one time are priceless gifts to children.

6. *Mothers Energized by Grace say only what communicates value, respect, and love.* Choose to never say or do anything that will humiliate. Sometimes, families will tell embarrassing, humiliating, stories about their children. The child is embarrassed at this but then the parent says, "I'm just kidding." (In other words, "Since I think this is funny, you shouldn't let this bother you.") Listen, we all do things in our families that are silly, stupid, mindless, careless, etc. I have found that it is much better for me to tell about something silly or stupid that I did — not my children. Children need to know that homes are safe places where one's mistakes are not announced to the world.

7. *Mothers Energized by Grace want to be their child's greatest encourager.* Far too many parents are really not that encouraging. It's not that they have a critical spirit. Rather, they just say nothing. Children are not mind readers. We can do better than just expecting them to know we are in their corner. They need to hear it! Make an effort to catch them doing something good, right, thoughtful, considerate, well done, etc. and point it out. Highlight it! "Hey, you really handled that situation very well."

8. *Mothers Energized by Grace give them what they need, not what they want.* Many of us are very busy people. We have a lot going on. So often parents will feel guilty about how busy they are and so decide to give them a new "toy." Yet we do our children no favors when we give them most everything they want. The point is this: Too many children grow up getting all the things they want while little attention is given to what they really need. Think about what your children really *need* if they are going to make it in this difficult world as obedient children of a loving God.

9. *Mothers Energized by Grace give their children something to look forward to when they come home. Give them a beautiful home to look forward to. That's "home" — not house. Anyone with enough money can build a beautiful house. Our children need beautiful homes—homes that are filled with warmth, laughter, and love. Beautiful homes are places where children can catch a glimpse of the loving God in the love of their parents. These homes remind kids that no matter how bad the day is at school or with friends, they can always come home.*

For a Christian mother, another core responsibility is to care for her children. Children are to be a priority in her life. In many developed countries of the world today, an anti-birth, anti-child mentality permeates society. Bible-believing Christians, however, must affirm the paramount value of children and motherhood[9].

For a Christian mother, another core responsibility is to care for her children. Children are to be a priority in her life. In many developed countries of the world today, an anti-birth, anti-child mentality permeates society. Bible-believing Christians, however, must affirm the paramount value of children and motherhood[10].

Dorothy Patterson, one of the authors of *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, puts the issue into focus:

“A mother builds something far more magnificent than any cathedral the dwelling place for an immortal soul. No professional pursuit so uniquely combines the most menial tasks with the most meaningful opportunities.”[11]

Titus two is a road map for all who want their life to count. It is God’s pathway of disciplines to choose each day in the power of the Spirit of grace.

God’s plan to work in the world is His church[12]. Christ’s church may be described as a group of people, energized by grace, doing the impossible for the glory of God. A key insight into God’s plan to reach the world through Christ’s church is in Titus chapter 2.

The verses of this chapter contain a call to First Century men and women energized by grace to live an extraordinary spiritual life in a very unspiritual culture.

When grace energizes us, we want to deny ungodliness in any form we find it cropping up in our lives. When God’s grace energizes us, we want to mortify lust in any form in our lives.

When we study this idea of the older-in-the-faith godly, Titus two woman, we are describing a woman who has chosen to learn from God how to live her life day-by-day and step-by-step in way that pleases God. Women energized by grace are useful to God.

When the Gospel of Jesus Christ entered the Roman world of the New Testament, the landscape was very bleak. Christ’s church was born into a sin-warped, sin-darkened world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

But men and women who were gloriously saved did not automatically become great wives and mothers, or husbands and fathers. When they came to Christ and were forgiven, God graciously gave them everything they needed to become godly wives, mothers, husbands, and fathers. But, they needed something else. They needed worship services that taught them to believe correctly, and then they needed small group discipleship times to learn how to behave correctly. Correct behavior is behavior energized by grace.

Titus two describes how God works in the life of a believer. When we were saved and the gospel of grace began in our lives, the evidence was seen in the sanctification process. Grace always teaches genuine believers how to say no to sin in any form.

The Titus two woman is an imperfect person, saved by God, and energized by His grace to live an exemplary life as described in Titus 2:3-4. So we could easily say that:

- Women energized by grace—are reverent in their behavior,

- Women energized by grace—are not slanderers,
- Women energized by grace—are not given to much wine,
- Women energized by grace—are teachers of good things, and
- Women energized by grace—are discipling younger women.

Those new believers, fresh out of paganism, needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices, and those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

And that is the vital ministry which we find captured for us in Titus two.

### **Christ's Church Used Grace Energized Coaches in Godly Living**

Just as important as the preaching and teaching of the doctrines of God's Word was the modeling and nurturing of individual saints through practical hands-on lessons in godly living.

The building blocks of Christ's church are Spirit-filled men and women—lives given daily as obedient servants of God.

God wants men and women that will mentor, nurture, and coach godly living for His church. These individuals believe that God has called them to touch one life at a time for His glory.

For just a moment please follow along in your Bibles in Titus 2:1-8, as I again read those special character traits for men and women.

*v. 1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: v. 2 that the [grace energized] **older men** be:*

1. sober,
2. reverent,
3. temperate,
4. sound in faith,
5. [sound in] love,
6. [sound in] patience;

*v. 3 the [grace energized] **older women** likewise, that they be*

1. reverent in behavior,
2. not slanderers,
3. not given to much wine,
4. teachers of good things— v. 4
5. that they admonish

*the [grace energized] young women*

1. to love their husbands,
2. to love their children, v. 5
3. to be discreet,
4. chaste,
5. homemakers,
6. good,
7. obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

*v. 6 Likewise exhort the [grace energized] young men*

1. to be sober-minded, v. 7
2. in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works;
3. in doctrine showing integrity,
4. reverence,
5. incorruptibility, v. 8
6. sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. (NKJV)

When God gets to pick the curriculum for His Church, what does He choose to be taught? He lays down 12 vital, godly character qualities for women and 12 vital, godly character qualities for men.

Women energized by grace who have these characteristics are highly useful to God. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children to be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus two woman and the Titus two man.

The whole goal of a Titus two woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

---

[1] This list was drawn from an article called **HURT AND BITTERNESS** by Winkie Pratney.

[2] This list was quoted and paraphrased from an article called **HURT AND BITTERNESS** by Winkie Pratney.

[3] Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (I Thessalonians 4:1). This mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). The message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible. But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** is spelled out in Titus 2:11-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

[4] Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (I Thessalonians 4:1). This mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). The message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible. But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** is spelled out in Titus 2:11-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.



[5] These ideas are adapted from *The Blessing* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986, Nashville) and *The Blessing Workbook* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993, Nashville) by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Ph.D.

[6] Adapted from Elizabeth George, *A Woman after God's Own Heart*, Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1997, chapters 7, 10, and 11.

[7] Dorothy Patterson, "The High Calling of Wife and Mother in Biblical Perspective," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 367.

[8] Posted by Jim Martin at January 16th, 2007 online at <http://www.godhungry.org/?p=592>

[9] Alexander Strauch, *Men and Women Equal Yet Different*. Littleton, Colorado: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1999, pp. 66-68.

[10] Alexander Strauch, *Men and Women Equal Yet Different*. Littleton, Colorado: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1999, pp. 66-68.

[11] Dorothy Patterson, "The High Calling of Wife and Mother in Biblical Perspective," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 367.

[12] Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (I Thessalonians 4:1). This mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). The message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible. But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** is spelled out in Titus 2:11-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

## Children Loved By Grace-Energized Mothers

### EBG: Message Thirty-Nine (070701AM)

God is love, the greatest of all Christian virtues is love, and love energized by God lasts forever.

What can be the most powerful aspect of a wife and mother's life on earth as she obeys God's calling for her life? God wants it to be her grace-energized love.

What does God say will last forever from all the endless and mostly unseen hours of work that being a wife and mother entail? All the deeds offered in obedience to the Lord produced by grace-energized-love.

In Titus 2:4 we find the key that produces eternal reward from every day of a grace-energized wife's marriage and a grace-energized mother's family. Paul explains that the key is love. The first calling of a wife and mother in God's Word is to be LOVE.

*[Our] gifts, [and our] ministries, all one day will cease to exist because they will cease to have purpose or meaning. But our showing love [to our husbands and children], practicing [that] love, [and] living [that] love now--are of utmost importance, more important than having any of the other virtues or gifts, because love is the link God gives us with His eternal Self<sup>1</sup>[1].*

God is love (I John 4:8), and everyone who is born of God loves (I John 4:7)—so the greatest of all the virtues, the one that will last forever, is love (I Corinthians 13:13).

The key to grace-energized lives, marriages, and families is love.

Just as love that is prompted by the Spirit and energized by God's grace as Peter said, "**covers** a multitude of sins" (I Peter 4:8), so the absence of that love **causes** a multitude of sins. Love is eternal, love is supreme, and love is most like God for God is love!

As we study Titus two we are looking back into a world where so few had ever known or felt real, Biblical love. The culture of Rome was driven by mighty armies, over-powering architecture and engineering, and Emperors known for their power.

To Romans and Cretans, those who were loving, sensitive, and caring were viewed as being weak. Only the tough could endure all the hardness of the day. So the entrance of love as the top-two qualities that wives and mothers were to possess must have been shocking to these early church believers in Crete.

Love was rarely seen in everyday life and culture in the Roman world. So this gentle, sensitive, grace-energized love was to become a powerful witness in the culture of

---

<sup>1</sup>[1] <sup>1</sup>[1]MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: I Corinthians 13:13*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

century one. Jesus had already said that by this shall all know that you are My disciples, by your love. So that is why Paul says Grace-energized mothers love their children. That is the second phrase of Titus 2:4

### *“To Love Their Children”(v. 4c)*

This characteristic is one word in the Greek text, **philoteknos**; and it means to be a lover of children, so grace-energized mothers love their children. That is what God says through Paul. And this love is **phileo** love that can be felt. That is a grace-energized-mother's special ministry in Christ's church<sup>2</sup>[2]!

Just the fact that these words were inspired by God to come to His saints means that this was not common, this was not easy, and this was not normal. This type of love just doesn't "happen" because God wants it. It is a choice, it is a lesson to be learned<sup>3</sup>[3], and it is a factor that determines a believer's eternal reward in Heaven.

The Bible clearly explains and illustrates this love that was modeled by Christ. This special **phileo** love is demonstrated by Jesus Himself. This type of close, companionship and friendship, emotional love is how Christ's relationship is described with Lazarus (John 11:3) and with "the disciple He loved" named John (John 20:2). This is also the word used in Revelation 3:19 for Christ's love for true saints in His church.

Jesus demonstrated His love to Lazarus and all who saw that friendship knew how close they were. The same was seen in Christ's closeness to the Apostle John. That is how Jesus loves us, and wants us to know He loves us, feeling His closeness, and enjoying His friendship.

And that **phileo** love that is emotional, close, and visible is what the Lord asks from grace-energized mothers towards their children.

### **Give the Priceless Gift of Love**

Do your loved ones in your family *feel* your love?

Many husbands think that their wives admire other men more than them as they relate how, "So-and-so's husband does this and that with his children or for his wife." Those **men do not feel the loving respect and admiration** of their wives.

<sup>2</sup>[2] Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (1 Thessalonians 4:1). This mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). The message of gr+ace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible. But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** is spelled out in Titus 2:11-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

<sup>3</sup>[3] From time to time it becomes so very hard to take care of children that a mom of any century in history no longer "feels" positive feelings towards her children. So how did God instruct Paul to prepare Christ's church for these great social challenges and family pressures? Again, Titus 2 has the solution. God says that the way that tired, burned out, and depressed mothers get relief is from the faithful army of Titus 2 grace-energized role models.

Likewise, many wives feel that their husbands think other women are either better at caring for their husbands, prettier, or better at caring for their families than they are. Those **women do not feel the love** of their husbands.

But most importantly for Titus two mothers energized by grace, we need to consider that many kids hurt because they sense that their parents don't even *like* them.

We already saw how Paul cultivated this type of love with a needy young man named Timothy. The mighty pastor of the church at Ephesus was also a young man with many physical and emotional needs. Paul loved Timothy with a love that could be seen and felt.

Paul loved Timothy with love he could feel. Paul "affirmed" Timothy and used tender and encouraging words to help him as his son in the faith Timothy. These exhortations were tenderly given to a struggling man.

Without attending the actual classes Paul helped Titus begin, where would we start for a way to understand, in a practical way, this love that was to be characteristic of those energized by God to live by His grace in the homes and marriages of Crete? I believe that--

### Jesus Showed Us How to Love

Who would be the best example of a person who modeled this love that was considered humanly impossible? The answer would be the only One who ever perfectly lived out God's will. You see, Titus two living is God's will for every one of us today and all the yesterday's back to when Paul wrote these words.

But only One ever lived out God's grace-energized love, and that was Jesus<sup>4[5]</sup>.

Christ's life reveals a perfect example of love. That is why Peter, writing just after Paul wrote to Titus, tells us that Jesus Christ's life is an example and that we should follow 'in His steps' (I Peter 2:21). As we consider how grace-energized mothers love their children, we can learn so much from the ways that our Lord Jesus Christ loved those He came to serve during His earthly ministry.

Jesus communicated His love to the disciples and others in several ways. He told them that He loved them. He showed them that He loved them (like serving them and touching them). Jesus is the perfect model of showing love that could be felt. One of the clearest ways Jesus showed His love was when He spoke and blessed His disciples.

What was the last memory all the disciples had of Jesus? As we turn to Luke 24 lets remember some details about when Jesus ascended into Heaven. What was He doing as He left? Have you ever noticed that little insight Luke gives us?

---

4[5] Jesus and phileo love are seen in the New Testament as: the love God has for Christ (John 5:20); the love Jesus had for Lazarus (John 11:3, 36); the love God has for us, and that we have for Jesus (John 16:27); the love Jesus had for John (John 20:2); and the love Jesus has for believers (Revelation 3:19).

We already know from Acts 1:8-12 that Jesus took the disciples to the Mt. of Olives and then ascended up into the clouds and out of their sight. That is the picture of Christ's final moments with the disciples we remember most, but there is a second account that gives some precious details we have often missed. Turn back to Luke 24:50-53, and stand with me as we read this precious event:

*Luke 24:50-53 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and **He lifted up His hands and blessed them.** 51 Now it came to pass, **while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.** 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and **blessing God.** Amen. (NKJV)*

Those men would never forget walking with Jesus for 3 ½ year, they would never forget Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; but what would be riveted in their minds? It would be that incredible moment of the last time they saw Him here on Earth.

Their friend, their Savior, their most precious Lord of all left them in a most touching way.

Jesus lifted up His hands and gave them the most unforgettable expression of His personal love as He touched each of them with His blessing!

Think about that. Jesus was very careful what He did as He left His disciples, and the picture they would have deeply etched in their minds is Christ's loving, prayerful blessing raining down upon them as He was lifted upward and out of sight.

### **Christ's Words Powerfully Expressed His Love**

Those words of blessing raining down upon them must have been remembered over and over in the days ahead. Words have such power for good or evil. What kind of words do you “rain down” upon those you are speaking to in life? And what are those who listen to your words remembering? Are they “blessed” by what you said?

Turn back with me to what Peter told us in I Peter 3. After talking about the basic building blocks of society and the church (marriage and family), he concludes with an incredible postscript:

*1 Peter 3:8-9 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling (spoken curses), **but on the contrary blessing,** knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*

In the New Testament a “blessing” we offer to a loved one is basically a prayer of encouragement for them. So, energized by grace--

## Loving Mothers Bless Their Children

Blessing is a verb used 44 times in the New Testament that means: “to praise [your loved one], to celebrate [them] with praises [that] invoke [God’s] blessings and consecrate [your loved one] with solemn prayers [that] ask God’s blessing on [your loved one] to cause [them] to prosper, to make [them] happy, to bestow blessings [that they be] favored by God.”<sup>5[6]</sup>

That is why Peter says to the church so strongly, watch out for how you “rain down” your words upon 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.*

So Peter basically says those who love with Christ's power, “sow words of blessing and you will reap a harvest of blessing.” What a powerful motivation to primarily use our words, mouths, and voices to bless others in Christ's Name!

And that is what we get from nearly every one of the 44 times the word “bless” is used in the New Testament (14 x in Luke). Here are some of the key verses:

- **[blessing often involves touching]** *Mark 10:16 And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and **blessed them**.*
- **[blessing often points to the future]** *Luke 2:34 Then **Simeon blessed them**, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against*
- **[blessing is usually hard but always very rewarding]** *Luke 6:28 “**bless those** who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.*
- **[lest we miss it Paul repeats the habit of blessing as part of Christ's church’s mandate]** *Romans 12:14 **Bless** those who persecute you; **bless and do not curse**.*
- **[there was a Spirit-prompted work of blessing in the early church services]** *1 Corinthians 14:16 Otherwise, **if you bless with the spirit**, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?*
- **[heroes of the faith made it their last act like Christ's to stretch out their hands and bless those they loved]** *Hebrews 11:20-21 By faith **Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau** concerning things to come.<sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when he was*

---

<sup>5[6]</sup>Enhanced Strong's Lexicon, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995.

*dying, **blessed each of the sons of Joseph**, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.*

Why should we learn to share a blessing with our families? Because a blessing shared and the whole expression of love that it gives helps those we love know in a visible way that we love them. Blessing those we love is a memorable way they can remember feeling and hearing our love.

Do you ever remember your mother or father telling you out loud, in a clear and loving voice, that they loved you and admired some qualities they had seen in your life?

Those words just stay in our hearts for a lifetime. My own mom and dad often told me how much they saw the Lord's Hand in my life and what great things they believed God would do in my life—and my dad who is still alive continues saying that on a weekly basis! This type of love expressed is actually a reflection of what God taught as--

### Old Testament Blessings

One of the key descriptions of how God wanted His people blessed comes from the instructions to the priests. In the Jewish community the priests were the public servants, they inspected for disease, they protected the food supply, housing, dealt with domestic issues, and of course represented the people to God. In the New Testament we are to all be priests, and, in a real sense, we are called like them to bless those around us.

*Numbers 6:23-27 (NKJV) "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." ' "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."*

This idea of the blessing of the people was so woven into the fabric of the life of God's chosen people of promise, the Jews, that they began to make a specific verbal blessing time to be part of the private family Sabbath meal.

One of the most moving Shabbat (Jewish Sabbath) traditions is the blessing over the children given on Friday night. There are many variations on how the blessing is made. The most common custom is the father walks around the table, puts his hands on each family members' head, and blesses them.

Go back in your mind to where we started.

*Luke 24:50-53 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and **He lifted up His hands and blessed them**. 51 Now it came to pass, **while He blessed them**, **that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven**. 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and **blessing God**. Amen. (NKJV)*

Those men would never forget walking with Jesus for 3 ½ years, they would never forget Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; but what would be riveted in their minds? It would be that incredible moment of the last time they saw Him here on earth.

Their friend, their Savior, their most precious Lord of all left them in a most touching way.

Jesus lifted up His hands and gave them the most unforgettable expression of His personal love as He touched each of them with His blessing!

Think about that. Jesus was very careful what He did as He left His disciples, and the picture they would have deeply etched in their minds is Christ's loving, prayerful blessing raining down upon them as He was lifted upward and out of sight.

They felt His love. Those words of blessing raining down upon them must have been remembered over and over in the days ahead.

Words have such power for good or evil. What kind of words do you “rain down” upon those you are speaking to? And what are those who listen to your words remembering?

Do they feel your love?



## Grace-Energized Living: The Titus Two Model

### EBG: Message Forty (070722AM)

We have gathered as Christ's church today, but the church that met as Christ's church nearly 2,000 years ago in New Testament times was a much simpler, informal gathering.

There were no "church buildings", so homes or public places were used.

There were no written materials other than God's Word. No books, no tapes, no videos, no projectors, no parking lots, no auditoriums: just people indwelt by God's Spirit and His Word.

When they met, they learned **why** they were there, **what** they were to share, and **how** they were to live. In other words, they were given what we could call a **Mission**, a **Message**, and a **Method**.

Our study of Titus 2 over these past weeks has been examining the method God commanded for them to reach their culture. But before we return to that method of Christ's church for reaching a godless society, back up and look at the mission and message of the New Testament church, because like them:

### We Have a Mission

As we open to I Thessalonians 4:1 may I remind you that as Christ's church we have **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (I Thessalonians 4:1).

*1 Thessalonians 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we **urge** (PAI an continuous present action) and **exhort** (PAI) in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how **you ought to walk and to please God**; NKJV*

Paul's teaching involved a continuous urging and exhorting of the believers in Thessalonica to stay on track with their mission in life of pleasing God at every level of their life.

The word translated '**to please**' God is a fascinating word in Greek (**aresko**; 19 times in New Testament) that means: "to please; to strive to please; to accommodate one's self to the desires and interests of another" 6[1][1]

Paul continuously reminded them they had a mission every day of life and that was to please God. Think about life today and each new day you start as launching out on a mission to please God all through the day and night, everywhere you are, and in everything you do. That was the mission that marked the New Testament saints.

---

6[1][1] *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995.

Secondly, we find that Paul also taught them that their message was simply the gospel of the grace of God. The message was simple and easy to remember and repeat. In a confusing world with many false messages, they declared God's message. So like them:

### We Have a Message

As we turn to Acts, this mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24).

*Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to **the gospel of the grace of God**. NKJV*

**gospel of the grace of God.** An apt description since salvation is solely by God's grace (Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 2:11).7[2][2]

*Acts 20:32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to **the word of His grace**, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. NKJV*

**word of His grace.** The Scriptures, the record of God's gracious dealings with mankind **build you up**. The Bible is the source of spiritual growth (1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 1 Pet. 2:2) for all Christians. And since the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), its leaders must be familiar with that truth.8[3][3]

The message of grace, that God did everything possible to be done for salvation and anyone can come to Him merely by faith, seems impossible. And as Paul says, it sounds foolish (1 Corinthians 1:18). But the message of the gospel of grace, summarized by the cross of Christ, is what we are to share.

God assures us that His grace gives us the strength, or 'energizes' us, to do all that pleases Him, making this gospel the greatest message of all. But how exactly were the men and women saved out of the world to reach the world? How were they to live on a daily basis that would make their lives redemptive?

But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** that is spelled out in Titus 2:1-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

The grace-energized life of Titus two is a road map for all who want their life to count. It is God's pathway of disciplines to choose each day in the power of the Spirit of grace, armed with the message of grace. God says:

---

7[2][2] John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

8[3][3] John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

## **We Have a Method**

God's plan to work in the world is His church. Christ's church may be described as a group of people, energized by grace, doing the impossible for the glory of God. A key insight into God's plan to reach the world through Christ's church is in Titus chapter two.

The verses of this chapter contain a call to First Century men and women energized by grace to live an extraordinary spiritual life in a very unspiritual culture.

When grace energizes us, we want to deny ungodliness in any form we find it cropping up in our lives. When God's grace energizes us, we want to mortify lust in any form in our lives.

We want to live life day-by-day and step-by-step in a way that pleases God. When energized by grace, we are useful to God.

When the Gospel of Jesus Christ entered the Roman world of the New Testament, the landscape was very bleak. Christ's church was born into a sin-warped, sin-darkened world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

## **Sin-Warped Lives**

But men and women who were gloriously saved did not automatically become great wives and mothers, or husbands and fathers. When they came to Christ and were forgiven, God graciously gave them everything they needed to become godly wives, mothers, husbands, and fathers. But, they needed something else. They needed worship services that taught them to believe correctly, and then they needed small group discipleship times to learn how to behave correctly. Correct behavior is behavior energized by grace.

Titus two describes how God works in the life of a believer. When we were saved and the gospel of grace began in our lives, the evidence is seen in the sanctification process. Grace always teaches genuine believers how to say no to sin in any form.

When God gets to pick the curriculum for His Church, what does He choose to be taught? He lays down godly character qualities for men and women.

And that is the vital ministry which we find captured for us in Titus two. What were these older women in the faith supposed to do?

## **Coaches in Godly Living**

Just as important as the preaching and teaching of the doctrines of God's Word was the modeling and nurturing of individual saints through practical hands-on lessons in godly living.

We have already learned that the Titus Two woman is an imperfect person, saved by God, and energized by His grace to live an exemplary life as described in Titus 2:3-4. So we could easily say that:

- Women energized by grace—are reverent in their behavior,
- Women energized by grace—are not slanderers,
- Women energized by grace—are not given to much wine,
- Women energized by grace—are teachers of good things, and
- Women energized by grace—are discipling younger women.

Those new believers, fresh out of paganism, needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices, and those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

God's plan has not changed. Two thousand years ago the Lord told men and women just what He wanted to see in their lives, and that is what He still is looking for today! We are in the midst of looking at the way God designed for women to most magnify and glorify Him by their everyday lives.

### **Twelve Characteristics of Grace-Energized Women**

We are studying the seventh characteristic. Paul told Titus to raise up grace-energized mothers. This element of the New Testament church is found at the end of verse 4.

Follow along with me as we look at the entire scope of God's entire curriculum for women, and then we'll examine this seventh characteristic.

*v. 3 the [grace energized] **older women** likewise, that they be*

1. reverent in behavior,
2. not slanderers,
3. not given to much wine,
4. teachers of good things— v. 4
5. that they admonish

*The [grace energized] **young women***

1. to love their husbands,
2. to love their children, v. 5
3. to be discreet,
4. chaste,
5. homemakers,
6. good,
7. obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. (NKJV)

## Grace-Energized Living Follows the Titus Two Model

When Paul gets down to every day life for women, he builds on the character of God, revealed in God's Word.

God is love, and the greatest of all Christian virtues is love.

So what is the most powerful aspect of a wife and mother's life on earth obeying God's calling to her life? Her **grace-energized love**.

And what does God say will last forever from all the endless and mostly unseen hours of work that being a wife and mother entail? All the deeds offered in obedience to the Lord produced by **grace-energized-love**.

In Titus 2:4 we find the key that produces eternal reward from every day of a grace-energized-wife's marriage and a grace-energized mother's family. Paul explains that the key is love. The first calling of a wife and mother in God's Word is to LOVE.

*[Our] gifts, [and our] ministries, all one day will cease to exist because they will cease to have purpose or meaning... But our showing love [to our husbands and children], practicing [that] love, [and] living [that] love now--are of utmost importance, more important than having any of the other virtues or gifts, because love is the link God gives us with His eternal Self*<sup>9[4][4]</sup>.

The key to grace-energized lives, marriages, and families is love.

Love was rarely seen in everyday life and culture in the Roman world; and this gentle, sensitive, grace-energized love was to become a powerful witness in the culture of century one. Jesus had already said that by this shall all know that you are My disciples, by your love. So that is why Paul says Grace-energized mothers love their children. That is the second phrase of Titus 2:4

### **v. 4c "to love their children"**

This characteristic is one word in the Greek text, **philoteknos**, and it means to be a lover of children; so grace-energized-mothers love their children. That is what God says through Paul. And this love is **phileo** love that can be felt. That is a grace-energized mother's special ministry in Christ's church!

Just the fact that these words were inspired by God to come to His saints means that this was not common, this was not easy, and this was not normal. This type of love just doesn't "happen" because God wants it. It is a choice, it is a lesson to be learned<sup>10[5][5]</sup>, and it is a factor that determines a believer's eternal reward in Heaven.

<sup>9[4][4]</sup> <sup>9[4][4]</sup>MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: I Corinthians 13:13*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

<sup>10[5][5]</sup> From time to time it becomes so very hard to take care of children that a mom of any century in history no longer "feels" positive feelings towards her children. So how did God instruct Paul to prepare Christ's church for these great social challenges and

And that **phileo** love that is emotional, close, and visible is what the Lord asks from grace-energized mothers towards their children.

Do your loved ones in your family *feel* your love?

### **Practice Ways to Make your Love Felt**

Grace-energized mothers make sure their loved ones feel their love. To help them receive and be touched by your love, we can try to use those several key ingredients that we see in both Christ's and Paul's ministry. These small choices always help us to communicate affirmation and encouragement.

First, look at what Jesus did in Mark 10:16 when he blessed the children. He gathered them into His arms. Jesus was always touching those He ministered to. He could have healed them with a word, nine times in Mark alone Jesus touches those He served<sup>11</sup>[6][7]. So should we! The act of touch is a key to communicating warmth and affirmation. It is even essential to physical health. Be generous with your hugs. Remember these ways we already learned from Christ's training of His disciples and Paul's training of Timothy?

- 1. So, like Jesus: Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they use meaningful touches with them.**

Secondly, do you remember reading through several verses in the epistles to Timothy, how Paul used tender and encouraging words to help his son in the faith Timothy? He doesn't belittle him for his weaknesses and tears. We should always remember that hugs aren't enough; we need, like Paul, to say as many encouraging and uplifting words as possible.

Tell your children how you feel about them! Those who are left to fill in the blanks often feel worthless and insecure. At best, only confusion can come from silence. Far too many of us are really not that encouraging.

It's not that we have a critical spirit. Rather, we just say nothing. Our loved ones are not mind readers. We can do better than just expecting them to know we are in their corner, loving and admiring them silently. They need to hear it!

Grace-energized mothers make an effort to catch them doing something good, right, thoughtful, considerate, well done, etc., and point it out. Highlight it! "Hey, you really handled that situation very well." Just like Paul does as he communicates with Timothy.

- 2. So, like Paul: Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they prepare and use special words for them.**

---

family pressures? Again, Titus 2 has the solution. God says that the way that tired, burned out, and depressed mothers get relief is from the faithful army of Titus 2 grace-energized role models.

<sup>11</sup>[6][7] Mark 1:31; 1:41; 5:41; 6:5; 7:33; 8:23; 9:27; 9:36, and 10:16.

Thirdly, remember what we saw in Paul, how he told Timothy he had a “treasure” entrusted him; and that he was “gifted”; and that God was “going to use him”? Grace-energized-mothers tell their children the qualities they admire in them.

**3. So, like Paul: Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they attach high value to them.**

Fourthly, we saw that Paul told Timothy about a “crown” that was awaiting him as he ran the “race” set before him; and that the Lord was going to “reward” him. So we also should express to our children what God can do with them as they follow Him in their life.

Grace-energized mothers explain to their children how they can become the greatest servant of the Lord in whatever field God has gifted them. Explain why you think their gifts and character traits will be useful throughout their lives. Avoid the overuse of negative admonitions; use Biblical affirmations to inspire confident dependence upon God.

**4. So, like Paul: Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they picture a bright future for them.**

Fifthly, reaffirm your plan to stand by your loved one through the months and years ahead to help make your words of affirmation become a reality. Paul expressed this truth as he confessed that one of his greatest labors was remembering Timothy “night and day” (II Timothy 1:3). Express ways you want to be a deeper part of their life (monthly dates, weekly prayer studies, nightly prayer times, on going shared prayer list, etc.)

Don’t quit as soon as you miss a scheduled time because of a conflict, or your loved one hurts or discourages you, or your child fails in some area.

What final words rang in Christ's disciples ears from the “Great Commission”? For the rest of their life they heard Him say, “I am with YOU always!” I am walking through every day of your life with you in love, in concern, in partnership.

**5. So, like Paul and Jesus: Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they make a commitment to walk through life with them.**

Sixthly, Grace-energized mothers pray for their children and let them know it. Start a life-long prayer list with specific areas that you have learned from them need prayer, and then PRAY. Ask for updates. Celebrate answers. Pray together.

If you are not praying for them each day, who is?

Regardless of their age, they need you to lift them up before the Lord in prayer each day. Think about their day. Think about their setting. Think about the people they will be with. Pray about these situations.

We need all the help we can get, and much of what happens to us or to our children in this life is beyond our control. John 17 is Christ's model prayer for us to treasure, just as His disciples did back then as they heard Him pray for THEM.

**6. So, like Jesus: Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they make a commitment to pray through life with them.**

Finally, Jesus started His ministry with the Twelve by one simple plan in Mark 3:14, “and He ordained 12 that ***they should be with Him***”. Watch them, share their ups and downs; know where they are in their spiritual life, their school life, work life, home life. Find out who they are close to and who they are not close to—and why.

- **Take an interest in whatever seems to interest your children.** Get into his or her world.
- **Be lovingly persistent in communicating with your children.** That is, keep trying to set up times when meaningful communication can occur.
- **Share activities.** Go to the grocery store, try a family time camping together, or even just ask them to do what you are doing with you (cooking, yard work, running errands). It is always loving to want them, include them, and ask for them to spend time with you.
- **Take the initiative in asking your children questions.** Have an endless learning time asking about what they think, what they feel, what they like or don't like—and why. Learn their favorite flavor, favorite food, favorite activity, dreamed of place to go, and so much more. Write it down afterward to see what you remembered, and ask again until you do remember. Then surprise them with something they like!
- **Listen to your children with full attention.** Let him or her see your eyes light up when they talk to you.
- **Meet their needs with love:** a regular schedule of nutritious meals, clean clothes, clean bodies, adequate sleep and rest. Give them a ***heart that serves***.

**7. So, like Jesus: Grace-energized mothers love their children in a way that can be felt when they become a student of their child's life.**

And as we share in time with them we can add even more gifts:



- Give them a **heart that rejoices** and is filled with happiness. Psalm 113:9 describes a “joyful” mother.
- Give them a **heart that gives** like Christ's (Mark 10:45): because love gives (John 3:16); because love is generous (II Cor. 9:6); because love expects nothing back (Luke 6:35).
- Give them a **heart that plays** and is full of fun.
- Give them a **heart that celebrates** all their special days (Matthew 5:41); and since we have to do all those things in the family, why not make them special!
- Give them a **heart that prefers your family first** (Titus 2:4 says they are your first priority).
- Give them a **heart that is focused** (Matthew 6:24).
- Give them a **heart that is present** and attentive (Psalm 119:10 ‘my whole heart’).
- Give them a **heart that trusts** in the Lord (Isaiah 26:3 ‘perfect peace, trusts’).<sup>12[7][8]</sup>

Dorothy Patterson, one of the authors of *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, puts the issue into focus:

“A mother builds something far more magnificent than any cathedral the dwelling place for an immortal soul. No professional pursuit so uniquely combines the most menial tasks with the most meaningful opportunities.”<sup>13[8][9]</sup>

### Practical Application Guide:

Here are just a few ways to work on to help your children know and feel your love.

### Practice Blessing Your Children

I want you to focus for a few minutes on giving an encouraging blessing to each member of your family.

Use this definition of the Greek word for “blessing” that we have been learning about.

Plug in some genuine loving expressions of what you see that you can praise in their life.

**2127 eulogeo is a verb used 44 times in the New Testament that means:**

“to praise [your loved one], to celebrate [them] with praises [that] invoke [God’s] blessings and consecrate [your loved one] with solemn prayers [that] ask God’s

---

<sup>12[7][8]</sup> Adapted from Elizabeth George, *A Woman after God’s Own Heart*, Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1997, chapters 7, 10, and 11.

<sup>13[8][9]</sup> Dorothy Patterson, “The High Calling of Wife and Mother in Biblical Perspective,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 367.

blessing on [your loved one] to cause [them] to prosper, to make [them] happy, to bestow blessings [that they be] favored by God.”<sup>14[9][10]</sup>

Often we forget that strengths and weaknesses are just the two opposite ends of a characteristic we exhibit. For example someone who is anxious and worries has just misdirected their meditation onto problems instead of blessings.

There are so many character flaws that we can encourage the positive side in a person. Just as Peter was encouraged by Christ's loving ministry, so can we encourage prayerfully those we love. Here are a few of the two-ends of the same trait:

Positive Character	Negative Character
Alert and sociable	Overly curious, nosy
Sensitive	Touchy
Resourceful and creative	Manipulative
Thrifty and stewardship minded	Stingy
Expressive and dramatic	Overly talkative
Enthusiastic, vivacious	Flighty
Sincere, earnest, with strong convictions	Too serious
Strong convictions and uncompromising	Bold and inflexible
Strong disciplines and convictions	Rigid
Confident and assured	Overbearing
Creative and imaginative	Dreamer and distracted
Organized and efficient	Too fussy

### Grace-Energized Mothers Cultivate Spiritual Assets

A servant of God has their heart set on spiritual treasures and measures life by the acquisition of spiritual assets rather than merely physical assets. Do you keep track of your **Spiritual Assets**? Often we know our house value, our retirement investment value, the worth of our collections and treasures—but do you keep an inventory of spiritual assets? What are some of our spiritual assets?

These are things like:

- Knowing **where your kid's are reading in God's Word** so they remember when they grow up and leave home that you always cared how they were doing spiritually.
- Asking your husband or wife each week **what they are finding in God's Word** that is helping them to make it through the day. And, actually remembering what they said the last time because you care. This is a spiritual treasure because it forges a strong bond in your hearts of a shared spiritual walk.
- Finding and learning scripture **memory verses that you share in common with your loved ones** is a spiritual treasure. Not hundreds or even dozens but a

<sup>14[9][10]</sup>Enhanced Strong's Lexicon, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995.

handful that you all have learned and share in common. What a treasure to quote them around the living room when the power goes out, or an ice storm cancels church, or when you are traveling. To have this body of Scripture that you together as a couple and a family learned is a true spiritual treasure. Some of the more valuable passages are Psalm 23, the love chapter--I Corinthians 13, the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, and key verses on the tongue and faith in James.

- Collecting **testimonies of salvation** is a record of each person's greatest treasure, isn't it? The only thing that lasts forever from this world will be people and whatever we send up to Heaven before we leave. So, who are you taking to Heaven with you? Have you heard, understood, and savored the testimonies of your family? Can you tell your husband's or wife's testimony? How about your children? What an incredible treasure is our salvation. Take a spiritual inventory of the status of each soul around you in those you love.
- Recording and remembering those **spiritual milestones**, have you started on this spiritual asset yet? Do you record your loved ones salvation date, baptism date, when they started the habit of personal devotional quiet times, what they are doing in that QT? Have you started yet to celebrate each other's spiritual birthdays? Do you keep a record of, share and celebrate any souls led to Christ by you or by loved ones, and then uphold them by prayer? Who can your family say that you as a family are "taking to Heaven"?
- Finally, one of the great spiritual treasures is a **lifelong prayer journal**. Even if you've never started, it is never too late to start watching God at work through prayer. Any type of list will do, just date it, hold onto it, and be specific enough in your requests—and there you have it—an actual record of the God of Heaven moving in and through your life by prayer. A list of family needs, specific challenges, hurdles, obstacles, great goals, and so on are all prayed over. As well the verses for Christ's formation in the lives of those you love are always such a tool. Just a sheet of paper, dated, written out and prayed over faithfully until it wears out and then a new one started will harvest great spiritual gains and treasures.

### **Grace-Energized Mothers Cultivate Habits that Demonstrate their Love**

1. *Mothers Energized by Grace love their children anyway.* Yes I know you love them. Most of us parents adore our children — most of the time. Yet some parents have a way of regularly communicating to their children that they do not measure up. I'm thinking now about the young girl who grew up in a family where she was seen as the dunce. Now as a young woman, she continues to experience the same from her family. Children need parents who will believe in them and no matter what will love them anyway.
2. *Mothers Energized by Grace prepare their children for the battleground, not the playground.* Some parents constantly buy their children toys, gadgets, candy, McDonalds, etc. The kids then get into their high school years and the pampering continues. Only now, the toys are much more expensive. What does that communicate to these children? Meanwhile, other parents prepare

their children for life on the battleground where a spiritual battle is taking place. These parents realize that children need more than toys. They need to be equipped for life so that they will survive the difficulties and trials they will face.

3. *Mothers Energized by Grace deal with their own issues.* There are no perfect human beings. Yet if you don't deal with your own issues (your sins, your insecurities, your feelings of inadequacy, etc.), these can impact your children. They may end up having to deal with some of the very issues you would never grapple with.
4. *Mothers Energized by Grace take every opportunity to remind them of who they are in Christ.* They will, most likely, receive many false messages about their identity. They will be told that their worth is based upon their academic record, their physical attractiveness, their charm, their ability to make money, etc. You bless your children when you help them grow up with a sense of their real identity.
5. *Mothers Energized by Grace bless your children by giving them you.* Jesus called the 12 to spend time with Him (Mark 3:14) and that was the great expression of His love. So should we commit to spend time with those we love. There is no substitute for your presence in their lives. Your regular, consistent, emotional and physical presence means so much. I have known a few parents who seem to see their child as one more activity on the list of things to be done for the day. Yet one senses there is no real connection between parent and child. Being attentive and giving one-on-one time are priceless gifts to children.
6. *Mothers Energized by Grace say only what communicates value, respect, and love.* Choose to never say or do anything that will humiliate. Sometimes, families will tell embarrassing, humiliating, stories about their children. The child is embarrassed at this but then the parent says, "I'm just kidding." (In other words, "Since I think this is funny, you shouldn't let this bother you.") Listen, we all do things in our families that are silly, stupid, mindless, careless, etc. I have found that it is much better for me to tell about something silly or stupid that I did — not my children. Children need to know that homes are safe places where one's mistakes are not announced to the world.
7. *Mothers Energized by Grace want to be their child's greatest encourager.* Far too many parents are really not that encouraging. It's not that they have a critical spirit. Rather, they just say nothing. Children are not mind readers. We can do better than just expecting them to know we are in their corner. They need to hear it! Make an effort to catch them doing something good, right, thoughtful, considerate, well done, etc. and point it out. Highlight it! "Hey, you really handled that situation very well."

8. *Mothers Energized by Grace give them what they need not what they want.* Many of us are very busy people. We have a lot going on. So often, parents will feel guilty about how busy they are and so decide to give them a new "toy." Yet we do our children no favors when we give them most everything they want. The point is this: Too many children grow up getting all the things they want while little attention is given to what they really need. Think about what your children really *need* if they are going to make it in this difficult world as obedient children of a loving God.
9. *Mothers Energized by Grace give their children something to look forward to when they come home.* Give them a beautiful home to look forward to. That's home — not house. Anyone with enough money can build a beautiful house. Our children need beautiful homes—homes that are filled with warmth, laughter, and love. Beautiful homes are places where children can catch a glimpse of the loving God in the love of their parents. These homes remind kids that no matter how bad the day is at school or with friends, they can always come home.

For a Christian mother, another core responsibility is to care for her children. Children are to be a priority in her life. In many developed countries of the world today, an anti-birth, anti-child mentality permeates society. Bible-believing Christians, however, must affirm the paramount value of children and motherhood<sup>15[10][12]</sup>.

For a Christian mother, another core responsibility is to care for her children. Children are to be a priority in her life. In many developed countries of the world today, an anti-birth, anti-child mentality permeates society. Bible-believing Christians, however, must affirm the paramount value of children and motherhood<sup>16[11][13]</sup>.

Always remember as you try to build these habits of love that quote from Dorothy Patterson, one of the authors of *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, who again puts this issue into focus:

"A mother builds something far more magnificent than any cathedral the dwelling place for an immortal soul. No professional pursuit so uniquely combines the most menial tasks with the most meaningful opportunities."<sup>17[12][14]</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>[10][12] Alexander Strauch, *Men and Women Equal Yet Different*. Littleton, Colorado: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1999, pp. 66-68.

<sup>16</sup>[11][13] Alexander Strauch, *Men and Women Equal Yet Different*. Littleton, Colorado: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1999, pp. 66-68.

<sup>17</sup>[12][14] Dorothy Patterson, "The High Calling of Wife and Mother in Biblical Perspective," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 367.

# Grace-Energized Women are Discreet: Grace Energized Minds

## EBG: Message Forty-One (070729AM)

Jesus loves absolutes. He always used them in His teachings, through contrasts: Light vs. Darkness, Heaven vs. Hell, Life vs. Death, Broad way vs. Narrow Gate, and so on.

Those absolutes continue into the church that bears Christ's Name. We have to choose go His way or ignore His way. The clearest choice of all involves our minds.

Either we choose to have a God-controlled mind or a World-controlled mind. Either we give in to a Media-saturated mind or pursue a Word-saturated mind. That was the challenge that the Lord directed Paul to lay before the church at Crete and to all of us since.

### God-Controlled Minds

"To be discreet" in Titus 2:5 in my Bible is a translation of one Greek word *sophron*, but actually this word is virtually untranslatable by any one English word. It is variously translated *of sound mind, discreet, prudent, self-controlled, chaste, having complete control over sensual desires*. The Greeks derived it from two words which mean *to keep one's mind safe and sound*.

In Titus 2:5 This word describes a woman with a mind surrendered to God's control. Her mind is surrendered to God's gracious sanctifying power; and she learns to govern every instinct and passion until each has its proper place and no more.

As we delve into this verse, God's Word makes one thing perfectly clear: God wants your mind under His control.

More than anything else God wants to saturate, influence, fill, direct, dominate and control your mind.

**If God has your mind** - He has your body,  
**If God has your mind** - He has your emotions,  
**If God has your mind** - He has your appetites,  
**If God has your mind** - He has your time,  
**If God has your mind** - He has your money . . .

Do you see the point? The one who gets your mind gets it all. Your mind is the prize! Everything else is just the scraps.

The battle is for our minds. Satan is seeking to steal the minds of God's children. Your mind is the key to knowing God. Only a mind stayed on the Lord can have perfect peace. A mind devoted to Christ is the road to God's plan for your life!

God wants your mind given to the pursuit of His Kingdom, His Word, and His Christ!

The grace-energized life of Titus 2 is a roadmap for all who want their life to count. It is God's pathway of disciplines to choose each day in the power of the Spirit of grace.

We have come to the eighth element of a godly woman's life—as described and prescribed by God—and that is a God-controlled mind, a Word-saturated mind, a Christ-seeking mind.

### Grace-Energized Women Have God-Controlled Minds

The Holy Spirit of the Infinite and Unchanging God of the Universe breathed out through Paul a list of life-choices, godly character traits, grace-energized actions that please God and are useful to Him.

God's plan to work in the world is His church<sup>18[1][1]</sup>. Christ's church may be described as a group of people, energized by grace, doing the impossible for the glory of God.

In this next grace-energized trait we see Paul point to the godly woman's mind. This word is our entry into one of the most vital areas of our life as believers—the realm of our minds.

This is the only universal character quality of this list. In the space of just six verses in Titus Paul declares this quality God desires is stated as part of the life of godly older women (2:4), godly younger women (2:5), godly older men (2:2), godly younger men (2:5), Biblical elders (1:8), and—to every Spirit-filled and Spirit-led believer (Titus 2:12; c.f. Romans 12:3).

So as we look at this word from God it is first of all in context to be the personal life-choice for younger women; and secondly, it is to be the curriculum on the mind of godly older women as they spend time nurturing younger women; and thirdly it is for every man in the church whether in a leadership role or not—because it is universally applied to every believer in Christ's church.

### Twelve Characteristics of Grace-Energized Women and Mothers

We are studying the eighth of 12 characteristics for grace-energized women, found at the start of verse 5. As a review please follow along as we look at the entire scope of what God wants trained, and then examine this eighth characteristic.

---

<sup>18[1][1]</sup> Christ's church has **a mission** that Paul summarized as pleasing God (I Thessalonians 4:1). This mission is accomplished by the proclamation of **a message** Paul summarized as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). The message of grace—that God did everything possible to be done and anyone can come to Him merely by faith seems impossible. But the most amazing part of all that the Lord is doing is His plan to do all this by **a method** is spelled out in Titus 2:11-14—Paul summarized as energized by God's grace to live in a way that is otherwise impossible.

v. 4 *that they admonish the [grace-energized] young women*

1. to love their husbands,
2. to love their children, v. 5
3. to be discreet **sophron** (KJV/NKJV); “self-controlled” (NIV); “sensible” (NAS),
4. chaste,
5. homemakers,
6. good,
7. obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. (NKJV)

The Greek word God inspires Paul to write is **sophron** translated in the New Testament as “discreet, sensible, or self-controlled”. The meaning of this word is vital to our spiritual lives. God is asking for believers to desire and seek by His grace to be:

“serious about spiritual things; not being known as a clown; living a disciplined life: self-controlled and not addicted to anything; in control of your choices, knowing your priorities; serious about life; temperate and avoiding excesses; a clarity of thought that leads to an orderly life.”<sup>19[2][2]</sup>

A further application of this word would be: to be seen as thinking about life through God’s filter, the Philippians 4:8 grid.

Sadly it seems that Satan has caught many believers off guard. While they carefully avoid many obvious doctrinal dangers, perhaps the most powerful mind-robber has been overlooked. Satan is neutralizing the power of so many godly minds, little-by-little every day through the onslaught of the media that overflows us like a raging flooded river.

### Beware of Mind-Neutralizers

**Your godly mind can get neutralized by modern<sup>20[3][3]</sup> media that has reset the Moral Acceptability Threshold.**

Here is the test: “Do the things that once offended you now entertain you? Are you able to enjoy the company of television programs, videos, and movies that have values diametrically opposed to yours? This moral drift is important to understand, for it continues unabated. Extrapolate ten or twenty years into the future and it is frightening to imagine what media content awaits us.” <sup>21[4][4]</sup>

<sup>19[2][2]</sup> These definitions are from MacArthur, Shepherdology: A Master Plan for Church Leadership, Panorama City, CA: Masters Fellowship, 1989.

<sup>20[3][3]</sup> Adapted and quoted from Swenson, Overload, p. 137-160.

<sup>21[4][4]</sup> Al Menconi, “Our Collective Soul Is Dying” *Minnesota Christian Chronicle*, 16 February 1995, p.6.



**Your godly mind can get neutralized by modern media that has *reset the Shock Threshold*.**

In the past, if we saw blood, killing, or tragedies on the evening news, it would disturb us for weeks. Today, however, the rule of the newsroom is, "If it bleeds it leads." Movies are worse. Beginning about thirty years ago, succeeding waves of movies relied on more and more violence to attract crowds. Audiences became numbed to the repulsiveness of each level of violence, so directors had to enhance the horror to maintain interest. Such common fare no longer elicits anguish from society, and more troubling is that believers who regularly watch these images seem to have no shock over the sin.

**Is your godly mind troubled that** God defines spiritual adultery in Ezekiel as the sin when His people followed the advice, customs, and practices of the pagans instead of Him?

The idols Israel followed had to do with pagan practices about their health, their business, their safety, their future security, and so on. They had abandoned God as their source of truth for life, *and they spent and invested more time getting help, counsel, direction, and advice from everyone but Him.*

Ezekiel 20:31 "For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live," says the Lord God, "I will not be inquired of by you. NKJV

Our world spends most of their time seeing the world through the world's eyes which is our media world. Today more and more believers are finding their world view, values, and guidance for life from TV, secular books, unsaved professionals, magazines, commercials, and the internet. Sadly, they follow that secular and ungodly direction more than God and His Word.

**Is your godly mind troubled yet that** today's teens (the 31 million 12-19 year olds, some of them may be living in your house) have a world that has been defined for them **more by** computer games, TV, social networking sites like MySpace and FaceBook, movies, advertisements for Apple, Nike, Sony, Gap, Old Navy and the web -- **than by God's Word?**

Half of all teens are from a broken home, and 63% have both parents working. All of them, down deep, need adult guidance. In ***A Tribe Apart***, author Patricia Hersch said, "Every kid wished they had more adults in their life, especially that their parents would invade their lives".

**Is your godly mind troubled yet that** video's, movie's and television's effects are so well known to be disastrous to the life of any child or adult?

Statistics by secular research has concluded what undisciplined media saturation causes.

- A shortened attention span: *that means a media saturated person can't think about God very well.*
- Reduced linguistic powers: *that means a media saturated person can't talk about God very well.*

**Is your godly mind troubled yet that** to attract and hold its audience, the entertainment industry feels it has to parade the taboos of culture: adultery, promiscuity, homosexuality, incest, violence, and sadism?

As a result the lowest of activities become commonplace, and even morally cachet.

Ephesians 5:12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. NKJV

**Is your godly mind troubled yet that** what you choose for your mind today will shape your eternal future?

- If you choose to be entertained by godlessness--it will callous you;
- If you choose to be entertained by sensuality--it will defile you;
- If you choose to be entertained by violence--it will desensitize you;
- If you choose to be entertained by evil--it will distance you;
- If you choose to be entertained by worldliness--it will discourage you;
- If you choose to be entertained by Satan's mind--you will forfeit the blessings of having the mind of Christ.

Let's be blunt: don't say you are committed to Christ unless you are disciplining your mind for the active pursuit of godliness!

### Words that God Chose for Us

That brings us back to the plan of God for your mind. When the Lord set out the description of the godly New Testament woman of grace He chose a word that deeply communicates His desire. That word is the Greek word ***sophron***.

There are many ways to study the Bible: book studies, chapter studies, verse studies, subject and topic studies, background studies—but perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Bible studies are those that examine closely the individual words that God chose to use in His Book. That is what we will be doing this morning.

Because God's Word is the best commentary on God's Word join me for a study of this very uniquely Christian word. God used this word only to describe believers, and makes it a quality He wants to see in all believers.

The basic meaning of this word **sophron** in the New Testament (a Greek word here as an adjective) is being serious about spiritual things; living a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything.

**Sophron** is part of a family of New Testament words that use the noun, verb, adverb, and adjective form of the very same word. Let's look at these words in the order they appear in the Greek vocabulary of the New Testament.

## 1. God Wants You Serious About Spiritual Things

This word (Strong's number 4998 **sophron**: of a sound mind, sane, in one's senses; curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate) is an adjective that occurs 4x in the New Testament:

- Titus 2:5 [younger women] **to be discreet**, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. NKJV
- Titus 2:2 that the older men be sober, reverent, **temperate**, sound in faith, in love, in patience; NKJV
- Titus 1:8 [an elder] but hospitable, a lover of what is good, **sober-minded**, just, holy, self-controlled, NKJV
- I Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, **sober-minded**, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; NKJV

## 2. God Wants You Restoring Others to Serious Spiritual Living

We find this same word as an action verb (4994 **sophronidzo** verb 1x) describing the need for the older, godly grace-energized women to exhort earnestly the younger women by "restoring them to their senses, so they moderate, control, curb their minds". That is the sense of this word in--

Titus 2:4 that they **admonish** the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, NKJV

This same word is found as an adverb (4996 **sophronos** adverb 1x: 'with sound mind, soberly, temperately, discreetly') further down in this chapter.

Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should **live soberly**, righteously, and godly in the present age, NKJV

- God says that His grace-energizes us into being serious about spiritual things;

- His grace teaches us how to live a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything;
- Believers energized by God's grace are in control of their choices, seeking out God's priorities;
- God wants us serious about life, temperate, and avoiding excesses;
- God's grace gives us a clarity of thought that leads to an orderly life;
- His grace leads us to thinking through the Philippians 4:8 grid.

### 3. God Wants You Regaining a Confident Mind

Again we find this word in a noun form with another shade of meaning (4995 **sophronismos** noun/masc. 1x: 'an admonishing or calling to soundness of mind, to moderation and self-control; self-control, moderation') as Paul encourages Timothy his son in the faith. Timothy exhibited a problem many believers struggle with, he was timid and fearful. This verse was Paul's strong encouragement to him in his struggle.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of **a sound mind**. NKJV

Even a casual reading of II Timothy 1:4-8 leads us to see that Timothy was fearful, timid, felt worthless even to the point of tears, and even struggled with being 'ashamed' of his ministry for the Lord.

Note that Paul does not harshly rebuke him, but gently reminds him of many things. He tells Timothy he has nothing to be ashamed of. He had a great upbringing though his father didn't help, his mother and grandmother were godly (II Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15). Paul reminds Timothy of his special position as a choice servant of the Lord, personally trained (Acts 16:3) with a special gifting (II Timothy 1:6). In short Paul says there is no reason that Timothy should be timid and fearful—yet he was!

Timothy appears to have a life-long need for encouragement to be bold and go on serving the Lord. It is very possible that the stomach problems he struggled with (I Timothy 5:23) were directly tied to his emotional problems of a fearful and timid personality.

If you are a person that feels uncomfortable around people, if you draw back from people who reach out to you, if you feel inferior to others, and you are afraid of always saying the wrong thing so that people dislike you—then welcome to the club.

One of the greatest pastors and servants of the Lord of all time was so much like you. Timothy, son-in-the-faith to Paul, servant-of-the-Lord to the largest church of the New Testament world was just like you. Paul does not chastise him, scold him, rebuke him harshly, or say that he was unspiritual. Rather, Paul says give your mind back to Christ's control each time you start to fear.

The fear, the discomfort, the feelings of inferiority and shame that Timothy felt were just part of living inside a fallen body, with flesh-influenced minds and emotions. The solution was to make a conscious choice by faith to keep surrendering his mind back under Christ's control. Paul was saying--

- Timothy, God's grace can energize your mind to understand who you are in Christ;
- Timothy, His grace teaches your mind to live a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything including fear and timidity.
- Timothy, believers energized by God's grace are in control of their choices, seeking out God's priorities which include fearing not;

Do you see the point? The one who gets your mind gets it all. Your mind is the prize! Everything else is just the scraps.

The battle is for our minds. Satan is seeking to steal the minds of God's children.

### **Renewing a God-Controlled Mind**

Your mind is the key to knowing God. Only a mind stayed on the Lord can have perfect peace. A mind devoted to Christ is the road to God's plan for your life!

God has a will for your mind and that is for your mind to be given to the pursuit of God, His Kingdom, His Word, and His Christ!

- How do we bring our minds into captivity?
- How do we fix our eyes on Jesus?
- How do we discipline our minds for godliness?

Probably the first and most powerful way to do all that is to put on tight, our helmet of salvation.

Paul told Timothy to stir up the gift given to him. We aren't sure what exactly it was, it might have been faith, or the teaching gifts of a pastor. But it was miraculous and came by the laying on of Paul's hands, from God.

But this evening we will learn about a miraculous gift we must stir. That gift also came the instant that God laid His Hands upon us. And that gift is our salvation.

The best way to get your mind back under God's control is to think the truth. The helmet that we are to wear as believers is the helmet of what? Salvation. Pull on the straps and fasten tight your helmet of salvation. Surrender again your mind to God's control. Energized by grace, allow God's truth to saturate your mind and see what He can do with you.

## Grace-Energized Minds

### EBG: Message Forty-Two (070729PM)

As we open to I Thessalonians 5, we open to Paul preparing new believers for spiritual warfare. As believers and followers of Christ, they were going to be attacked in their minds, by the Devil. That is where he starts. Your body only goes where your mind directs. Your mind is the key to following God. Only a mind stayed on the Lord can have perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3). A mind devoted to Christ is the road to God's plan for your life (Proverbs 3:5-6).

When Paul spoke of living in a world that loves darkness, ruled by a prince of darkness he exhorted those new believers to remember who they were. The way to get through dark days in this world was simple as long as you wore your helmet:

*1 Thessalonians 5:5-8 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, **and as a helmet the hope of salvation.** NKJV*

We need to wear our helmet! Paul explained that helmet as part of a complete way of life in Ephesians 6. If you could have seen Paul as God saw him in his battle gear you would have seen an old, gray headed man with a badly dented war helmet. Many dents, slices, and marks show how often the enemy had struck at him.

### Renewing a God-Controlled Mind

The best way to get your mind back under God's control is to think the truth. The helmet that we are to wear as believers is the helmet of what? Salvation. Pull on the straps and fasten tight your helmet of salvation. Surrender again your mind to God's control. Energized by grace, allow God's truth to saturate your mind and see what He can do with you.

The "*helmet of salvation*," was Paul's confidence of knowing that he is saved and will be saved. That mind of his, guarded-by-God was assured of the past, present, and future aspects of his salvation allowed him to stand against all of Satan's vicious assaults.

*Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; NKJV*

Paul told Timothy to stir up the gift given to him. We aren't sure what exactly it was, it might have been faith, or the teaching gifts of a pastor. But it was miraculous and came by the laying on of Paul's hands, from God.

*2 Timothy 1:6-7 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.<sup>7</sup> For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of **a sound mind**. NKJV*

But this evening we will learn about a miraculous gift we must stir. That gift also came the instant that God laid His Hands upon us. And that gift is our salvation.

As you begin each day, each month, and as we come to the end of this month, one of our greatest privileges is to open and enjoy the gift of salvation God has given to us. By faith we please God when we believe what He's said about us. We need to not live by what others say or have said about us all your life.

### **Start a New Spiritual Exercise**

Satan is the Accuser and wants us to only remember all the many times we have fallen; Satan delights in the days, weeks, or months he can keep us condemning ourselves for what we've done. That is his plan, so don't fall for it. Resist Satan as you believe the truth; speak the truth; and preach the Gospel to yourself.

And when ever we fall down, God says to just turn back to Him and repent right then. Don't wallow in your pain and guilt and punish yourself, confessing our sin immediately-- and believe that what God has promised in His salvation. We are forgiven, justified, regenerated, reconciled, adopted, redeemed, and sanctified. That makes us precious in His sight, special in His plan.

One of the most powerful habits you could grow is to take this list of the ramifications of having received the gift of salvation!

Keep this list in your Bible, at home, on your computer, put one on your mirror where you start your day, and in your car. Where ever you need to keep reminding yourself of what great things God has promised and done through Christ's death for us!

Slowly as you understand and lay hold on these truths a life-changing transformation take place in our minds, and then in our emotions, and finally throughout our entire life as we live each day based on God's eternal truth. It starts as we:

### **Focus on Your Forgiveness**

*Because of our sin—we are all debtors to God's Righteousness; so we need forgiveness.*

Forgiveness. Nothing matters more to any who have sinned—and God says all have sinned.

One moment before your last breath, one thing will matter more than anything else—whether you are dying forgiven or unforgiven.

The peace you can have one moment before you die is available on a daily basis if you understand what God has done in Christ and if you choose to respond by faith to Him.

**In Forgiveness we go from hopelessly offending God stained by sin to the peace of complete forgiveness.**

We need to experience what the Scriptures often declare—God is a God who offers His children complete forgiveness. Trace with me again those life giving words in your hearts as I read them to you.

Then repeat the truth of what God has done!

- “as far as the east is from the west, **so far has he removed** our transgressions from us”. (Psalm 103:12). **God said all my sins are gone.**
- “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “ Though your sins are like scarlet, **They shall be as white** as snow; Though they are red like crimson, **They shall be as wool.**” (Is. 1:18). **I am white as snow in God’s sight.**
- “For I will forgive their wickedness and **will remember their sins no more.**” (Jeremiah 31:34b). **God has forgotten all my sins.**
- “She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “**Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.**” (John 8:11). “There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 8:1). **Jesus will never condemn me for my sins.**

Celebrate your forgiveness that is only in Christ.

### Focus On Your Justification

*Because of our sin—we are all guilty convicts in God’s sight; so we need justification.*

Jesus died to take guilty convicts and destroy any record that that ever committed a crime and takes their place in the punishment—**that’s justification!** A Sinner stands before God as accused and is declared righteous by His imputed righteousness.

**In Justification we go from being accused and guilty before God to being righteous and with no record of wrongs!**

We need to experience what the Scriptures often declare—God has once and for all through Christ’s sacrifice justified us. That means that He has accused us, declared us guilty of sin and then made us righteous and forever deleted the record of all our wrongs[1].

- Romans 8:33-34 “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.<sup>34</sup> Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” I



have been justified and by Christ justifying me and because the record has been erased—I **am free now & forever from condemnation.**

- 1 Corinthians 6:17 “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” By Christ justifying me—I **am forever united with the Lord.**
- Ephesians 1:4 “... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love”. By Christ justifying me—I **was chosen by Jesus to be holy and blameless in his sight.**
- Ephesians 2:6 “...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”. By Christ justifying me—I **am already seated with Christ in Heaven.**

### Focus on Your Regeneration

*Because of our sin—we are all dead in our trespasses and sin; so we need regeneration.*

Jesus died to take us who are dead in our sins, bring us to life and welcome us as family members, full of endless life and brand new—**that’s regeneration!**

**In Regeneration we go from dead and decaying to alive and overflowing.**

We need to experience what the Scriptures often declare—God Himself has regenerated us. That means that He has sought us out in our dead and decaying condition, breathed eternal life into us, and brought us into His family by the new birth. Then He comes to live within us so we are forever having an abundant and overflowing, eternal life[2].

- 1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually”. Because Jesus regenerated me—I **am a member of Christ's Body.**
- 1 John 5:18 “We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him”. Because Jesus regenerated me—I **am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.**

### Focus on Your Reconciliation

*Because of our sin—we are all enemies of God; so we need reconciliation.*

Jesus died to take enemies and make them friends—**that’s reconciliation!** A Sinner stands before God as an enemy and is made a friend by His peace.

**In Reconciliation we go from being an enemy at war with God to being His treasured friend!**

We need to experience what the Scriptures often declare—God has ended His war against us in our sin by Christ's reconciling sacrifice and has established not a truce, He has made us His treasured friend.

- *John 15:15* “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you”. Because Jesus reconciled me—I am **Christ's friend**.
- *2 Corinthians 5:17-20* “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.<sup>18</sup> Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,<sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.<sup>20</sup> Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God”. Because Jesus reconciled me—I am **Christ's ambassador of reconciliation**.
- *Ephesians 1:6* “to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved”. Because Jesus reconciled me—I am **accepted in Christ Jesus**.

### Focus on Your Adoption

*Because of our sin—we are all strangers to God; so we need adoption.*

Jesus who died to take strangers and make them part of the family—that's adoption! A Sinner stands before God as a stranger and is called a Son by His choice.

**In Adoption we go from being a stranger and an outsider to being His son or daughter and in partnership with Him!**

We need to experience what the Scriptures often declare—God has taken me from being a stranger outside of His presence and blessing and has made me his child and the son and daughter of His family in partnership with Him[3].

- *John 1:12* “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”. Because I was adopted by God—I am **God's child**.
- *John 6:47* “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life”. Because I was adopted by God—I have **everlasting life**.
- *Romans 8:28* “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”. Because I was adopted by God—**God is working everything in my lifetime out for His good**.
- *Romans 8:29* “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren”.

Because I was adopted by God—I **am being conformed into Christ's likeness.**

### Focus on Your Redemption

*Because of our sin—we are all slaves to unrighteousness; so we need redemption.*

Jesus died to take slaves and make them freed forever—**that's redemption!** A Sinner stands before God as a slave and is granted freedom by Christ's payment.

Christ's death to pay the price of our sin is so wonderful that we, the redeemed of all the ages will be joined by the angels so that together we may sing a new song, as Revelation records:

*Revelation 5:12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" NKJV*

**In Redemption we go from being a slave chained to our sins to complete freedom by God and a new focus.**

We need to experience what the Scriptures often declare—God has liberated us from our slavery to sin, broken sins chains that long had enslaved us and freed us to focus our lives on what really matters to Him.

- 1 Corinthians 6:20 *"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's".* Christ bought me with a price—I **belong to God.**
- Philippians 1:6 *"...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ".* Because Christ bought me in redemption—**God will finish what He started in me.**
- Ephesians 2:10 *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them".* Because Christ bought me in redemption—I **am God's workmanship.**

### Focus on Your Sanctification

*Because of our sin—we are all defiled; so we need sanctification.*

Jesus died to take our soiled and misdirected lives that always get wasted and make them clean, focused and fruitful—**that's sanctification!**

**In Sanctification we go from our formerly wasted and empty life to holy purposeful life.**

We need to experience what the Scriptures often declare—God has come into me and taken over my wasted life and made me new, entered my empty life and filled it with

Himself to make me holy and filled with His purposes more and more until He gets me Home[4].

- 1 Corinthians 3:16 "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" Because of Christ's sanctifying work in me—I **am God's temple**.
- Ephesians 1:1 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus". Because of Christ's sanctifying work in me—I **am a saint**.
- 2 Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind". Because of Christ's sanctifying work in me—I **never need to fear again**.

As you begin each day, and each month, one of our greatest privileges is to open and enjoy the gift of salvation God has given to us. By faith we please God when we believe what He's said about us. We need to not live by what others say or have said about us all your life.

Satan is the Accuser and wants us to only remember all the many times we have fallen; Satan delights in the days, weeks, or months he can keep us condemning ourselves for what we've done. That is his plan, so don't fall for it. Resist Satan as you believe the truth; speak the truth; and preach the Gospel to yourself.

And when ever we fall down, God says to just turn back to Him and repent, confessing our sin immediately--and believe that what God has promised in His salvation. We are forgiven, justified, regenerated, reconciled, adopted, redeemed, and sanctified. That makes us precious in His sight, special in His plan.

Slowly as you understand and lay hold on these truths a life-changing transformation take place in our minds, and then in our emotions, and finally throughout our entire life as we live each day based on God's eternal truth.

[1] Ephesians 3:12 "... in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him". By Christ justifying me—I **can always approach God with confidence**. Say that aloud with me  
Colossians 3:3 "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God". By Christ justifying me—I **am safely hidden with Christ in God**. Say that aloud with me

Hebrews 4:15-16 "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." By Christ justifying me—I **always have His grace and help**. Say that aloud with me

[2] 2 Corinthians 1:21 "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God". Because Jesus regenerated me—I **am established, anointed and sealed by God**. Say that aloud with me

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". Because Jesus regenerated me—I **can do all things through Christ who strengthens me**. Say that aloud with me

Colossians 2:10 "...and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power". Because Jesus regenerated me—I **am complete in Christ**. Say that aloud with me

[3] John 10:10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly". Because I was adopted by God—I **have abundant life**. Say that aloud with me  
John 15:15 "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you". Because I was adopted by God—I **am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life**. Say that aloud with me

*Romans 8:17 "... and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together".* Because I was adopted by God—I **am an heir of God, and co-heir with Christ.** Say that aloud with me

*Ephesians 1:5 "... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."*

**I have been adopted by God.** Say that aloud with me

*Philippians 3:20 "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ".* Because I was adopted by God—I **am a citizen of heaven.** Say that aloud with me

[4] *Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* Because of Christ's sanctifying work in me—I **am Christ's personal witness.** Say that aloud with me

*Romans 8:35 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"* Because of Christ's sanctifying work in me—I **will never be separated from the love of God.** Say that aloud with me

*Ephesians 2:18 "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father".* Because of Christ's sanctifying work in me—I **have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.** Say that aloud with me

*Colossians 3:12 "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering".* Because of Christ's sanctifying work in me—I **can wear Christ's love every day.**

*John 15:16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you".* Because of Christ's sanctifying work in me—I **have been chosen by God to bear fruit.** Say that aloud with me

*Ephesians 1:13 "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, you are marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit".* Because of Christ's sanctifying work in me—I **am sealed and marked by the Spirit of God.** Say that aloud with me

# When Christ is Magnified and Believers Consecrated— God's Word Prevails

EBG: Message Forty-Three (070805AM)

## What Does a Grace-Energized Church Look Like?

A grace-energized church is where believers are empowered by God to magnify Christ, when God's Word is prevailing in and through their lives, and they are willing to consecrate their lives and rid themselves of anything that hinders or displeases God.

As you open in your Bibles, we will examine one of the most amazing chapters in the Bible, Acts 19. In this chapter we find a powerful grace-energized church that God used, and where Christ's glory is supreme.

This chapter is the biography of the saints at Ephesus, a phenomenal grace-energized church, and in that account we find ***the timeless keys to a church God can use greatly.***

God's Word explains to us what makes Christ's church powerful in any culture. It is when:

- ***God's Son is magnified, and***
- ***God's People are consecrated, then***
- ***God's Word prevailed.***

Jesus was magnified and God's Word prevailed in this group of consecrated people in the New Testament church at Ephesus. What a combination to have for the Lord in any generation. That powerful ministry was the result of a purged and obedient local church.

The grace-energized saints of Ephesus overcame the same pressures facing us as believers today: a pleasure seeking culture, a mind-assaulting media, and a materialism-dominated way of life.

God's Word always has an answer for how to walk in the Spirit, abide in Christ, and see Christ's church prevail in an ever darkening world. The struggle is always against our flesh and the Devil; and resisting<sup>22[1][1]</sup> both is what we are charged with as an imperative from God's Word.

In this church we see grace-energized saints, walking in the power of God's Spirit. To study this model church at Ephesus is to see...

---

<sup>22[1][1]</sup> A few months back we studied our spiritual immune system that is laid out in Scripture as having three factors: **spiritual health** (eating God's Word in Hebrews 5:13-14, Matthew 4:4; plus exercising each day by walking in the Spirit in Galatians 5:16); **spiritual armor** (understanding and uses the armor Paul commands us to use in Ephesians 6:10-18); and **spiritual warfare** (resisting the devil and his demons in James 4:7, I Peter 5:8-9). If you neglect any part of your spiritual immune system—Satan and his army have a point to step up their campaign.

## When God's Word Prevailed in Dark Ephesus

Acts 19 records one of the greatest revivals in Biblical history. Paul went to the godless heart of the Eastern Roman Empire called Ephesus. There he confronted the evils of culture that godlessness begets: materialism, pride, occultism, and sensuality—each of which is still a constant enemy of our walk with Christ.

The kingdom of darkness was left shaken to the core, confused and fighting against itself. Then, God called out a group of believers that would form one of the greatest churches of the New Testament era. By their zenith they numbered as many as 50,000 and were the home church of Paul, Mary, John, and Timothy.

Before we read through Acts 19 for a look at this incredible revival that swept through the church at Ephesus, remember the facts about this place.

Ephesus was a coastal seaport along the commercial trade route linking east to west. For hundreds of years the worship of Diana (or Artemis) had made Ephesus a thriving, and safe commercial center. Known as the “Treasure House of Asia” the city of Ephesus also became a center for materialism and ambition.

The Temple dedicated to Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. A forest of 127 bejeweled and carved sixty foot high marble pillars rose around the perimeter; and a statue of a sex goddess, worshipped by unbridled immorality was at the center of everything done in that city. The worship of Artemis was the worship of the desires of the flesh to their fullest.

Hundreds of prostitutes were always on the grounds to promote this unrestrained indulgence of the flesh. Ephesus was a magnet for not just the sexually enslaved; it was also the center of the promotion of the black arts, witchcraft, superstition, and all the powers of Satan. It was like a cesspool where everything occultic was collected. Ephesus became the watering hole where every charlatan, medium, palm-reader, spiritist, magician, and witch felt right at home. That helps us understand why Paul would tell these Ephesians that there was so much more than the physical world to contend with.

We recall his words in Ephesians 6:12.

*For we do not wrestle<sup>23[2][2]</sup> against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

So in this very dark, very worldly, very alluring place of sin—Christ's church was born. And Acts 19:8-20 records that amazing birth. Please stand with me and listen to what

---

<sup>23[2][2]</sup> The word “wrestle” refers to hand-to-hand combat with trickery and deception. That is Paul's description of how Satan and his hosts try to attack. Paul then lists four different designations of the spiritual world in opposition to God. Each of these words describe a different layer or rank of demons in the evil spiritual empire they serve. Satan's forces of darkness are highly structured for the most destructive purposes. Paul and Peter both name these same levels of demons (Colossians 2:15; 1 Peter 3:22).

God can do when His Son is magnified, His Word unleashed, and His children are consecrated for His Glory.

### Facing the Darkness (Acts 19:8-10)

In Acts 19:8-10 we find the plan God laid on Paul's heart for reaching a society so much like ours. Paul faced off against the powers of darkness in Ephesus by one of the longest recorded times he ever got to spend teaching God's Word in a synagogue. Paul spent three months in intense Bible teaching right there in the shadow of Diana's Temple of Darkness. Look how Luke describes that time in Acts 19:8-10.

*Acts 19:8-10 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning<sup>24</sup>[3][3] and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*

Paul rented a lecture hall from a "Tyrannus" and using the customary lunch and siesta time observed each day in the Roman Empire<sup>25</sup>[4][4].

Paul didn't want to just be another religious peddler, living off the hardworking people of Ephesus. He wanted nothing to stand in the way of his message so he labored night and day with his own hands, and taught any and all who would come on the afternoon break time.

Look at the next verse. Paul did this daily for two years. That means Paul invested as much as five hours a day for 24 months. With the Sabbath off for rest, that means Paul invested over three thousand hours in teaching into the church at Ephesus. That is equivalent to thirty-years of morning and evening sermons at this church all packed into two years. Paul gave them a lifetime of learning in a very short time.

Listen to the results of this extensive and focused teaching time shedding Christ's light in that sin-darkened culture. I like to describe this as--

### Penetrating the Darkness (Acts 19:11-12)

*Acts 19:11-12 Now God worked unusual miracles<sup>26</sup>[5][5] by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.*

---

<sup>24</sup>[3][3] The word "reasoning" (NKJV) is the Greek word 'dialoguing'. Paul did questions and answer times, he reasoned back and forth taking the Jews from where they were, into God's Word and back to an application for their life in Ephesus. After three months of this, when the unbelievers became "hardened" and started to attack those who had believed, Paul makes a strategic shift in his methods.

<sup>25</sup>[4][4] Usual work days went from 7 to 11 AM, then lunch and rest from 11AM-4 PM, and back to work from 4-9 PM. The Western Text actually says in the Greek text at this place 'from the fifth hour to the tenth'. From Paul's other writing we can assume that he worked at his tent-making business each morning, dialogued each day during the time off people had, and then returned to the shop to work from 4-9PM. If you look over at Acts 20:34 note what Paul reminded the church about his work ethic: Acts 20:34 "Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me."



We already saw in v. 10 that Luke said that “all” who dwelt in the Roman province of Asia (which is roughly modern day Turkey) were exposed to God's Word. In the area surrounding Ephesus there are the famous seven churches that Jesus wrote to in Revelation. It is very possible that each of them were a by-product of this extensive and intensive proclamation of God's Word.

The word “handkerchiefs” is actual the word for the sweat rags of the workshop<sup>27</sup>[6][6]. The word “aprons” is the word for the leather workers apron. There in the hot and humid seaside tent-makers quarters, the rags that Paul used to wipe his face as he labored to work to pay his way and the way of those who were with him—when taken from that shop by those who wanted him to help their loved ones, healed them. That is unusual. God honored Paul's message, his hard work, and most of all his assault on the realm of Satan's hold over these enslaved and sin-darkened people.

God looks for men and women to use who are willing to work unhindered by the sacrifice, laboring with an undivided heart, proclaiming an undiluted message, investing even in a humble occupation—all to make the Gospel of Christ known. This level of commitment was not new to Paul.<sup>28</sup>[7][7]

Paul sewed tents in the morning, taught the Bible all afternoon, disciplined fellow tent makers into the evening, went on visitation, prayed through sleepless nights and wrestled with the Devil. All that to get the Gospel out, and see a church born in the center of Satan's lands of darkness. What a wonderful, inspiring servant of the Lord Paul must have been.

And as always happens: light attracts bugs. The powerful work of God was so amazing that Satan sent some bugs to hinder that work in Acts 19, they began--

### **Faking the Light (Acts 19:13-16)**

In the midst of these “unusual” miracles a clever group opportunists wanted to get in on the action and started ‘selling’ the power of God. But God powerfully silenced their mockery.<sup>29</sup>[8][8]

---

<sup>26</sup>[5][5] Next, Luke records that “unusual miracles” took place. That is interesting because miracles in and of themselves are unusual, but these were extraordinary attestations by God of His Kingdom overcoming the reign of darkness in that whole area. Two types are noted—the hands of personal work of Paul and the power of God displayed through objects taken from Paul to the sick. Therein lies a bit of insight into the ‘unusual’ power displayed.

<sup>27</sup>[6][6] Those handkerchiefs and aprons were as one commentator puts it, were: “symbols which God chose to employ in order to underscore the characteristic of the apostle which made him a channel of the power of God. In the same way, Moses’ rod was a symbol. Cast on the ground, the rod became a serpent; lifted over the waters, it rolled them back. There was nothing magic about the rod itself; it was the symbol of something about Moses which God honored. So these sweatbands and trade aprons were symbols of the honest, dignified humility of heart, the servant-character which manifested and released the power of God.” ~ Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

<sup>28</sup>[7][7] In his first epistle to the Thessalonians he said: 1 Thessalonians 2:9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

<sup>29</sup>[8][8] In the ancient world there were professional exorcists. They were magicians who had the reputation of knowing the individual names of the most powerful spirit beings. Among them were also even a group of Jewish priests who claimed to have knowledge of how to pronounce secret names of God, and thus they held special powers over the spiritual world. “So it was very natural for renegade Jewish exorcists to add Jesus’ name to their incantations. But the situation was intolerable, and the Lord decided to purge the bandwagon by providing an unforgettable example. The seven sons of Sceva thought they would have another quick exorcism and an easy buck—until they intoned the name Jesus. Then the demoniac rolled his frenzied eyes and said, “I know who Jesus is, and I know who Paul is, but who do you think you are?” After that, all they remembered were some rights and lefts, the door opening, and streaking madly for cover! Oh, how the church probably loved to tell that story!” Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

This event and the powerful outpouring of God's power deeply penetrated the hearts of the believers. They saw clearly that God was Living and True and that they as His children must be—

### **Renouncing the Darkness (Acts 19:17-20)**

This was the turning point. The power of darkness was broken. Satan's house was divided. Christ triumphantly opened the door to great ministry through this church.

*Acts 19:17-18 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. 19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So **the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.***

The most remarkable facet of Paul's ministry to this church is that when Paul taught the Ephesian believers about the strategies of Satan, they collected and burned all of the objects associated with demonic and satanic contact.

The level of their desire to repent and follow the Lord was seen in this costly choice to rid their lives of anything that displeased Him. Their example recorded by God in His Word should stir us to ask, "Have we likewise carefully purged out of our lives anything that displeases the Lord?"

As you look back at v. 19, doesn't that verse amaze you? What did God lead Paul to do to prompt such a huge response in public with such great sacrifice involved?

God's Word records exactly what Paul told them that made them respond so dramatically to the evil around them. What Paul taught made them go home, search out, gather and BURN all of their expensive media.

Aren't you glad that the Holy Spirit has captured for each of us Paul's message that those saints heard and responded to? It is in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where Paul wrote down the messages God wanted them to remember and us to hear with them. Turn with me to Ephesians 4:22-24, and remember again that we are called to--

### **A Life-style of Shedding the Old Life (Ephesians 4:22-24)**

The heart of the message Paul taught them is in Ephesians 4:22-24. That same message of Christ's Lordship must fill our lives, leading to the removal of any part of our lives that displeases God. There are three clear choices we must make! Look again with me at Ephesians 4:22-24:

*that you **put off**, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and **be renewed** in the spirit of your*

*mind, 24 and that you **put on** the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

First, Paul is asking believers **to start a life-style of grace-energized shedding**. This is “putting off” old habits like old clothes are so comfortable and fit us so well, that we often forget that we even have them on again—until the Spirit of God convicts us. Paul is reminding us that those who will live a life holy to the Lord must repeatedly put off the old ways.

If we struggle with anger, anger must be shed daily; and if we struggle with pride, pride must daily be shed. This is also the choice we must make for lust, greed, fear and any other byproducts of our flesh. Often believers fail to grow in their spiritual lives because they don’t understand the life-long need to shed or “put off” our old sins on a daily basis.

Second, in v. 23 Paul is asking them **to start a life-style of grace-energized thinking**. Choices to put off old ways flow from our renewed minds. Just as Romans 12:2 says we are “transformed by the renewing of our minds”. When we think godly, we behave godly; or when we believe right, we behave right.

God’s plan for our minds always starts with us personally reading and studying His Word. Then from that flows our personal request to God’s Spirit, asking Him to renew our minds. As we prayerfully read we have in our minds God’s thoughts. As we submit to God’s desires through His Word—He infuses His mind into ours. Paul said that we can have the mind of Christ by this constant renewal process. A grace-energized mind comes as believers regularly, hopefully daily get God’s Word into their hearts and minds.

A simple goal would be to listen to God’s voice all the way through His Word once each year. This is an imperative for us, reading the Bible expectantly and asking God to speak to us by His Spirit each day in His Word.

Lastly, in v. 24 Paul is asking them **to start a life-style of grace-energized wearing**. This is the putting on: “and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (v. 24). God makes it clear that it is not enough to merely put off old fleshly habits, they must be replaced with the newness of Christ in wearing His love, wearing His peace, etc. (Galatians 5:22). If I lose my temper with my wife or children, and repent and put it off—that is not enough unless I also put on Christ’s love and patience also!<sup>30[9][9]</sup>

God is at work in us His children, and energized by His grace we must work at living out this new life Phil. 2:12-13). Our daily task is getting dressed in our divine clothes—spiritually speaking clothes do make the man, and the woman.

---

<sup>30[9][9]</sup> All of this is through God’s grace. Works have no place in obtaining salvation or in gaining merit in the Christian life. The Christian life is sola gratia, grace alone. Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul said, “continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:12b, 13). Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

One final point that is perhaps the most important one of all for each of us: when the church cleans house, when believers renounce hidden sins, when there is a banishment of all hypocrisy and pretense, and genuine holiness begins to permeate Christ's church—*unbelievers become attracted to this new way of life.*

The power of the early church was simply genuine holiness. Energized by grace they magnified Christ, God's Word prevailed in them, and they lived consecrated lives. The Spirit of God moved unhindered, flowed unquenched and God got all the glory. No one competed for the credit, no one sought to be in control. God reigned, the Spirit moved, and Christ was magnified. They had caught the message of Ephesians 4:22-24. They put off, renewed, and put on the new—just as God told them to do. The choice is still ours.

- We must daily strip off any return of the rotting garments of the old life.
- We must personally reject any hint of sensuality, selfishness, pride, materialism, and bitterness in our lives.
- We must eat God's Word and ask for renewed minds by His Spirit.
- We must work out our own salvation by choosing to do the disciplines that will develop a Biblical mind.
- We must put on and wear our new, shining garments of light each day, and live the new us we became in Christ.

God's Word explains to us what makes Christ's church powerful in any culture. It is when:

- ***God's Son is magnified, and***
- ***God's People are consecrated, then***
- ***God's Word prevailed.***

Jesus was magnified and God's Word prevailed in this group of consecrated people in the New Testament church at Ephesus. What a combination to have for the Lord in any generation. That powerful ministry was the result of a purged and obedient local church.

One dear pastor wrote these words:

*"What would be burned today if the Spirit's conviction swept this church?"*

*I think some DVD's, magazines, and videos would be quietly removed from out-of-the-way desk drawers or certain novels from the family bookshelves.*

*Perhaps some television shows, movies, web sites, radio stations, and video games would be boycotted.*

*Some people would ask others to pray that they would be set free from whatever is dragging them down.*

*And many would come to Christ for forgiveness of sin and deliverance from the eternal wrath of God*<sup>31[10][10]</sup>”.

---

<sup>31[10][10]</sup> Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997.

## Grace-energized Women Of Purity

### EBG: Message Forty-Four (070812AM)

For two thousand years God has been looking in each generation of Christ's Church for a few good women--who will give themselves to His plan for their lives. That plan has been laid out for them in Titus 2.

When these women offer themselves as willing servants to follow God's plan, His grace energizes them to live a life that magnifies Christ at every level, and glorifies the Lord with eternal rewards.

The 12 virtues that God desires to be in the lives of these grace-energized women are what we are studying in Titus 2. This morning God declares in v. 5 that His plan for your life, if yielded to Him, is purity. He asks, "Will you follow my plan, surrender your life and let Me make you a grace-energized woman of purity?"

We have been invited by our Holy God, who dwells in unapproachable light (I Timothy 6:16), to become His very dwelling place (I Cor. 6.19-20). What is the only request that the One who lives within us, using our body as His temple asks of us? Purity, He asks us to keep this place He lives clean.

The sheer level of sexual temptation assaulting believers at every level in Paul's day, rivals our own times. Men fed upon lust, and found sexual gratification every where they could; and women obliged giving them much to lust after and became willing participants in all types of sinful behavior. That is why the sin that Paul mentions most often in every letter is sexual sin. The early church was immersed in a flagrantly sexual culture. The believers of Paul's day were being squeezed by the pressure all around them to not resist, but to just float along with the culture of self-expression, self-gratification.

Purity in the moral realm has always marked genuine believers throughout the centuries of the church. Paul was clearly telling Titus that God's expectations in an immoral and lust-filled Roman world was absolute purity. That is the meaning of ***hagnos***. In the first New Testament letter James said the very same thing in no uncertain terms, that believers must keep themselves "unspotted by the world" (James 1:27).

God is very serious about purity and holiness; and He uses them interchangeably throughout the New Testament to describe the sanctified lives he demands from His children. Purity is the description (adjective ***hagnos***) of the believers who are allowing God to sanctify (verb ***hagiazō***) them.

In fact, God's Word says that all believers are being sanctified or they are not genuinely saved.

*Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: NKJV*

That description of Jesus wants in His church is the next character quality of a grace-energized woman in Titus 2:5. God asks for grace-energized purity.

This morning we are studying the ninth of 12 characteristics for grace-energized women, found at the start of verse 5.

Christ's church has been called to this high standard and empowered by the Holy Spirit to stay morally pure. Believers have faced sexual temptation at every intensity level—and by God's grace have found strength to resist.

From Joseph fleeing from Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:6-13) to Paul's charging Timothy to do the same thing "flee also youthful lusts" (II Timothy 2:22) God's desire for His children is clear. Jesus explains that it is impurity of thought that leads to impurity of action (Mt. 15:19) so moral purity starts with a sanctified mind.

The word "chaste" (KJV/NKJV) or "pure" (NIV/NAS) that Paul wrote to Titus in this verse is so important to God that He guided the Apostles to speak of this purity and holiness over 300 times (using 11 closely related Greek words)<sup>32[1]</sup> in the New Testament that encompass every New Testament reference to holiness, purity, and sanctification.

Paul uses this word to describe the constant choices believers make to be Christ-like. It is the same word John used when he said a believer, "**purifies** himself, just as He is **pure**" (I John 3:3, NKJV); and that James describes the first manifestation of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit as, "wisdom that is from above is first **pure**" (James 3:17, NKJV); and that Peter uses to describe our choices to be different from the godless culture as our testimony to them of the power of salvation, "even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your **chaste** conduct accompanied by fear" (I Peter 3:1-2, NKJV).

Paul says women be chaste, conduct yourself like the holy servants of Christ Himself. Don't give in to the culture, don't reflect the sexual license of the day—stand for purity and keep yourself pure for Christ's sake; and to be a role model He can use in His church. But we know that--

### Purity is Grace-Energized Sanctification

As we were saved only by the accomplishment of Christ's sacrifice on the cross—so we live each day 'by faith' (the same faith by which we were saved). We are always dependent upon Christ's gracious death upon the cross that saves and keeps us!

<sup>32[1]</sup> **Hagiazō** (37) verb 'sanctify' 29x key verses: John 17:17, Acts 26:18; Eph. 5:26; I Thes. 5:23; II Tim. 2:21; **hagiasmos** (38) noun/masc. 'sanctification' 10x key verses: Romans 6:19, 22; I Cor. 1:3; I Thess. 4:3, 4, 7; II Thess. 2:13; I Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 1:2; **hagion** (39) adjective 'holy place' 11x only in Hebrews; **hagios** (40) adjective 'holiness' 229x ["holy" 161x, "saints" 61x, and "Holy One" 4x]; **hagiotēs** (41) noun/fem 'holiness' 1x key verses: Hebrews 12:10; **hagiosune** (42) noun/fem 'holiness' 3x key verses: Romans 1:4; II Cor. 7:1; I Thess. 3:13; **hagneia** (47) noun/fem 'purity' 2x key verses: I Tim. 4:12; I Tim. 5:2; **hagnizo** (48) verb 'purify' 7x key verses: James 4:8, I Peter 1:22, I John 3:3; **hagnismos** (49) noun/masc 'purification' 1x; **hagnos** (53) adjective 8x key verses: II Cor. 11:2; Phil. 4:8; I Tim. 5:22; Titus 2:5; James 3:17; I Peter 3:2; I John 3:3; **hagnotes** (54) noun/fem 'pureness' 1x key verse: II Cor. 6:6.

*“**Sanctification** is a process-the process of becoming more like Christ, of growing in holiness. This process begins the **instant you** are converted and will not end until **you** meet Jesus face-to-face.*

*Through the work of His Spirit, through the power of His word and fellowship with other believers, God peels away **our** desires for sin, renews **our** minds, and changes **our** lives. Sanctification is **about our own choices and behavior**. It involves work. Empowered by God's Spirit, we strive. **We fight sin. We study Scripture and pray, even when we don't feel like it. We flee temptation. We press on; we run hard in the pursuit of holiness.**<sup>33[2]</sup>*

The New Testament epistles call us to personal purity or holiness, and are built around dozens of imperatives (or commands). Remember that **God never commands me to do what He hasn't already given me the grace to accomplish by faith through His Spirit!**

*“Our participation in the process of **sanctification** comes only after we've been totally accepted and made right before God through faith in Jesus. **So yes:***

- *We **work** hard at obeying God's word.*
- *We **read** our Bibles.*
- *We **pray**.*
- *We **memorize and meditate** on Scripture.*
- *We **share** the gospel.*
- *We **serve** in our church.*
- *We **fast**.*

***God commands us in His Word to do** many things; and our obedience is both pleasing to Him and brings **His** blessing to our lives.*

*But not one adds to our justification, our standing before God, our eternal life. Only grace sustains lasting change and **sanctification**.*

*Through the cross we overcome not only the guilt of sin, but the power of sin as well<sup>34[3]</sup>.*

So this morning, we are asked to yield every part of our lives to the Lord. We want a Word-filled walk that is worthy of the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. That leads us to learn and cultivate--

### **Grace-Energized Motives**

If our whole mission in life is to please God (as we learned a few weeks ago in I Thessalonians 4:1) then that motivates us to want to know what pleases Him, and to

---

<sup>33[2]</sup> C. J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*, Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2002, p. 31-34.

<sup>34[3]</sup> C. J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*, Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2002, p. 31-34.



seek to do those things. So we ask ourselves, “Does the New Testament explain how to mentor younger women in the grace-energized purity as a way of life?”

Yes, we see this grace-energized mentoring when Paul instructs Timothy how to have the women trained in the proper way to dress. Let’s turn there next in I Timothy 2:9-10 where Paul says train the women to:

*1 Timothy 2:9-10 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. NKJV*

That timeless Biblical standard is as applicable today as when it was first established. Paul was speaking against the backdrop of Roman culture. There are writings still in existence from several ancient writers who described how women dressed in the Roman culture of Paul’s day. That culture was the driving influence in Ephesus where Paul wrote Timothy, as well as Crete where Paul wrote Titus.

Juvenal, a first-century Roman writer, pictured everyday life in the Roman Empire noting that women were preoccupied with their appearance. Another writer explained that this preoccupation was driven by the most famous people of the day. The wife of the Roman Emperor Caligula, had a dress worth more than one million dollars by today’s standards, covered with emeralds and pearls.

The rich of Paul’s day are noted in these sources as wearing dresses that cost up to 7,000 denarii (or the full time salary for 20 years work by an average factory worker of Paul’s day). Can you imagine how disruptive it was to a church service when someone walked in wearing nearly a lifetime of earnings for the majority of the people there? That is why James (2:1-9) warned about giving these golden, glowing clothes wearing rich people preferential treatment!

“Rich women also displayed their wealth through elaborate hairdos with expensive jewelry woven into them. That’s what Paul meant by “braided hair and gold or pearls” (1 Tim. 2:9). The Bible does not forbid women from wearing simple braids or gold, pearls, and high-quality clothing. Both the bride of Solomon (Song 1:10) and the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31:22 wore beautiful clothes and jewelry. However, the Bible does forbid wearing those things for wrong motives”. 35[4]

Women who offer their lives to the Lord to follow His plan are asking Him to guide them into a –

---

35[4] John MacArthur’s *Different By Design*, (Wheaton,: Victor Books).

## Grace-Energized Appearance

Both Paul and Peter explain that a godly woman ought to attract attention by her godly character, not her physical beauty. That is why Paul here (v. 9-10) instructs Timothy about the way women are dressed as he writes “adorn themselves with proper clothing.”

The word “adorn” is ***kosmeo*** that has entered our English language in the word ‘cosmetics’. The basic idea of this Greek verb was “to arrange,” “to put in order,” or “to make ready.”

Paul actually explained to Timothy that a godly woman should get ready for a worship service by wearing “proper clothing.” The word behind “proper” is just the adjective form of ***kosmeo*** and meant “well-ordered.” The Greek word translated “clothing” goes beyond just the clothing, but also the way it was worn.

Many applications of this verse can be seen. Paul says that Timothy was to teach his congregation that the ladies were to come to worship services already prepared, not in disarray of demeanor or wardrobe. Paul does emphasize clothing in this passage, but a woman’s attitude and motivation are the real issues. Paul says external adornment reflects a woman’s heart.

Paul is saying that it is possible to discern whether what you were as a woman is right or wrong by discovering your personal motivation and goals for how you appear to others. In your heart Paul says, look honestly and ask:

- Do my clothes reflect the grace and beauty of womanhood?
- Do my clothes show my love and devotion to my husband?
- Do my clothes reveal a humble heart devoted to worshipping God?
- Or do my clothes call attention to myself—to flaunt my wealth and beauty?
- Or worse, do my clothes attempt to allure men sexually?

*“The tragic number of pastors who have fallen into immorality indicates that not all women in today’s church have entirely pure motives.*

*If you are focused on worshipping God, you won’t have to worry about how you dress because your commitment will dictate your wardrobe.” 36[5]*

So a grace-energized appearance flows from—

## Grace-Energized Attitudes

Paul distills down a godly woman’s attitude about the way she dresses to two words: “modestly and discreetly” in v. 9. The word translated in your Bible for “modestly” means modesty mixed with humility. The base word connotes a sense of shame—not to be

---

36[5] John MacArthur’s *Different By Design*, (Wheaton,: Victor Books).

ashamed at being a woman, *but ashamed to ever dress in a way that incites a man to lust or that distracts others from their worship of God.*

A grace-energized woman will seek to avoid being a cause of temptation. Secondly the word connotes rejecting everything displeasing to God. Some commentators note it means a “grief over a sense of sin.” The essence of a grace-energized woman’s attitude is that she hates sin so much that she will avoid anything that can produce sin in others.<sup>37[6]</sup>

We can even see this if we consider just the dictionary definition of modesty: ‘having a regard for decencies of behavior or dress; quiet and humble in appearance, style, etc.; not displaying one’s body; not boastful or vain; unassuming; virtuous; shy or reserved; chaste’.

The Biblical standard for believers is to be un-entangled in, un-conformed to, and un-in-love with the world that is not worshipping its Creator. That sums up the will of God in the Old Testament. Remember how often God said that?

- Leviticus 18:3 ‘You shall **not do what is done** in the land of Egypt where you lived, **nor are you to do what is done** in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you **shall not walk** in their statutes. (NASB)
- Psalms 106:35 But **they mingled with the nations**, And **learned their practices**, (NASB)

### **The New Testament Has the Same Standard!**

Romans 12:1-2 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (NASB)

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 17 “Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord. “And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. 18 “And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty. 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (NASB)

### **Give Yourself to Purity**

---

<sup>37[6]</sup> Drawn from the Marriage and Divorce section of the electronic version of John MacArthur’s *Different By Design*, (Wheaton,: Victor Books).

“Our bodies are precious because they are a gift from God. They are attractive because God made us in His image for His pleasure (and if we are married, to please our mates as well). But God never intended us to flaunt ourselves or exhibit our bodies in an immodest way (Rom. 12:1) Many Christians are either oblivious or uncaring about the effect they have on others. They may even appear to have a real excitement and love for the Lord—however, their body is sending out a totally different message. 38[7]

For two thousand years God has been looking in each generation of Christ's Church for a few good women--who will give themselves to His plan for their lives. That plan has been laid out for them in Titus 2.

Paul says women be chaste, conduct yourself like the holy servants of Christ Himself. Don't give in to the culture, don't reflect the sexual license of the day—stand for purity and keep yourself pure for Christ's sake; and to be a role model He can use in His church.

### Summary

Women who are highly useful to God have these characteristics. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus 2 woman and the Titus 2 man.

The whole goal of a Titus 2 woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

Titus 2 women have in their wake a grateful army of **husbands who feel deeply loved by their wives**. What was the first thing that the Holy Spirit chose to have taught to the young married women believers? LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS. Can you imagine what a deep and lasting impact upon this local body of Christ's church to have men coming home to a wife who is earnestly being taught how to love her own husband. In a world where women are being pressed into the mould of the worldly, self-seeking, independent, do-their-own-thing women. If nothing else, every family at TBC would be enriched if every younger woman was taught in a practical, simple, and personal way how to love their own husband.

Titus 2 women train younger women in one of the hardest and yet most rewarding investments in life—**children who feel deeply loved by their mothers**. The key the Holy Spirit emphasizes very clearly that the key to children is LOVING them. Titus 2 women train, teach, model, and mentor moms into the deepening of love for their children that can be felt. One of the most common complaints of 21<sup>st</sup> century children is that don't feel loved. Most mothers love their children, but many children are not feeling that love. Titus 2 women are coaches that tutor and mentor young moms in ways to show love that can be felt.

---

38[7] Melody Green, "Uncovering the Truth about Modesty", Lindale, Texas: Last Days Ministries, 1982.

Titus 2 women train younger women to be ***discreet, sensible, wise in the decisions and choices they make***. What a rich resource for new marriages and families to have a young woman walked through those days side-by-side with a godly, Spirit-filled woman who will regularly, personally, individually mentor, mother, coach, and cheer on younger women in skillfully living as a wife, mother, and woman of God on a day to day basis. A Titus 2 woman isn't found in a classroom or lecture hall—they are in the kitchen with a younger woman, in the dining room, in the nursery, at the grocery store. Titus 2 women are hands on tutors; and they nurture younger women in the laboratory of life--walking through life together praying, sharing, learning, and loving.

Titus 2 women train younger women in the ***holiness and purity that pleases God and unleashes the power of the Spirit***. The training that a Titus 2 older woman gives is a seven-part package, that is immensely practical not theoretical. Modesty, purity, chaste behavior must be learned, modeled, and practiced. The power of a godly, Spirit-filled woman of Biblical maturity sitting over a cup of tea discussing what pleases God in dress, in behavior, conduct, and so on. Modesty is understood through Bible study that applies God's Word to daily life.

Titus 2 older women teach ***younger women the centrality in God's plan of a woman's priority being her home***. Home making is a learned art and so many women never have the hands on training that is needed. Life is so full, our culture has moved away from homemaking and few young women get mentored in the godly, Biblical art of home making. If the highest calling in the Titus 2 list is to love husbands, and to love children, and younger women are called to be

## **Grace-Energized Homemakers**

### **EBG: Message Forty-Five (070812PM)**

For the past 20 centuries God has offered to every married woman the privilege of turning each moment she spends in her hut, tent, cave, flat, apartment, or palace--into eternal crowns to cast at Christ's feet.

Since Paul sat to pen one word "homemakers" (NKJV) ["keepers at home" (KJV); "to be busy at home" (NIV); "workers at home" (NAS)] to his young son-in-the-ministry named Titus, every grace-energized homemaker can offer in worshipful service to God-- each dish that she washed, each towel she folded, each diaper she changed, and each weary day she spent with self-centered family members.

Titus 2:5 promises each grace-energized homemaker<sup>39[1]</sup> that they can redeem every moment they spend in the endless duties of the home into worship offerings of obedience to God.

### **Redeeming the Time**

One word, chosen by God is this word homemaker.

One word, designed by God as the role-specific ministry that pleases Him, is what He wants for godly women who offer their lives to Him through their ministry to their home.

As we open to this next virtue that God desires to be cultivated in the lives of grace-energized women—the very concept is increasingly offensive to our 21<sup>st</sup> century world. "Admonish the younger women to be...homemakers".

The verses of this chapter were sent as a call to First Century men and women energized by grace to live an extraordinary spiritual life in a very unspiritual culture.

The Cretan church was saved, bought from the slave market of sin (redeemed), but still had clinging to their lives the garbage of their culture. They had generations of bad thinking, false thinking, and warped lives.

Of all the godly traits older women of the faith were to exhibit and train the younger women to embrace—this is the most controversial. In our liberated women, egalitarian society nothing riles modern women more than the image of a home-bound-slaving woman that this passage seems to portray.

And even in the church of today nothing seems harder than to convince wives that their primary ministry ordained by God is to be their husbands; and mothers that their primary calling is to disciple and nurture their children.

---

<sup>39[1]</sup> It is very interesting that in the eternal portrait of the godly woman of Proverbs 31, that 9 of the 22 verses are about working in her home.

The lesson of this verse is not so much that a woman's place is in the home as it is that **her priority is for her home**, and that calling from God becomes evident by her choices. It is not whether she works outside the home or not--just being in or out of a building that you live in, is not the measure of this virtue.

God explains that her home is a wife and mother's special domain; and must always be her highest priority. It is within the home that a woman can provide the best ways to express her love for her husband and children—by obeying the Lord and following His plan!

### God's Plan is Always Best

Paul is explaining that by God's design a woman who is a wife and mother finds her greatest fulfillment in obeying this priority from God. A married woman who is a believer must make a conscious choice to obey the Lord and make her priority of life to be her home. Marriage for a believer brings men and women into definite God-ordained roles.

Whether our culture agrees or not, whether it is easy or hard, whether others obey or not—God is looking for women who see their home as His priority for them. They are to first focus upon loving their husbands with an emotional, intimate friendship. And then to love their children with a love as we have already seen, is always kind.

Such a woman as Paul says in I Timothy 2: 11-15 will never be second-class in her accomplishments for Christ's glory, nor in her reward. You can be as great a servant of the Lord as is possible to be in this life by living out your God-given priority of loving your husband and your children in a home that is your priority!

The term “workers at home” in Titus 2:5 is from the compound Greek word ***oikourgos*** which is built from ***oikos*** (house) and a ***ergon*** (work). The Greek word ***ergon*** isn't just about general work but a specific job focus. That is why in the New Testament it is used of strategic spiritual ministry. When God asks a grace-energized woman to focus on their God-ordained role as a homemaker, He is asking them to join in with a ministry strategic to the plan of God.

A grace-energized woman believes that she has been called of God to do the work of homemaking for the Lord Himself.

- Jesus declared his focused ministry when He said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His **work**” (John 4:34, emphasis added) and, on another occasion, “I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the **work** which Thou hast given Me to do” (17:4, emphasis added).
- The Spirit of God clarified the focused ministry of the church at Antioch “set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the **work** to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2, emphasis added).
- Paul explained the focused ministry of Epaphroditus, who “came close to death for the **work** of Christ” (Phil. 2:30, emphasis added), and Paul says that the

faithful leaders in the church of Thessalonica shared that focused ministry (1 Thess. 5:13).

Think of the joy it can be to go through life doing exactly what God designed you to do, wants you to do, and walks through life giving His grace to help you succeed. That is what a grace-energized homemaker has to look forward to—loving the focused ministry God gave her to do. Paul told Titus to speak these virtues because--

### God Has Given His Plan

In our culture there is probably no distinctive of the Christian life that is more derided than this one. In our liberated-woman-individualistic-independent-culture a grace-energized homemaker sounds like a dinosaur or worse.

Even among Bible-believing Christians there are many that want to relegate Paul's instructions to Titus and Timothy concerning the God-designed roles and responsibilities to being cultural instructions for that locality only—and not supra-cultural Biblical commands from an unchanging Lord of His Church.

If we make Paul's Scriptural instructions to women as being biased because of his Jewish upbringing and culture and no longer binding, authoritative, or relevant we come up with huge problems. This position opens up the entire Bible to being questioned as to being authoritative, inspired, and trustworthy.

If Paul can't be trusted and erred in his teaching on women, did he also get other parts wrong of the half of the New Testament that he wrote? If Paul was mistaken about women, who knows if what he said about how a man is saved is correct?

I firmly believe that all that Paul wrote was under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—and thus totally trustworthy. And even though there are some issues that Paul addressed that were possibly local and cultural such as head coverings in Corinth, there is no way a good interpreter of God's Word can say that about his instructions regarding the role and priorities of women.

To do so seriously questions the authority of God's Word. One of the clearest Biblical teachings directed towards godly, Spirit-prompted women of all times is that they, if married, are to be “busy at home”. This desire of God is seen consistently in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

### What God Does Not Say

When Paul wrote the Holy Spirit's instructions that said married women are to be homemakers ***he was not saying that they could do nothing else***. This instruction does not mean that they can never leave the home, be active outside the home, and never have a career. Proverbs 31:10-27 clearly shows the many facets of this wise



woman's life and among them were real estate investments (v.16) and a small manufacturing business (v. 24).

Another misapplication of God's instructions are to take them to mean that a woman is to do all the work at home. In fact, as the God-ordained "head of the house" the husband is actually to lead by Christ's example; and Jesus came not to be served but to serve (Mt. 20:28). So a godly husband will lead the way with a servant's heart (Phil. 2:7) and all the time give honor to his wife (I Peter 3:7) by assisting her in every way he can.

Paul never taught that women were any sort of "second-class" to the men because of this role responsibility. In fact God's Word clearly teaches gender-specific roles in the home (Ephesians 5) and the church (I Timothy 2)—but just as clearly declares absolute spiritual equality in Christ. The same Paul who God led to write 1 Corinthians 11:9:

*Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. NKJV*

Also wrote Galatians 3:28:

*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. NKJV*

In God's sight the spiritual standing, access, and position of a woman is not different than that of any man. God has no sexual distinctions when it comes to spiritual access.

### **What God Does Say**

Now that we have established that Titus 2:5's "homemaker" role is authoritatively from God, and that it is not imprisonment, slavery, or second-class citizenship to men. What does God say and mean when He says that some women have a God-ordained role to serve Him through?

First this role is defined in Titus as being for married women. This admonition to be taught comes to a woman who is a wife who loves her husband, and a mother who loves her children. So she is obviously to be married.

When Paul was guiding Timothy concerning young widows in the church at Ephesus note what he says in I Timothy 5:13-14:

*And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. <sup>14</sup> Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. NKJV*

Paul clearly defines a woman's priorities in order for her as a believer to have spiritual and eternal significance. This is the context of I Timothy 2:11-15 which says:

*1 Timothy 2:11-15 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. NKJV*

Paul says that a woman's role in the church is as a learner and not a leader or teacher—that is the gender specific role of the godly men; but her God-ordained gender-specific role if heeded and pursued keeps her from being second rate to the men. If she spiritually follows God's desire to manage a home built around "faith, love, and holiness" she finds her greatest blessing and complete fulfillment from God; and she gets the privilege of rearing children who are God-hearted, useful servants. Any married woman who resists being a grace-energized homemaker works against this divine plan established by the God of the Universe.

Any married woman who wants to do God's will makes her home her priority. That was God's Word, through Paul, to Titus—and by the authority of Scripture to us today. That is what God means by "homemaker". God demonstrates that He allows a great deal of freedom in how this is done (as Proverbs 31 records), but what is vital is that this priority of the home is heeded. Any marriage and home where this priority is neglected is headed for serious problems. No one can violate a specific directive from God without incurring the consequence engine of Galatians 6:7.

### **What about a Single Woman?**

But what about all the women who are not married, and some who may never be married? Is there no place of special favor and ministry for them? Often it is hard for singles to be around a marriage-focused fellowship, they feel left behind, left out, and even cheated. Often this leads to withdrawal, isolation, morbid introspection, and loneliness. Unchecked all of these responses lead to growing anxiety, frustrations, and even bitterness. That is not God's plan.

My favorite example of a God's plan is a single woman that has taught me more general knowledge of the Bible--than nearly anyone else. Her name is Henrietta Mears. At eight while watching to Billy Graham on TV, I saw him hold up a book and talk about a woman that had immense influence on his life and was one of the greatest Christians he had ever met.<sup>40[2]</sup> Then he explained that she had written in the book he held, all that she had taught through the Christian Education department at Hollywood Presbyterian Church for decades. She guided Billy Graham as he started his crusades and actually trained Bill Bright as a college student in her classes; and was at his home when he founded Campus Crusade for Christ.

---

<sup>40[2]</sup> Billy Graham, Introduction to The Henrietta Mears Story, by Barabara Hudson Powers (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1957), p. 7.

Dr. Mears testified later in life that she had met a man who did not have a personal relationship with the Lord, yet wanted to marry her. She waited, prayed, and believed that God wanted her to fully seek and serve Him, which she could never do with this man. After him no other man ever seemed to fit in her heart. She recorded her prayer at this time:

“Lord, You have made me the way I am. I love a home, I love security, I love children, and I love him. Yet I feel marriage under these conditions would draw me away from You. I surrender even this, Lord, and leave it in Your hands. Lead me, Lord, and strengthen me. You have promised to fulfill all my needs. I trust in You alone.”<sup>41[3]</sup>

At the end of her life Henrietta testified to the Lord’s grace in her life. She described how the Lord gave her more in every way than she ever dreamed. Through her Sunday School ministry she had thousands of children who loved her and in whose lives she poured her life. She said from the day she surrendered to the Lord her future (the prayer above) she never looked back; and God never ceased to open further and further doors of family, friendship, and ministry.

Even though God’s Word presents marriage and family life as the major way to fulfillment—it isn’t the only avenue. God has designed a road of blessing for every person who surrenders to His will and will follow Him through life. The greatest step is enjoying supremely through life the unwavering companionship of Jesus Christ—the only One that can go through every moment of our life together with us.

### **Loving the Ministry God Gave Her**

When we see that home management is God’s will then we can see how easy it becomes to love what God wants done. First of all, grace-energized homemakers see that managing their home is what God believes is best. That is what Paul said in Romans 12:2:

*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*

When God’s grace helps us resist the pressure of culture, and we set our mind on His plan and will—we live out God’s best.

God’s best for a married woman is seeing home management as her special ministry plan assigned directly by her Creator and Redeemer; and thereby pleasing the One who called her to that ministry.

---

<sup>41[3]</sup> Ethel M. Baldwin and David V. Benson, *Henrietta Mears and How She Did it* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, Regal Books, 1966), pp. 42-43.

Think of the joy it can be to go through life doing **exactly** what God **designed** you to do, **wants** you to do, and **walks** through life giving His **grace** to help you **succeed**.

That is what a grace-energized homemaker has to look forward to—loving the ministry God gave her to do. She can echo Paul's words in Colossians 3:23-24:

*And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord** and not to men,<sup>24</sup> knowing that **from the Lord you will receive the reward** of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. NKJV*

Grace-energized homemakers will never be second-class in their accomplishments for Christ's glory, nor in their eternal rewards.

You can be as great a servant of the Lord as is possible to be in this life by living out your God-given priority of loving your husband and your children through being a homemaker for the Glory of God; and redeeming every moment you spend in the endless duties of your home into worship offerings of obedience to God.

### **Appendix: Personal Assessment is Always Vital**

If you are a married woman, here is a quick checklist you can use to determine if you may be away from home more than God wants you to be. Or, that your priorities when you are home are not guided by God's Word.

Here's the test: "Because of the pace of my life I am:

- often too tired to plan and cook meals or even keep the house orderly.
- constantly feeling the pressures of never having enough time to finish what needs to be done.
- noticing that my husband is sometimes stressed and troubled over things that are not getting done on time.
- feeling irritated at my children because I am stressed and tired.
- always wanting to eat out and not at home.
- no longer able to show hospitality or even entertain friends in my home.
- slowly losing interest in my homemaking responsibilities.

This is exactly the place of wise and godly mentorship that a grace-energized older woman can bring: coming alongside a younger wife and mother slowly losing interest and even hope in their role as a homemaker. What a vital and godly ministry Titus 2 women can have in Christ's church!

Think of two women, both believers, both wanting to serve the Lord but so different. The first is always on the move from ministry at church to volunteering at school. She sings in the choir, shuttles her children everywhere, attends two Bible studies and teaches Sunday School. One thing she never does is stay home, she is always on the go. Her husband has asked her to please stay home more and keep the house from becoming a disaster.

The other woman is home most of the time. She is lazy, watches TV, sleeps in, and often lets her children get up and get ready for school. At night she's rarely tired, stays up reading or TV watching, but never seems to get any of her projects done that she has agreed to do. Her husband has asked her to please get up, help the children, and get her work done.

Both of these situations are typical among women who know the Lord: the super-woman that is everywhere and does everything but stay home; and the non-super-woman who stays home and never seems to get anything done. Both need to stop and examine their lives to see where they have diverged from God's plan for their priorities.

Wives who are gone from home too much with activities or work can't "keep house" as Titus was told to instruct all women to do. The instruction to the grace-energized homemakers was to "rule or guide the house" *oikodespoteo* in Greek.

When a wife is working or considering entering the workforce she needs to examine what the claims of God's Word are upon her choices. One of the best ways to make the choice about whether to go to work outside the home is to sit next to a godly grace-energized older woman and honestly answer some heart searching questions about what is prompting you to seek work outside the home:

- Is it because I desire more material things?
- Is it because I am tired of the constant demands of caring for my children?
- Is it to make myself into an independent woman that is secured by a career?

None of these reasons after careful examination are God's plan for a grace-energized woman. The clear plan of God for a woman that wants to please the Lord is to be content where God has placed her (Phil. 4:11), grateful for what possessions are hers (1 Thes. 5:18), and to stay home as much time as it takes (Titus 2:5) to fulfill her calling from God to maintain a clean and orderly home for her family--all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31)

Beware of being the perfectionist that is always dissatisfied with your home so that you can never enjoy it with your family.

### **Practical Applications**

Our society is increasingly becoming individualistic. This makes everyone a stranger at times, because of our cultural obsessions with privacy. For believers called to community we are to be different. A grace-energized woman who manages her home is also the gatekeeper for hospitality and sets the tone for her home. Peter explained that one of the basic ministries that a grace-energized homemaker can engage in is hospitality.

The New Testament teaches us that not only are we as believers to love one another, we are to “love strangers” which is the translation of the Greek word for hospitality (1 Peter 4:7-10). Hospitality is going extinct in our privacy guarding, individualism seeking culture. Grace-energized homemakers see that God’s will is for believers to open their homes and welcome in those they do not know and extend to them the love of Christ.

This is not a call to enlarge the guest list for entertaining our friends at our homes. Sometimes our entertaining can become a source of pride. We find ourselves wanting to impress our guests with the beauty of our home, and point out all that we have as they look on with admiration. Hospitality never seeks to impress but only seeks to serve. Hospitality whispers quietly in the background to those who are served—what is mine I share with you.

The best manager of the home is the grace-energized homemaker that heeds God's Word calling us to love Christ supremely. That means loving Him more than our home, or possessions. One way to strengthen Christ's supremacy is to de-accumulate our possessions. The more things we own the more complicated our lives become. Things must be sorted, stored, restored, and protected. Most of us could get rid of as much as half of what we own without too much real sacrifice.

The world is constantly trying to infect us with the discontentment-with-what-I-have syndrome that drives the constant cycle of buying more and more stuff. Godly contentment and simplicity are disciplines (1 Timothy 6:9-11) that can free us from becoming ensnared by the “needing more” bug. Simplifying also can help many families from having the need for two incomes to survive.

### **Shaping the Atmosphere of Her Home**

What are God’s guidelines for a grace-energized homemaker? One of the first is in Proverbs 14:1:

The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.  
NKJV

This word speaks not merely of the physical structure of the house as a place, but also the reality that it is for people and is to be built into a home. And who does God say builds that atmosphere that makes a house into a home? A grace-energized homemaker. Much like a thermostat regulates the temperature of your house, a godly woman sets much of the emotional and spiritual temperature of the home. When words get heated in the home, a grace-energized woman can give a soft answer “that turns away wrath” (Proverbs 15:1). When hearts turn cold, a godly wife and mother becomes a conduit of encouragement; as she exhibits the merry heart she encourages “a cheerful countenance” (Proverbs 15:13). This of course is humanly impossible to maintain, that is why only a grace-energized woman can create this atmosphere in the home.

## Guarding Her Home

If we move on to Proverbs 31 we find a second guideline God gives to help a grace-energized woman with her role as a homemaker. Note Proverbs 31:27:

She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. NKJV

Here we find a very descriptive word used to describe the home, “watches” is literally “to hedge about” like a mother bird would do to protect her young. This reminds a godly woman that part of her assignment God gave her in the home is to watch over both the house and the people within. This is why the “idleness” is mentioned, it is a constant care implied. The meals, the schedule, the clothes, the health, and so much more are watched, guarded, and done as an offering of worship to the God who called and assigned this highest of duties.

## Loving the Ministry God Gave Her

When we see that home management is God’s will then we can see how easy it becomes to love what God wants done. First of all, grace-energized homemakers see that managing their home is what God believes is best. That is what Paul said in Romans 12:2:

*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*

When God’s grace helps us resist the pressure of culture, and we set our mind on His plan and will—we live out God’s best. God’s best for a married woman is home management pleasing the One who called her to that ministry.

Think of the joy it can be to go through life doing exactly what God designed you to do, wants you to do, and walks through life giving His grace to help you succeed. That is what a grace-energized homemaker has to look forward to—loving the ministry God gave her to do. She can echo Paul’s words in Colossians 3:23-24:

*And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord** and not to men,<sup>24</sup> knowing that **from the Lord you will receive the reward** of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. NKJV*

## Grace-Energized Kindness

### EBG: Message Forty-Six (070819AM)

Do you serve the Lord with grace-energized kindness? Knowing that is vital because that is the only type of serving that God will reward according to His Word.

Someday when our journey on earth ends, and we stand before Christ's Throne—the Scriptures use only one word to describe what God eternally rewards.

Have you thought about what it is that God has decided is worth rewarding in our lives? Paul reduces God's desire to just one word: **agathos** (Greek), which we will see in our passage this morning means grace-energized kindness or goodness.

Turn with me to II Corinthians 5:10 and think about that moment when we each stand at Christ's Feet. That scene is well known to us from this verse, as Paul captures the eternal moment we have lived our lives on earth to prepare for.

*2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether **good** [Gk. **agathos**] or bad. NKJV*

Everything we ever lived for that wasn't offered to God the way He desired it done will be incinerated. This word is the adjective that quantifies and describes God's desire for our lives.

It isn't just **what** we do—it is also **why** we do it that matters so much to the Lord!

Every deed, every word, every motive, every moment lacking this one quality of goodness or kindness will in an instant be reduced to a puff of smoke and then forever be gone.

Remember the fires that examine our works? Paul had already described that event in I Corinthians 3:10-17. There he tells us that--

### Good Works Don't Get Burned

The works that remain and get rewarded are "good" Paul says. The bad is burned and gone. The bad are not sin because we will never again face our sins because of Christ's justifying death. All rewards will be based upon that word: "Good". This simple description is a word when used in the Bible of everything but people it means 'good' and when used of people it means 'kindness, generosity, benevolence'.

Someday we are going to stand in front of Jesus Christ and watch him open the history files of our lives. Better than any web program God has logged the keystrokes of our lives. Our actual motivations, our genuine intentions, our literal thoughts will all be exposed as the frames around each action. There at last will be exposed the complete



picture of God's servants. And everything done for Jesus that was done in grace-energized kindness will last forever.

Jesus mentioned this word "good" twice in a statement nearly all believers can be heard wanting to have spoken over them by the Lord. Here is what Jesus said in *Matthew 25:21,23* "... 'Well done, **good** and faithful servant...' " NKJV.

When we stand before Christ's judgment seat, God the Father has already graciously "justified" the document of our lives: removing every sin, erasing the record that they were ever done, and placing the full penalty upon Jesus Christ.

But now in the "history file" is everything we have done since salvation. Every service of Christ's church we came to, every day of work we lived, every moment in our homes, cars, and personal lives. And that file is placed on the altar, and a fire burns that will consume anything that was not a grace-energized work of kindness.<sup>42[1]</sup> We know because:

### God's Plan is Clear

Now turn with me to Titus 2:5. What will be the test of eternal rewards? It is whether they were good in God's sight. In this verse once again God reduces what He is looking for in a Titus 2 woman into this same one word<sup>43[2]</sup>: "good" (KJV/NKJV) or "kind" (NIV/NAS) in Titus 2:5.

Paul says grace-energized women ought to be characterized by being gentle, tender-hearted, and merciful toward others. Just as we all should be if we want to receive eternal rewards.

This morning as we see the grace-energized woman of kindness, we are looking at what God wants you to be as a woman, as a wife, and as a mother. No matter where you are in the chapters of your life—this is God's advertisement in His Word for exactly what He is looking for.

As His children, there is nothing we want more than to please Him. And when we think of Heaven, and when we seek to have a crown to cast at Christ's feet—think of living life, doing good works with grace-energized kindness.

### Wanted: Grace-Energized Women of Kindness

Paul asks Titus to train women in the church how to become kind in their personal life, marriage, home life, and in their ministry to others in Christ's Name.

How can we, with God's Word in our hands, understand this life-style God calls good? What does that mean to us who want to please God and live this way?

---

<sup>42[1]</sup> As Vine's Expository dictionary describes it "that which, being) good in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect." Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

<sup>43[2]</sup> Greek agathos (Strong's # 18) is the word in Romans 12:2 'prove what is good'; 12:9 'cling to good'; 12:21 'overcome evil with good'; also in Eph. 2:10 'created for good works'; also Eph. 4:29 'let no corrupt, only what is good'; II Cor. 5:10 this is what our eternal reward examination looks for!

Is there any example to follow? Is there a clear pathway God has laid down for us? If this is what determines my eternal rewards, it is something God must have very clearly explained, right?

Exactly, and there are four very notable people in the New Testament that are described as “good” or “kind”. So this attribute Titus is to train women in becoming brings us into great company. The New Testament examples of being good are in order of occurrence in the Scriptures:

- Joseph of Arimathaea (Luke 23:50) who sacrificially gave his own family tomb to Jesus, and publicly identified with Jesus by burying Him;
- Dorcas (Acts 9:36) who was known as a generous, loving servant of Christ's church in real and tangible ways; and many people testified to her kindness and generosity. She was described as someone who works to benefit others, does deeds of kindness and speaks words of kindness.
- Jesus Christ our Lord (Acts 10:38) whose entire earthly ministry was described by Peter as “who went about doing good”; and
- Barnabus (Acts 11:24). Look at the last one in that list with me.

In Acts 11:24 the Spirit of God praises this quality in Barnabas: he was a **good** man, he was full of the Holy Spirit, and he was full of faith.<sup>44[3]</sup>

*Acts 11:24 For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. NKJV*

### A Simple Life of Kindness

Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem to pastor the great missionary church at Antioch. We know from Acts that Barnabas was a Hellenistic Jew born and raised on Cyprus. His life had been watched by the church at Jerusalem, and they had deep respect for his godliness and generosity. In a time of great need he had sold his property on Cyprus and laid it at the apostles' feet (4:36–37). Barnabas was known as an encourager. He could be described as cheerful, big-hearted, and loving. He was the perfect choice of a pastor that was needed in the fast-growing church at Antioch. Acts 11:23 says:

*When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. (v. 23)*

Did you see what Luke records? Barnabas, sent from Jerusalem had eyes to see “the evidence of the grace of God”! Think about what a grace-energized kindness does to a person.

---

<sup>44[3]</sup> John Calvin said at this verse: “Barnabas is praised by the Holy Spirit. But this is said not so much for his benefit as for ours. This condemns the ungodliness of everyone who envies other people's labors and grieves to see them successful”. What blesses me most is that Luke wrote this description of Barnabas *after* the break between Paul and Barnabas, recorded in Acts 15:39. Since we know that Luke was Paul's traveling companion, this statement written with the Spirit's prompting and Paul's knowledge, probably means that it reflects Paul's assessment of Barnabas as well.

Barnabas is a crucial character in the New Testament as he is the first pastor of a gentile church we see in the book of Acts. James pastored in Jerusalem but that church was primarily Jewish and dealt with those issues for a long time. But a pastor to people steeped in sin, paganism, and without Biblical backgrounds to their culture—that is who Barnabas pastored.

### **Barnabas Saw Past the Exterior**

*“Barnabas could easily have seen the situation in a different light. These people were new, untaught Christians. They still carried the mire of Antioch with them. Some of them had miles to go in their language and relationships and ethics. But Barnabas “saw the evidence of the grace of God.” He could see Christian grace and charm in their lives—the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace...”—and “he was glad.” So he simply “encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts,” to meditate on him, to make him everything!*

*In this way Barnabas helped them focus on that which would cleanse them of the defilement of Antioch. His advice is appropriate for all Christians, whether in beginning stages or well along the path. Maclaren rightly warned, “Many of us are so busy thinking about Christianity that we have lost our hold of Christ.”*

*Barnabas saw grace, rejoiced, and then tenderly encouraged God’s people. How was he able to do this? The refreshing water of the Spirit flowed from Barnabas’ innermost being. Can you think of anyone like that? Why not be such a person?*

*... the goodness and fullness of the Holy Spirit and faith seen in Barnabas began to reproduce in that young church. “And a great number of people were brought to the Lord” (v. 24).<sup>45[4]</sup>*

And the type of man God picked is so amazing. Barnabas was a renowned teacher and discipler, but his personal life was characterized by being a loving, gentle man who was generous and a great encourager—because he had grace-energized kindness.

And God loves grace-energized kindness so much that he explains that lifestyle with a want-ad for women. That is exactly what Paul gives us as we turn to I Timothy 5.

### **God's Word Advertises His Job Openings**

Did you know that Paul published the “job description” of a woman that the church should be on the look-out for to “hire” as a full-time servant to Christ’s Church? That woman is an older woman who has surrendered to the Spirit of God and has become a grace-energized woman of Kindness. Paul asks Titus to train women in the church how to become kind in their personal life, marriage, home life, and in their ministry to others in Christ’s Name.

---

<sup>45[4]</sup>Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Acts—The Church Afire*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books) 1998, c1996. [282 word quote]

This morning as we see the grace-energized woman of kindness, you are looking at what God wants you to be as a woman, as a wife, and as a mother. No matter where you are in the chapters of your life—this is God’s advertisement in His Word for exactly what He is looking for. As His children, there is nothing we want more than to please Him.

What exactly were those “good or kind” characteristics? Paul explains them in I Timothy 5:10:

“well reported for **good** works: if she has **brought up children**, if she has **lodged strangers**, if she has **washed the saints’ feet**, if she has **relieved the afflicted**, if she has **diligently followed every good work**” NKJV.

In summary we will find this morning from God's Word that the Lord asks for five areas of your life to be surrendered to the control of the Holy Spirit. You may want to jot these in the note area of your bulletin. Grace-energized women of kindness are:

1. –intentionally family first.
2. –purposefully hospitality conscious.
3. –prayerfully humble servants.
4. –compassionately Good Samaritans.
5. –energetically devoted to ministry.

Quite different from any list of the “Who’s Who” of this world, here we find Christ’s “Who is valuable for my church”. Here is who enriches my church in a strategic way; and that helps my church grow in godliness, grow in ministry, and grow in worship. Look for this type of person and invest in them.

They are the models to follow; and they are the teachers to be revered. They are the women of God, useful to Him, rewarded by Him! So these five simple choices should become the daily goal for every woman in Christ’s church this morning.

The context of I Timothy 5 is the care of godly widows who have no family that can care for them. When that happens, the church is to pick up their support. These women then can continue to be godly Titus two women ministering in the power of God’s Spirit with the women of the church.

### **Invest Heavily in Kindness**

This mentoring of godliness is so vital and strategic for God’s plan, He tells Paul—this is something you actually use the offerings of God’s people to invest in. In fact, this is an investment tip from God. If God were a stockbroker, and He who knew all things, all future events before they unfold, the secret thoughts and motivations of everyone—and He called you and gave you an investment tip, would you listen and respond?

That is exactly what God offers us. He says, if one of these types of women ever comes by—grab her, invest in her, support her so all she can do is THIS! Wow, to think that the Lord God our Savior and Redeemer would single out one special type of individual and

describe her so we can spot her; and then He says she is priceless for what matters to me.

I love passages of Scripture like this one. So often we are faced with questions of how to interpret and apply some portions of God's Word. Not this one. This one is simple, direct, clear, and powerful.

So what exactly marks one of these “good” women? What are their priorities that impress God and draw His special interest and attention? Clear and simple, they are listed for us by Paul in I Timothy 5.

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness are Intentionally Family First in Their Priorities.**

“well reported for **good** works: if she has **brought up children...**”(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul describes the first grace-energized good work this woman of renown has done is she “brought up children”. This means that they church would actually ask: “What kind of mother was she?”

Based on the plan of God's Word they would investigate: “Was she faithful to her home and was her tongue characterized by being kind to her children?” In fact, she models the Proverbs 31 mother who raises her children with the law of kindness on her tongue (Proverbs 31:26).

And based on the high calling to be a homemaker in God's plan, the church would find out: “Was her home her priority?”

This reminds a godly woman that part of her assignment God gave her in the home is to watch over both the house and the people within. The meals, the schedule, the clothes, the health, and so much more are done as an offering of worship to the God who called and assigned this highest of duties.

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness are Purposefully Hospitality Conscious for Christ's Church**

“if she has **lodged strangers**”(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her second grace-energized good work as whether she “lodged strangers”.

This is another way of asking, “how did she use her home”? When her God-given priority for caring for her children was done, did she offer her home to be opened to ministry to others in an unselfish way? This means, were sacrifices made to serve others through her home for Christ's sake?

Hospitality to strangers is a quality God esteems highly. He made hospitality one of the clear qualifications for elders in Christ's church (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).

God's Word also say hospitality is often one of the marks of spiritual maturity (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:1-2; I Peter 4:9).

So Paul says that older women in the faith are to train the younger women how to use their home in a godly, hospitable way for 'strangers', those not yet connected and nurtured in Christ's church.

Our society is increasingly becoming individualistic. This makes everyone a stranger at times, because of our cultural obsessions with privacy. For believers called to community we are to be different. A grace-energized woman who manages her home is also the gatekeeper for hospitality and sets the tone for her home. Peter explained that one of the basic ministries that a grace-energized homemaker can engage in is hospitality.

The New Testament teaches us that not only are we to love one another, we are to "love strangers" which is the translation of the Greek word for hospitality (I Peter 4:7-10). Hospitality is going extinct in our privacy-guarding, individualism-seeking culture. Grace-energized homemakers see that God's will is for believers to open their homes and welcome in those they do not know and extend to them the love of Christ.

This is not a call to enlarge the guest list for entertaining our friends at our homes.

Sometimes our entertaining can become a source of pride. We find ourselves wanting to impress our guests with the beauty of our home, and point out all that we have as they look on with admiration. Hospitality never seeks to impress but only seeks to serve. Hospitality whispers quietly in the background to those who are served—what is mine I share with you.

The best manager of the home is the grace-energized homemaker that heeds God's Word calling us to love Christ supremely. That means loving Him more than our home, or possessions. One way to strengthen Christ's supremacy is to de-accumulate our possessions. The more things we own the more complicated our lives become. Things must be sorted, stored, restored, and protected. Most of us could get rid of as much as half of what we own without too much real sacrifice.

The world is constantly trying to infect us with the discontentment-with-what-I-have syndrome that drives the constant cycle of buying more and more stuff. Godly contentment and simplicity are disciplines (I Timothy 6:9-11) that can free us from becoming ensnared by the "needing more" bug. Simplifying also can help many families from having the need for two incomes to survive.

Someday we are going to stand in front of Jesus Christ and watch him open the history files of our lives. Better than any web program God has logged the keystrokes of our

lives. Our actual motivations, our genuine intentions, our literal thoughts will all be exposed as the frames around each action. There at last will be exposed the complete picture of God's servants. And everything done for Jesus that was done in grace-energized kindness will last forever.

Everything we ever lived for that wasn't offered to God the way He desired it done will be incinerated. It isn't just **what** we do—it is also **why** we do it that matters so much to the Lord!

Every deed, every word, every motive, every moment lacking this one quality of goodness or kindness will in an instant be reduced to a puff of smoke and then forever be gone. Because that Judgment Seat of Christ is coming, the Lord asks for five areas of your life to be surrendered to the control of His Spirit.

Grace-energized women of kindness are:

1. —intentionally family first.
2. —purposefully hospitality conscious.
3. —prayerfully humble servants.
4. —compassionately Good Samaritans.
5. —energetically devoted to ministry.

Grace-energized women of kindness are the models to follow; and they are the teachers to be revered.

They are the women of God, useful to Him, rewarded by Him!

So these five simple choices should become the daily goal for every woman in Christ's church this morning.

Next time we'll see:

### **Grace-Energized Women Prayerfully Seek Out Ways to Invest Their Time in Humble Ministry**

“if she has **washed the saints' feet**”(1 Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her third grace-energized good work as whether she has “washed the saint's feet”.

The New Testament Gospel was spread down the dirty and dusty roads of the ancient world. In those times the care of feet was a daily chore. At the Last Supper Passover Seder (John 13), do you remember how Jesus used this common and menial task to demonstrate the servant-hearted humility He desired to see in all of us?

Paul says that this grace-energized servant of Christ's church will share her humble heart in serving others. This woman is Christ-like because she also came not to be served, but to serve. She is not above humble ministry, she is characterized by it!

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness Compassionately Watch for Opportunities to do Selfless and Sacrificial Deeds**

“if she has ***relieved the afflicted***”(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her fourth grace-energized good work as whether she has “relieved the afflicted”.

This grace-energized woman has surrendered her life to be on the lookout for selfless ways to serve others. She knows that Jesus said even a cup of cold water held out to a child in the Name of the Lord will never lose its reward. She has that Good Samaritan heart of reaching out to those stricken with need. For all the centuries of Christ's church, and in all the cultures of this world, the Spirit of God finds these willing servants and He gives them the strength to spend their life doing selfless deeds of kindness and sacrificial service for others.

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness Energetically Devotes Her Life Towards Works That Please God**

“if she has ***diligently followed every good work***” (I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Finally Paul tells Timothy these grace-energized women are characterized as one who **has devoted herself to every good work**. The Greek word Paul uses is a very strong verb (***epakolutheo*** translated has devoted herself to) and it captures the idea that this widow devoted her life towards the pursuit of good deeds like Dorcas, energetically and diligently.

Since Paul states that this is the kind of woman that should be sought out to be a paid servant of Christ's church, that makes this life-choice the standard that should be recognized and sought out by every woman in Christ's church. Each woman who wants to please God by her life should follow this quality now, so that at the end of her life she will be a sought out as a qualified servant to Christ's church.

These five qualities laid down in God's Word are the plan of God for a godly, useful woman. Any woman that pursues these qualities in her priorities of life will accomplish a profound and eternal impact through the ministry of her life.



## Appendix One: Grace-Energized Women Have the 'Law of Kindness' On Their Tongues

One final word about how vital this quality must be to God. We can conclude from God's Word that when the love of God is not in a woman's heart, the law of kindness is absent from her lips.

This means that grace-energized women of kindness must *speak* well of people, even their enemies. As Jesus said, '*Bless them that curse you*'. "When we speak to them, we must answer their revilings with courteous and friendly words, and *not render railing for railing*; behind their backs we must commend that in them which is commendable, and when we have said all the good we can of them, not be forward to say any thing more. See 1 Pt. 3:9. They, in whose tongues is *the law of kindness*, can give good words to those who give bad words to them."<sup>46[5]</sup>

The words of a grace-energized woman of kindness must be guided by this law of kindness, as well as truth and justice. Remember how Solomon made this a necessary part of the character of the virtuous woman, *that she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness* (Prov. 31:26). This quality is imperative and must be a part of the character of every true Christian. Consider what James said so strongly (James 4:11) '*Speak not evil one of another*'.

*"Since Christians are brethren, they should not defile nor defame one another. It is required of us that we be tender of the good name of our brethren; where we cannot speak well, we had better say nothing than speak evil; we must not take pleasure in making known the faults of others, divulging things that are secret, merely to expose them, nor in making more of their known faults than really they deserve, and, least of all, in making false stories, and spreading things concerning them of which they are altogether innocent."*<sup>47[6]</sup>

As Jesus reminds us, it is 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh' (Matthew 12:34). A grace-energized woman has a heart full of love and opens her mouth with wisdom, and in her lips there is that law of kindness. But if her heart is full of prejudice, anger, suspicion, or any unkind temper, she will surely open her mouth "in a manner corresponding with the disposition of her mind. And hence will arise, if not lying and slandering, (which yet will hardly be avoided,) bitter words, tale bearing, backbiting, and evil-speaking of every kind".<sup>48[7]</sup>

Again: "Love is kind." Whosoever feels the love of God and man shed abroad in his heart, feels an ardent and uninterrupted thirst after the happiness of all his fellow-creatures. His soul melts away with the very fervent desire which he hath continually to promote it; and out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. In his tongue is the law of kindness. The same is impressed on all his actions. The flame within is

---

<sup>46[5]</sup>Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

<sup>47[6]</sup>Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

<sup>48[7]</sup>Wesley, John, *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons*, (Albany, OR: Ages Software, Inc.) 2000.

continually working itself away, and spreading abroad more and more, in every instance of goodwill to all with whom he hath to do. So that whether he thinks or speaks, or whatever he does, it all points to the same end, — the advancing, by every possible way, the happiness of all his fellow-creatures. Deceive not, therefore, your own souls: He who is not thus kind, hath not love.<sup>49</sup>[8]

### **Appendix Two:**

#### **Grace-Energized Women Meditate Upon Jesus and the Fruit Of the Spirit Gal. 5:22-23**

In Isaiah 11 we find that Jesus was to minister in the Spirit. In Acts 10:38 we find that Jesus was anointed for ministry with the Holy Spirit. Can we want any less? The joy of ministry in the power of the Spirit and with His fruit in our life should be our highest desire.

Did you know there is a Consumer's Guide to the Spirit Filled or Controlled Life? A way to measure if all systems are properly functioning? This check up is called the growth in and evidence of the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. What does one look like that has given them self over to the power, influence and control of the Holy Spirit? Why don't we go to the source, Galatians 5:22-23.

This passage gives us three ways to measure our spiritual progress. Three tests of growth in the Spirit's fruit bearing. Let's see how we measure up. There are nine visible manifestations of the Holy Spirit yielded to in our lives. These 9 are then easily divided into three areas of life.

#### **Our Imperative: Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit**

At any point in time, we are either walking in the flesh or in the Spirit. There are fifteen manifestations of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. Of these, eight deal with interpersonal problems. It is not enough to say that we have always struggled in these areas, or to say "I sinned" and go on. Instead, the Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way in each of the nine areas described as "the fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22-23—all of which will greatly impact our relational lives:

There are 15 manifestations of the flesh in verses 19-21. Of these 8 are dealing with interpersonal problems. It is not enough to say that we have always struggled in these areas. Or, to say I sinned and go on. The Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way in each of these areas.

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting His mind, through the Word, dominate everything that is thought and done. Being filled with the Spirit is the same as walking LIKE Jesus did on earth!

---

<sup>49</sup>[8]Wesley, John, *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons*, (Albany, OR: Ages Software, Inc.) 2000.

Fullness of the Spirit is first described as a change in our Personal Relationship with God. The Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way in each of these areas.

**First, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Personal Relationship with God.**

1. LOVE is the absence of selfishness. Can others trace my progress in expressing God's love? Am I less selfish and self-seeking than I was last month? LOVE. One of several Gr. words for love, *agape*, is the love of choice, respect, devotion, and affection that leads to willing, self-sacrificial service (John 15:13; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:16, 17). 1. Love is the absence of selfishness. It is the product of the Holy Spirit present in our lives, so it remains even in the harshest and most difficult times because we don't produce the love—the Holy Spirit does! The word *agape* is the love of choice, referring not to an emotional affection, physical attraction, or a familial bond, but to respect, devotion, and affection that leads to willing, self-sacrificial service.

Ask yourself: Can others trace my progress in expressing God's love? Am I less selfish and self-seeking than I was last month?

2. JOY is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances. Because Love and self-centeredness can not coexist. Do those that know me and watch my life see me as a joyful person? JOY. A happiness based on unchanging divine promises and eternal spiritual realities. Joy is not the result of favorable circumstances, and even occurs when those circumstances are the most painful and severe (John 16:20–22). Joy is a gift from God. 2. Joy is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances because our happiness is based on unchanging divine promises and eternal spiritual realities. Christian joy is not a shallow emotion that, like a thermometer, rises and falls with the changing atmosphere of the home. Rather, Christian joy is a deep experience of adequacy and confidence in spite of the circumstances around us. The Christian can be joyful even in the midst of pain and suffering. This kind of joy is not a thermometer but a thermostat. Instead of rising and falling with the circumstances, it determines the spiritual temperature of the circumstances. Paul put it beautifully when he wrote, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11). Joy is a gift from God; as such, believers are not to manufacture it but to delight in the blessing they already possess.

Ask yourself: Do those who know me and watch my life see me as a joyful person?

3. PEACE is the internal serenity that only God can give. Troubles are not absent. Rather, God is present! Has peace become more and more a way of

life for you this year? PEACE. The inner calm that results from confidence in one's saving relationship with Christ. Like joy, peace is not related to one's circumstances (John 14:27; Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:6, 7, 9). 3. Peace is the internal serenity that only God can give. Jesus said not to live tomorrow's challenges today, but to trust what lies ahead to Him. Troubles are not absent; rather, God is present! When the Holy Spirit is not grieved, the Dove of Peace is able to alight on the heart. Peace is an inner calm that results from confidence in one's saving relationship with Christ. The verb form denotes binding together and is reflected in the expression "having it altogether." Like joy, peace is not related to one's circumstances.

Ask yourself: Has peace become more and more a way of life for me this year?

## **Secondly, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Public Walk with Others.**

4. PATIENCE is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. Ask yourself, am I more patient than I was three months ago? or less? If we are not increasing in patience it is only that we are not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit. LONGSUFFERING. This is patience or the ability to endure injuries inflicted by others and the willingness to accept irritating or painful situations (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim. 1:15, 16). 4. Patience ("longsuffering" in kjv) is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. It is that gentle patience with people that Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Patience is also one of the supreme attributes of God. It is His character that is revealed as being gracious and longsuffering. This is patience—the ability to endure injuries inflicted by others and the willingness to accept irritating or painful situations.

Ask yourself: Am I more patient than I was three months ago? Or less? If I am not increasing in patience, is it because I am not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit?

5. KINDNESS is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives. It is the absence of an abrasive manner in my dealings with people. Kindness will soften any word or act that might hurt another. Is my character showing an increasing tendency toward personal kindness in my way with others? KINDNESS. Tender concern for others, reflected in a desire to treat others gently, just as the Lord treats all believers (Matt. 11:28, 29; 19:13, 14; 2 Tim. 2:24). 5. Kindness is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives. It is when we choose to avoid an abrasive manner in our dealings with people. It is when we choose to live out Ephesians 2:8 and 4:32. Kindness is seen as sensitivity toward others that produces deeds of self-sacrifice and love—even toward the unlovely and undeserving. Kindness will soften any word or act that might hurt another.

Ask yourself: Is my character showing an increasing tendency toward personal

kindness in the way I treat others?

6. GOODNESS is being Godlike! It is the opposite of fallen humanity. Am I a visibly better person than last year? Do people see me doing good to all those around me? GOODNESS. Moral and spiritual excellence manifested in active kindness, exemplifying goodness (6:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:11). Faithfulness. Loyalty and trustworthiness (Lam. 3:22; Phil. 2:7–9; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; Rev. 2:10). 6. Goodness is being Godlike, which is the opposite of fallen humanity. Look at Jesus in Acts 10:38: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good ....” When the Holy Spirit anointed Christ’s life, what came out? He simply went about doing “good.” The example of Jesus should be our guide for life—everywhere we are we should touch those around us with His goodness. Believers are commanded to exemplify goodness.

Ask yourself: Am I a visibly better person than last year? Do the Lord and the godly mentors He has put in my life see me doing good to all those around me?

**Finally, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Private Life with our Self.**

7. FAITHFULNESS is the idea here. A trustworthy and dependable life. The kind of person that keeps their own life in order so that you can count on them. Am I making strides in reliability and dependability? 7. Faithfulness refers to a trustworthy and dependable life. A faithful person keeps his own life in order so you can count on him. Like Psalm 15 describes, this type of person always keeps his word. Faithfulness is the same as loyalty and trustworthiness.

Ask yourself: Am I making strides in reliability and dependability?

8. MEEKNESS is the opposite of asserting ourselves. What shape is my personal agenda in? Is it intact and my rights being defended? Or, is it in hopeless shape, crucified with Christ and fading? GENTLENESS. Better translated “meekness.” It is a humble and gentle attitude that is patiently submissive in every offense, while having no desire for revenge or retribution. In the NT, it is used to describe 3 attitudes: submission to the will of God (Col. 3:12), teachability (James 1:21), and consideration of others (Eph. 4:2). 8. Gentleness is better translated “meekness,” which is the opposite of asserting ourselves. The Lord said the meek are the ultimate winners. c Those who are servants of the Lord must not strive. They must resist selfish ambition because that is a reflection of Satan, not God.

Ask yourself: What shape is my personal agenda in? Is it intact and my rights being defended? Or, is it as Christ desires—crucified with Him and fading?

9. DISCIPLINE is the mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones. The only force that can control or flesh is the Holy Spirit. Do others see me as graciously under the control of God's Spirit of Discipline? SELF-CONTROL. This refers to restraining passions and appetites (1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Pet. 1:5, 6). No law. When a Christian walks by the Spirit and manifests His fruit, he needs no external law to produce the attitudes and behavior that please God (cf. Rom. 8:4).<sup>50[9]</sup>

Well, are they present? Are they growing? The proof is in how we are with our relationships. 9. Discipline ("self-control" in kjv) refers to restraining passions and appetites and is defined by the Greek dictionary as "a virtue, which consists in mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones." The only force that can control our flesh is the Holy Spirit. When yielded to the Spirit, we become vessels that are worshipful sacrifices to Him, and no longer to self. Self cannot control self; flesh is not able to harness flesh. Only the Spirit can discipline us.

Ask yourself: Do others see me as graciously under the control of God's Spirit of Discipline? Am I beating under and giving knockout blows to my flesh—like Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:27?

When God's Spirit is at the helm, there is a remarkable change in our homes, churches, and lives. We see that as believers we are in the same family—God is our Father. We are headed toward a common goal—heaven. We serve a common Master—Jesus. We follow the same Guide—His Word. And share the same passion—Christ, who gets all the glory.

Prayer Example: Dear Lord, I pray that You will make Colossians 3:12-17 a reality in my family's lives! Help us to put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering. Enable us to be bearing with one another, and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, even as You have forgiven us, so help us to forgive others. And above all these things, help us to put on love, which is the bond of perfection. May Your peace rule in our hearts and home. May we always be thankful in all circumstances because Your Word dwells in us richly in all wisdom! Enable us to be teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to You, oh Lord. And whatever we do in word or deed, may it be done all in Your name, giving thanks to God the Father through You!

---

<sup>50[9]</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

## What is the Grace-Energized Life?

### EBG: Message Forty-Seven (070826AM)

This week as Gerry and I had lunch someone stopped by our table and asked, “Could you define ‘grace-energized’ for me?” I did briefly there at that restaurant, but as I thought and prayed about it, I decided that it would be good to pause one week and back up to look at the underlying doctrine of progressive or personal sanctification which is what grace-energized living is all about.

As we open to Philippians 2:12-15 consider this question, “Did you know that ***spiritual growth is not automatic***--but requires our cooperation with God?”

Grace-energized living means our personal, daily application of the spiritual disciplines. That is what God states in our passage this morning, both His work and ours, side-by-side: “Work out your own salvation, For it is God who works in you” (Phil. 2:12–13).

Paul sent this strong challenge to many who sat to hear his letter back to the church in Philippi as he explained to them that when we were saved by grace through faith, nothing was left undone by God—we were saved to the uttermost.

But in God’s plan He left something for us to do. At the instant of salvation we were justified and positionally sanctified[i] (just a big way of saying that we became saints). But that instantaneous justification launched what God describes as a life-long arduous struggle to work out our own salvation.

Is this some type of contradiction in the Bible? Is it a mistake, a mistranslation, or something? No, it is the command God has left to every believer called the doctrine of progressive sanctification.

Where there is life, there is always growth. Our new birth was just the beginning. God gave us all we need to live godly lives, but as His children we must apply ourselves by diligently using the “means of grace” He offers us.

Paul commands each of us to work out our own salvation in Philippians 2:12-14. The work ‘work out’ is ***energein*** in Greek, and means “energize, work out fervently”. We see what God wants us to be in His Word, and we tell Him, “YES, that is what I want, help me to obey.” Then we take earnest, active steps to obey—and in doing so we find amazingly that He gives us the spiritual power and strength to change areas of our life that have stubbornly stayed the same for so long!

### Grace-Energized Living Means We Work with God

Whether Peter’s list of seven characteristics of the godly life (II Peter 1:5-8) or Paul’s list of the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22–23), these qualities grow out of a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. But, as Peter clarifies, we don’t “let go and let God,” as though spiritual growth were God’s work alone, but as Peter wrote, “Make every effort...”,

meaning God the Father and you and me His children must work together to see these qualities grown.

Every part of our spiritual life is through God's grace. Our human works have no place in gaining salvation or in obtaining merit with God. The Christian life is *sola gratia*, grace alone. Yet, the Apostle Paul wrote, "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12b).

God works in us; but as children of grace we must work at our Christian walk.

God presents us with a divinely ordained synergism that is required of all Christians. This same Paul who fought the legalists and Judaizers all across the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey), writing of his hatred of works-religion in Galatians, clearly commanded each believer to, "work out your own salvation" (Phil. 2:12, NKJV).<sup>51[2]</sup>

Please stand as we read together Philippians 2:12-15 and pray.

*Philippians 2:12-15 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, NKJV*

### **Our Life Long Goal is Christ-likeness**

First, in v. 12a "**work out** your own salvation" uses a Greek verb rendered "work out" which means "to continually work to bring something to fulfillment or completion." This could never refer to salvation by works because of everything else God's Word says (cf. Rom. 3:21–24; Eph. 2:8-9), but it does refer to the divine responsibility each of us received at salvation to actively pursue personal sanctification, progressive sanctification, or grace-energized living.

Then in v. 12b "**with fear and trembling**" explains our attitude as we pursue sanctification is a healthy fear of ever offending God. We cultivate a growing, life-long, righteous awe and respect for our Holy God (Is. 66:1, 2).

Paul continues in v. 13a "**for it is God who works in you**" clarifies for us that while each believer is responsible to work (v. 12), only the Lord can produce any virtue, good work, or spiritual fruit in our life (John 15:5)—that is why we call this progressive sanctification being "energized-by-grace". God accomplishes this as He works in us by His Spirit who lives within (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20).

---

<sup>51[2]</sup> Adapted from ideas by Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books) 1997. [122 words]



He adds in v. 13b “**both to will and to do**” that progressive sanctification (grace-energized living) happens in our lives only as God energizes both our desires and actions. The Gr. word for “will” indicates that God has as His planned purpose to make us live godly lives.

Finally Paul warns in v. 14 that grace-energized living should be “**without complaining and disputing**”. The Greek word used here for “complaining” is a word that sounds like what it means. Its pronunciation uses a part of our voice often heard when we mutter or grumble. Paul says beware of your emotions rising up against the plan of God He has designed through the circumstances of your life. The second word for “disputing” speaks of “questionings” or “criticisms” about life’s events that we don’t like, and reminds us our disagreements with our circumstances are ultimately directed against God.

So Paul clearly explains to us that we have our part to do in dressing ourselves with each of His grace-energized virtues. We must daily strip off the rotting garments of the old us. We must read the Word and ask God to renew our minds through the Spirit. The only way this can happen is through **God** whose grace energizes us to do it (v. 13).

Paul told the Philippian saints that God worked in them but that both divine enablement and human responsibility are involved in getting God’s work done. Believers are partners with God, laboring together with Him. The verb<sup>52[3]</sup> **works** (v. 13) means “energizes” or “provides enablement.” When we surrender to God’s plan He makes us both willing and desirous to do His work.<sup>53[4]</sup> That is why in the next chapter Paul explains that:

### Grace-Energized Living is a Lifelong Pursuit of Christ Each Day Philippians 3:12-13

In Phil 3:12-13 when Paul describes his life as pressing onward he used a Greek word that describes a sprinter, and their aggressive, energetic push towards a goal. Paul pursued sanctification with all his might, straining every spiritual muscle to win the prize (1 Cor. 9:24–27; 1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 12:1).

*Philippians 3:12-13 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I **may lay hold** of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.<sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and **reaching forward** to those things which are ahead, NKJV*

---

<sup>52[3]</sup> Energized # 1754 “work, effectual fervent work”; God energizes us: Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. NKJV; Colossians 1:29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily. NKJV; God energizes us through His Word: 1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. NKJV; God energizes us through prayer: James 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. NKJV. Energized # 1753; Ephesians 3:7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. NKJV

<sup>53[4]</sup> Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

In v. 13 Paul uses the same Gr. word translated “laid hold” in v. 12 and effectively reduces all of personal sanctification to the simple and clear goal of doing “one thing”—pursuing Christ-likeness. He concludes with a reminder that we must neither rely on our past achievements in following the Lord nor dwell on our past sins and failures.

Each day we are faced with one goal for our lives—to stretch every part of our life and every minute of our day towards being like Christ in our attitude and behavior. But how do we do that? Paul continues to explain this in Romans 6. There he taught us that

### **Grace-Energized Living is Cultivating Lifelong Habits of Personal Sanctification Romans 6:5-23**

The daily experience of progressive sanctification demands key choices in mind and action on a believer’s part. These Paul discussed in Romans 6. The first choice or habit is:

#### **We cultivate Habits of Grace-Energized Reckoning Romans 6:5-11**

Paul calls us to build a habit of counting on God. He explains the power of the Cross in v. 5-10 and then says, act accordingly. You can count on God to be there when you face temptations and sin, which is the first attitude for progressive sanctification demanded of believers—we “reckon” (pres. imperative, “keep on counting”) ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (v. 11).

*Romans 6:5-11 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,<sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.<sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin.<sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,<sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.<sup>10</sup> For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.<sup>11</sup> Likewise you also, **reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. NKJV*

This spiritual habit or discipline of reckoning is dependent on our knowing and believing the truths of God’s Word as presented in verses 5-10. Then we build upon that habit of faith and also practice:

#### **We cultivate Habits of Grace-Energized Yielding Romans 6:12-14**

*Romans 6:12-14 Therefore **do not let sin reign** in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.<sup>13</sup> And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as*

*being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. NKJV*

Our second habit is translating the power of Christ's death by surrender to His will, as we say no to our own. Paul commands us in v.12 “**therefore do not let sin reign**” using a present imperative (“do not let sin continue to reign”) as it did before we were saved. This present imperative is negative so it is better translated, “Stop letting sin reign.” Sin reigns in our lives and bodies when we “**obey it in its lusts**”. When sin enslaves (v. 6), we are subjecting ourselves to the rule of our own desires. The Greek word *epithumia* refers to our “longings” or “desires,” which may be either good or evil, here these are sinful desires, and thus evil.

In v. 13 Paul repeats the command of verse 12 using more specific terms. He says, “**Do not present** (lit., “do not continue to present,” or “stop presenting”) **your members to sin**”. Then in contrast to the wrong choices Paul commands that we “**present** (aorist imper., “present once and for all”; also used in v. 19) This refers to a decision of the will.

Before sin can have power over a believer, it must first pass through his will (cf. Phil. 2:12, 13). So we can see that before grace can energize us that choice must pass through our will; and Paul continues “**yourself to God, as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God**”. Paul says the same thing six chapters later, “Offer your bodies as living sacrifices . . . to God” (Rom. 12:1).

### We cultivate Habits of Grace-Energized Serving Romans 6:15-23

*Romans 6:15-23 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, **you are that one's slaves whom you obey**, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.18 And having been set free from sin, you became **slaves of righteousness**. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.22 But now having been set free from sin, and **having become slaves of God**, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NKJV*

## Grace-Energized Living is Progressive Sanctification

Justification differs from sanctification thus: the former is an instantaneous act with no progression; while the latter is a life long process with it the idea of growth unto completion.

Our ultimate goal is to be like Christ (cf. Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:12–14; 1 John 3:2). Only by continually focusing on Him the Spirit transforms the believer more and more into His image. II Corinthians 3:18 describes progressive sanctification. The more believers grow in their knowledge of Christ, the more He is revealed in their lives.

When we pray in faith asking God to change us, and we want to respond to God's will, our prayer is a sanctifying grace that changes our lives dramatically. Prayer is a means of progressive sanctification. One more passage we need to look at is II Corinthians 3:18.

*2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. NKJV*

*"The tense is interesting here: we are being transformed from one degree of character, or glory, to another. It is because sanctification is progressive, a growth, that we are exhorted to "increase and abound" (1 Thess. 3:12), and to "abound more and more" (4:1, 10) in the graces of the Christian life.*

*The fact that there is always danger of contracting defilement by contact with a sinful world, and that there is, in the life of the true Christian, an ever increasing sense of duty and an ever-deepening consciousness of sin, necessitates a continual growth and development in the graces and virtues of the believer's life.*

*Holiness is not a mushroom growth; it is not the thing of an hour; it grows as the coral reef grows: little by little, degree by degree.*<sup>54</sup>[5]

Salvation is all about God changing us. First we are made a new person by the new birth inside an old body. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17)!

Then new birth begins a new lifelong goal for every believer called progressive sanctification. We are all called by God to make daily choices to become more and more like Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:15-16 reminds us, "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." Our goal every day should be to yield more of our body and mind to God for His purposes.

Thus when we read what God's Word says He desires and prayerfully respond to Him saying that is what I want in my life. I want Your way and not mine, and God's Spirit pours out in us the grace or power to do make that response. God's grace energizes or

---

<sup>54</sup>[5]Evans, William, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press) 1998, c1994. [272 words]

works in us to produce “love, joy, peace” or “loving our husbands and children” and “being kind”

Progressive sanctification **starts** with God who makes His will known, **it continues** when we agree and ask for His will to be done in us—**it transforms** us step-by-step as we obey and submit and follow God’s way, walking in the power or energizing strength of the Spirit.

### Grace-Energized Sanctification is A Continuing Process

*“As Christians, we realize shortly after we have been saved that there is a new inner battle being waged within us - a battle between our old sin-lead nature and new Spirit-lead nature. Paul in Galatians best describes this inner struggle in Galatians 5:17:*

*For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. NKJV*

*Like Paul, our heart's desire is to please and obey God, but our flesh is weak making sin difficult to resist. Yet, it is in our continual struggle with sin and obedience to God that sanctification does its work.*

*The effects of living in a fallen world have harmed everybody differently. We all face different issues, struggle with sin, and past hurts of varying degrees, hindering our ability to live the life God desires for us. Once we accept Jesus Christ into our lives, the Holy Spirit enters our life to start a transformation process (progressive sanctification).*

*He convicts us on areas that need to be changed, helping us to grow in holiness. We begin to view the world, people, and personal difficulties from a more biblical perspective. Our choices begin to be motivated by love and truth and not selfishness. For instance, we may have misplaced our confidence and security on beauty, wealth, and materialism, but God may ordain difficult circumstances to liberate us from these growth-hindering snares. The transformation process may be painful, but it is always motivated by God's love for us.*

*Sanctification is not about trying to be sinless in order to earn the favor of God. Rather, sanctification is for our own benefit. God commands us to pursue sanctification so that through it we may be blessed.*

*Sanctification is one of the most challenging aspects of the Christian walk. Our natural tendency is to embrace sin, yet God in His divine wisdom has chosen to give us the responsibility of working out our own sanctification.*

*"Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work," says 2 Timothy 2:21.*

*But how do we pursue sanctification? How are we personally responsible? Lovingly, God has sent His Holy Spirit and His written Word, the Bible, to guide us. Though every person's sanctification is unique and personal, there are common disciplines in the pursuit of sanctification that are unchanging<sup>55[6]</sup>."*

### Grace-Energized Sanctification is the Key to Spiritual Growth

Sanctification is both a position as well as a progression. We were positionally sanctified the instant Christ has saved us, yet sanctification progresses as each grace-energized choice we make transforms us unto the likeness of Christ. Personal sanctification is our responsibility.

Choices to pursue sanctification make positive growth occurs. Our pursuit involves surrendering our will to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This takes time and cannot be hurried. Just as newborn babies gradually mature unto adulthood, so God seeks to mature life of every believer. God's work of sanctification will be finished in every believer's life only when they see Jesus Christ face-to-face.

Grace-energized living means our personal, daily application of spiritual discipline.

That is what God states in our passage this morning, both His work and ours, side-by-side: "Work out your own salvation.... For it is God who works in you" (Phil. 2:12–13).

God has left something for us to do. Our instantaneous justification launched what God describes as a life-long arduous struggle to work out our own salvation and that is called **grace-energized living**.

### Titus Two is Part of God' Plan

Paul puts it best in his epistle to the Thessalonians: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Women who are highly useful to God have these characteristics. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus 2 woman and the Titus 2 man.

The whole goal of a Titus 2 woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

Titus 2 women have in their wake a grateful army of **husbands who feel deeply loved by their wives**. What was the first thing that the Holy Spirit chose to have taught to the young married women believers? LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS. Can you imagine what a

---

<sup>55[6]</sup> <http://www.allaboutfollowingjesus.org/sanctification.htm> [413]

deep and lasting impact upon this local body of Christ's church to have men coming home to a wife who is earnestly being taught how to love her own husband. In a world where women are being pressed into the mould of the worldly, self-seeking, independent, do-their-own-thing women. If nothing else, every family at TBC would be enriched if every younger woman was taught in a practical, simple, and personal way how to love their own husband.

Titus 2 women train younger women in one of the hardest and yet most rewarding investments in life—***children who feel deeply loved by their mothers***. The key the Holy Spirit emphasizes very clearly that the key to children is LOVING them. Titus 2 women train, teach, model, and mentor moms into the deepening of love for their children that can be felt. One of the most common complaints of 21<sup>st</sup> century children is that don't feel loved. Most mothers love their children, but many children are not feeling that love. Titus 2 women are coaches that tutor and mentor young moms in ways to show love that can be felt.

Titus 2 women train younger women to be ***discreet, sensible, wise in the decisions and choices they make***. What a rich resource for new marriages and families to have a young woman walked through those days side-by-side with a godly, Spirit-filled woman who will regularly, personally, individually mentor, mother, coach, and cheer on younger women in skillfully living as a wife, mother, and woman of God on a day to day basis. A Titus 2 woman isn't found in a classroom or lecture hall—they are in the kitchen with a younger woman, in the dining room, in the nursery, at the grocery store. Titus 2 women are hands on tutors; and they nurture younger women in the laboratory of life--walking through life together praying, sharing, learning, and loving.

Titus 2 women train younger women in the ***holiness and purity that pleases God and unleashes the power of the Spirit***. The training that a Titus 2 older woman gives is a seven-part package, that is immensely practical not theoretical. Modesty, purity, chaste behavior must be learned, modeled, and practiced. The power of a godly, Spirit-filled woman of Biblical maturity sitting over a cup of tea discussing what pleases God in dress, in behavior, conduct, and so on. Modesty is understood through Bible study that applies God's Word to daily life.

Titus 2 older women teach younger women the ***centrality in God's plan of a woman's priority being her home***. Home making is a learned art and so many women never have the hands on training that is needed. Life is so full, our culture has moved away from homemaking and few young women get mentored in the godly, Biblical art of home making. If the highest calling in the Titus 2 list is to love husbands, and to love children, and younger women are called to be homemakers then that is exactly what the grace-energized woman, in step with God's Spirit wants to be.

Titus 2 older women teach younger women the ***utter necessity of kindness being the law of her tongue and the flavor of her life***. Since everything will be measured by Christ as whether or not it was done for His good, and for His glory—she learns that

means being done in Christ-like goodness and kindness. Her husband, her children, and her friends see a growing kindness that spreads through all her life.



## The Eternal Reward of Grace-Energized Kindness

### EBG: Message Forty-Eight (070902AM)

Can you imagine how liberating it would be to know how to choose the best in life? We live in a complex world of multiplied choices, many of which are good. We have more new information and more new opportunities offered to us each week—than the average 18<sup>th</sup> century person was offered in a lifetime.

Often this leads to an overloaded mind, and overloaded life—and a short-circuited decision making system. We just don't know which opportunity and what activity to choose to spend our time doing. Wouldn't it be incredible to confidently go to work or school and know that you are doing exactly what God wants done? And think of life at home, as you travel, in your free time and everywhere you are—just to know that we are pleasing God by our actions? We can only make one investment of that portion of the river of time that flows by our lives at the speed of 60 minutes-per-hour. We can't get time to use over—but we can redeem time as an investment for God.

Does God offer a plan to help us know what is our best use of time for His Kingdom and His Glory? Yes, and it is simple. Paul explains this way of life in Philippians 3.

Paul learned how to live a simple, singularly-focused life as a believer. He knew why he was here, what he was doing—and he did both with all of his strength. In fact, Paul says in Philippians 3 that he was straining every ounce of his body towards the goal of his life which was Christ-like living.

Paul made the Christian life simple because he simply lived life for Christ. He stated his simple goal in Philippians 3.

*Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; **but one thing I do**, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 **I press toward the goal** for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. NKJV*

Paul confidently could say—

### One Thing I Do

One thing I do.

Have you come to that point?

It's a life of many things—done for one supreme purpose.

Paul was consumed with one goal in life, one purpose for living. He did many things—

- he had a skill in tent-making that he used to earn a living,
- he had a love to travel,
- he had a tremendous communication skill set in both speaking and writing,
- he was a genius in making and staying in touch with friends,
- he loved to sail around the Mediterranean Sea,
- he was somewhat of a power-walker (walking hundreds of miles in walks around the Roman Empire),
- he had social skills that made him able to comfortably move among the highest circles of the wealthy,
- he was very sensitive to the needs and concerns of the poor—and on and on we could go picking out the multi-faceted life of this accomplished person.

But, here in Philippians 3 Paul confesses that everything he did was harnessed to one dominating purpose in his life. One thing connected every other thing.

“Paul had reduced the whole of sanctification to the simple and clear goal of doing “one thing”—pursuing Christlikeness”.<sup>1[1]</sup>

Paul had connected with the very purpose of God in election and predestination. As he had previously stated in Romans 8, he was focused on his reason to even be alive. We like Paul were divinely chosen to be conformed to Christ-likeness. As Paul says to the church at Rome:

*Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined **to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*  
NKJV

Conformity to Christ is Christ-like living.

Christ-like living, as we saw last time, is personal sanctification.

### I Press Toward the Goal

Personal sanctification is a life long ‘pressing towards the goal’ of Christ like behavior. This singular goal can pull together all the rest of the many pieces of life.

We look at everything we must do and weigh each one as to whether or not it contributes to the one great finish line of our life—Christ-conformity!

So what exactly is Christ-like behavior? How do we know where to point our lives, our time, and our energies? Last time we saw in Philippians 2:12-13 we were to work on something in our progressive sanctification.

*Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own***

**salvation** with fear and trembling;<sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. NKJV

Paul said we are to pursue living God's desires for our life. And where would we find that? Paul would say, "That's simple!"

So that there is no confusion of what we should work on, God wrote it down. We have it this morning.

God's Word is God's plan for our life. No matter where you go in this book we find the will of God for us His children. Paul saw his purpose was to obediently yield his life to ever increasing levels of Christ-conformity. He saw life as being more and more conformed to Christ.

*2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image** from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. NKJV*

This morning our quest for personal, progressive sanctification—or living life continually surrendering my life to God's plan, is what's written down in Titus.

Paul left Titus in Crete with a simple assignment—do everything you can to help these new believers become like Christ. Note the purpose Titus had in chapter 1.

*Titus 1:5 **For this reason** I left you in Crete, that you should set in order (also KJV, NASB; NIV 'straighten out') the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—NKJV*

What did Paul want Titus to set in order or straighten out? He was to address the wrong doctrine and practices that were going on in the Cretan church. Now look at chapter 2.

*Titus 2:1 But as for you, **speak** [present active imperative "I command you to keep on speaking"] the things which are proper for **sound doctrine**: NKJV*

The best way to get the whole church headed in the right direction was to get them focused on "healthy" doctrine. The word "sound" is **hugiano** (we get the word hygiene from this word) it means healthy—and Paul uses this word 9 times in the pastoral epistles (5 times in Titus). Paul always emphasized that truth produces spiritual well-being.

The "things" (v. 1) Paul commands to be taught in vv. 2–10 are the doctrinal truths of godly attitudes, Christ-like behavior. "In order not only to please God, but also to have an effective witness to unbelievers, God's people must know the truth that leads to spiritual health."<sup>1</sup>[2]

The plan was that the older believers, who are living the life, train the younger ones in how to do likewise.

Paul then spells out a list of the 24 character qualities, 12 each for godly men and women. We are now in the 11<sup>th</sup> of 12 virtues or godly character qualities God wants in women. This quality in God's 12 part list for women is the quality of being "good" or "kind". Kindness energized by grace is what we are all called to demonstrate.

God's Word portrays in a very clear way exactly how God measures kindness. And that is what we want to open our hearts to as we look into His Word today.

### God Seeks Grace-Energized Kindness

In Titus 2:5 Paul says grace-energized women ought to be characterized by being gentle, tender-hearted, and merciful toward others. As His children, there is nothing we want more than to please Him. And when we think of Heaven, and when we seek to have a crown to cast at Christ's feet—think of living life, doing good works with grace-energized kindness.

God wants older women of the faith who have surrendered to the Spirit of God and have become examples of kindness. Paul asks Titus to train women in the church how to become kind in their personal life, marriage, home life, and in their ministry to others in Christ's Name.

Is there any example to follow? Is there a clear pathway God has laid down for us? If this is what determines my eternal rewards, it is something God must have very clearly explained, right?

Yes, and Paul illustrates exactly what those "good or kind" characteristics look like in I Timothy 5:10 where he said that women of kindness were:

"well reported for **good** works: if she has **brought up children**, if she has **lodged strangers**, if she has **washed the saints' feet**, if she has **relieved the afflicted**, if she has **diligently followed every good work**" NKJV.

Grace-energized women of kindness are the models to follow; and they are the teachers to be revered.

They are the women of God, useful to Him, rewarded by Him!

So these five simple choices should become the daily goal for every woman in Christ's church this morning. Grace-energized women of kindness are:

1. —intentionally family first.
2. —purposefully hospitality conscious.
3. —prayerfully humble servants.

4. –compassionately Good Samaritans.
5. –energetically devoted to ministry.

This is Christ's list of “Who is valuable for my church”. Here is who enriches my church in a strategic way; and that helps my church grow in godliness, grow in ministry, and grow in worship.

Last time we met the first two priorities of these godly women.

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness are Intentionally Family First in Their Priorities**

“well reported for **good** works: if she has **brought up children...**”(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul describes the first grace-energized good work this woman of renown has done is she “brought up children”. This means that they church would actually ask: “What kind of mother was she?”

And based on the high calling to be a homemaker in God’s plan, the church would find out: “Was her home her priority?”

This reminds a godly woman that part of her assignment God gave her in the home is to watch over both the house and the people within. The meals, the schedule, the clothes, the health, and so much more are done as an offering of worship to the God who called and assigned this highest of duties.

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness are Purposefully Hospitality Conscious for Christ's Church**

“if she has **lodged strangers**”(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her second grace-energized good work as whether she “lodged strangers”.

This is another way of asking, “how did she use her home”? When her God-given priority for caring for her children was done, did she offer her home to be opened to ministry to others in an unselfish way? This means, were sacrifices made to serve others through her home for Christ's sake?

Hospitality to strangers is a quality God esteems highly. He made hospitality one of the clear qualifications for elders in Christ's church (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).

God's Word also say hospitality is often one of the marks of spiritual maturity (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:1-2; I Peter 4:9).

So Paul says that older women in the faith are to train the younger women how to use their home in a godly, hospitable way for 'strangers', those not yet connected and nurtured in Christ's church.

### **Grace-Energized Women Prayerfully Invest Their Time in Humble Ministry**

"if she has ***washed the saints' feet***"(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her third grace-energized good work as whether she has "washed the saint's feet".

The New Testament Gospel was spread down the dirty and dusty roads of the ancient world. In those times the care of feet was a daily chore. At the Last Supper Passover Seder (John 13), do you remember how Jesus used this common and menial task to demonstrate the servant-hearted humility He desired to see in all of us?

Paul says that this grace-energized servant of Christ's church will share her humble heart in serving others. This woman is Christ-like because she also came not to be served, but to serve. She is not above humble ministry, she is characterized by it!

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness Compassionately do Selfless and Sacrificial Deeds**

"if she has ***relieved the afflicted***"(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her fourth grace-energized good work as whether she has "relieved the afflicted".

This grace-energized woman has surrendered her life to be on the lookout for selfless ways to serve others. She knows that Jesus said even a cup of cold water held out to a child in the Name of the Lord will never lose its reward. She has that Good Samaritan heart of reaching out to those stricken with need.

For all the centuries of Christ's church, and in all the cultures of this world, the Spirit of God finds these willing servants and He gives them the strength to spend their life doing selfless deeds of kindness and sacrificial service for others.

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness Energetically Devotes Their Life Towards Works that Please God**

"if she has ***diligently followed every good work***" (I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Finally Paul tells Timothy these grace-energized women are characterized as one who **has devoted herself to every good work**. The Greek word Paul uses is a very strong verb (***epakolutho*** translated 'has devoted herself to') and it captures the idea that this

widow devoted her life towards the pursuit of good deeds like Dorcas, energetically and diligently.

Since Paul states that this is the kind of woman that should be sought out to be a paid servant of Christ's church, that makes this life-choice the standard that should be recognized and sought out by every woman in Christ's church. Each woman who wants to please God by her life should follow this quality now, so that at the end of her life she will be a sought out as a qualified servant to Christ's church.

These five qualities laid down in God's Word are the plan of God for a godly, useful woman. Any woman that pursues these qualities in her priorities of life will accomplish a profound and eternal impact through the ministry of her life.

Everything we ever lived for that wasn't offered to God the way He desired it done will be incinerated. It isn't just **what** we do—it is also **why** we do it that matters so much to the Lord!

Every deed, every word, every motive, every moment lacking this one quality of goodness or kindness will in an instant be reduced to a puff of smoke and then forever be gone. Because that Judgment Seat of Christ is coming, the Lord asks for five areas of your life to be surrendered to the control of His Spirit.

Grace-energized women of kindness are:

1. —intentionally family first.
2. —purposefully hospitality conscious.
3. —prayerfully humble servants.
4. —compassionately Good Samaritans.
5. —energetically devoted to ministry.

Someday we are going to stand in front of Jesus Christ and watch him open the history files of our lives. Better than any web program God has logged the keystrokes of our lives. Our actual motivations, our genuine intentions, our literal thoughts will all be exposed as the frames around each action. There at last will be exposed the complete picture of God's servants. And everything done for Jesus that was done in grace-energized kindness will last forever.

### Appendix One:

**Grace-energized Women have the 'law of kindness' on their tongues.**

One final word about how vital this quality must be to God. We can conclude from God's Word that when the love of God is not in a woman's heart, the law of kindness is absent from her lips.

This means that grace-energized women of kindness must *speak* well of people, even their enemies. As Jesus said, '*Bless them that curse you*'. "When we speak to them, we must answer their revilings with courteous and friendly words, and *not render railing for*

*railing*; behind their backs we must commend that in them which is commendable, and when we have said all the good we can of them, not be forward to say any thing more. See 1 Pt. 3:9. They, in whose tongues is *the law of kindness*, can give good words to those who give bad words to them.”<sup>1[3]</sup>

The words of a grace-energized woman of kindness must be guided by this law of kindness, as well as truth and justice. Remember how Solomon made this a necessary part of the character of the virtuous woman, *that she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness* (Prov. 31:26). This quality is imperative and must be a part of the character of every true Christian. Consider what James said so strongly (James 4:11) ‘*Speak not evil one of another*’.

*“Since Christians are brethren, they should not defile nor defame one another. It is required of us that we be tender of the good name of our brethren; where we cannot speak well, we had better say nothing than speak evil; we must not take pleasure in making known the faults of others, divulging things that are secret, merely to expose them, nor in making more of their known faults than really they deserve, and, least of all, in making false stories, and spreading things concerning them of which they are altogether innocent.”*<sup>1[4]</sup>

As Jesus reminds us, it is ‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh’ (Matthew 12:34). A grace-energized woman has a heart full of love and opens her mouth with wisdom, and in her lips there is that law of kindness. But if her heart is full of prejudice, anger, suspicion, or any unkind temper, she will surely open her mouth “in a manner corresponding with the disposition of her mind. And hence will arise, if not lying and slandering, (which yet will hardly be avoided,) bitter words, tale bearing, backbiting, and evil-speaking of every kind”.<sup>1[5]</sup>

**To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men [Titus 3:2].**

“Speak evil of no man” means we are to malign no one, and we are not to repeat gossip. It has been said that you can’t *believe* everything you hear today, but you can *repeat* it! That is what he is talking about here—we are *not* to repeat what we hear. Many evil reports are passed from person to person without even a shred of evidence that the report is true. Another old saying is that some people will believe anything if it is *whispered* to them!<sup>1[6]</sup>

**Appendix Two: Grace-Energized Women Meditate Upon Jesus And The Fruit Of The Spirit Gal. 5:22-23**

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting His mind, through the Word, dominate everything that is thought and done. Being filled with the Spirit is the same as walking LIKE Jesus did on earth!

Fullness of the Spirit is first described as a change in our Personal Relationship with God. The Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way



in each of these areas.

**First, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Personal Relationship with God.**

1. LOVE is the absence of selfishness.
2. JOY is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances.
3. PEACE is the internal serenity that only God can give. Troubles are not absent. Rather, God is present!

**Secondly, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Public Walk with Others.**

4. PATIENCE is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. Patience is also one of the supreme attributes of God. It is His character that is revealed as being gracious and longsuffering. This is patience—the ability to endure injuries inflicted by others and the willingness to accept irritating or painful situations. If I am not increasing in patience, is it because I am not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit?
5. KINDNESS is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives. It is the absence of an abrasive manner in my dealings with people. Kindness will soften any word or act that might hurt another. God's Spirit gives us a tender concern for others, that is reflected in our desire to treat others gently, just as the Lord treats us as believers (Matt. 11:28, 29; 19:13, 14; 2 Tim. 2:24). Kindness becomes a beautiful reflection of God through our every day lives when we choose to avoid any abrasive words or deeds in our dealings with people. Grace-energized kindness grows as we choose to live out Ephesians 2:8 and 4:32 in self-sacrifice and love—even toward the unlovely and undeserving. Grace-energized kindness softens our words or actions so they don't hurt others.
6. GOODNESS is being Godlike! Do people see me in active kindness, exemplifying goodness (6:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:11), living in faithfulness, showing loyalty and trustworthiness (Lam. 3:22; Phil. 2:7–9; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; Rev. 2:10)?

**Finally, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Private Life with our Self.**

7. FAITHFULNESS is the idea here. A trustworthy and dependable life. The kind of person that keeps their own life in order so that you can count on them. Like Psalm 15 describes, this type of person always keeps his word. Faithfulness is the same as loyalty and trustworthiness.

8. MEEKNESS is the opposite of asserting ourselves. It is a humble and gentle attitude that is patiently submissive in every offense, while having no desire for revenge or retribution. In the NT, it is used to describe 3 attitudes: submission to the will of God (Col. 3:12), teachability (James 1:21), and consideration of others (Eph. 4:2). The Lord said the meek are the ultimate winners. Those who are servants of the Lord must not strive. They must resist selfish ambition because that is a reflection of Satan, not God.
9. Discipline refers to restraining passions and appetites and is defined by the Greek dictionary as “a virtue, which consists in mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones.” The only force that can control our flesh is the Holy Spirit. When yielded to the Spirit, we become vessels that are worshipful sacrifices to Him, and no longer to self. Self cannot control self; flesh is not able to harness flesh. Only the Spirit can discipline us.

When God’s Spirit is at the helm, there is a remarkable change in our homes, churches, and lives. We see that as believers we are in the same family—God is our Father. We are headed toward a common goal—heaven. We serve a common Master—Jesus. We follow the same Guide—His Word. And share the same passion—Christ, who gets all the glory.

Prayer Example: Dear Lord, I pray that You will make Colossians 3:12-17 a reality in my family’s lives! Help us to put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering. Enable us to be bearing with one another, and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, even as You have forgiven us, so help us to forgive others. And above all these things, help us to put on love, which is the bond of perfection. May Your peace rule in our hearts and home. May we always be thankful in all circumstances because Your Word dwells in us richly in all wisdom! Enable us to be teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to You, oh Lord. And whatever we do in word or deed, may it be done all in Your name, giving thanks to God the Father through You!

## What is Grace-Energized Submission?

### EBG: Message Forty-Nine (070909AM)

Jesus reduced life to one simple goal—seeking God’s rule over each day of my life. Do you remember Christ’s simple yet powerful words? Please open there with me:

*Matthew 6:33 “But seek **first** the **kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. NKJV*

Ever since the Garden of Eden, and mankind’s fall into sin—we humans have wanted our own way. Submission in Biblical terms is when we submit to wanting God’s way.

When sin entered the world, the woman desired to rule over the man; the man desired to rule over the woman, and both departed from their God-ordained roles in life. The fall has impacted every part of life, including marriage--as husbands and wives compete for first place.

Now, instead of being the Christ-like leader of his home, as the biblical head over his wife, the typical man has become either dominant and forceful—or passive and uncaring; in reaction, the typical woman has either resisted his control or had to become the leader she was never designed by God to be. And that whole distortion began way back in the Garden!

Biblical submission in marriage can only be understood and practiced when seen in the wider context of God’s plan. First and before all other commands--God commands each of us that we first submit to Him (James 4.7). We surrender to God and seek first His rule over our lives on a daily basis (Mt. 6:33).

Then, after submission to Him, God also commands that we each submit to others He has established in His Divine plan:

- Congregations are to submit to their elders (Heb. 13:17);
- Citizens are to submit to their rulers (I Peter 2:13);
- Younger believers are to submit to older (mature) believers (I Peter 5:5; Titus 2), and so on. Because:

### Mutual Submission is Part of God’s Plan

The whole “Spirit-filled” life is described in Ephesians 5:1-20. Do you remember how it culminates with the great imperative of Ephesians 5:18?

*Ephesians 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; **but be filled with the Spirit**, NKJV*

And then, what comes next? God applies this Spirit-filled walk with an explanation how the Holy Spirit graciously fills our hearts with a submission that overflows into every aspect of life.

That means that our topic this morning—grace-energized submission for wives fits as just one piece of a much larger plan.

The clearest statement of submission for a wife comes in the middle of this much larger teaching about Spirit-prompted submission. If you trace the word and concept of submission in **Ephesians 5:21-6:9**, it is actually stated or implied seven times. Let's turn there and note these truths.

It is, in other words, a complete (as in the meaning of number 7) guide to the work of God's Spirit empowering us to be like Jesus. Here is the larger context of a wife's submission:

- We all are to submit to each other (5:21).
- Wives are to submit to their husbands (5:22).
- Husbands are to submit to the picture of Christ and the church (5:23-33).
- Children are to obey (submit to) their parents (6:1-4).
- Bondservants are to submit to their masters, as in an employee-to-employer relationship today (6:5-8).
- Masters (business owners and managers of today) are to submit to their heavenly Master (6:9a).
- Everyone is to submit to their Master in heaven (6:9b).

### Wives Energized By God Will Submit to Their Husbands

God's final lesson for younger women in the church is submission as we see in Titus 2. Unfortunately, the KJV and NJKV obscure the complete message Paul gave to Titus.

*Titus 2:5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, **obedient to their own husbands**, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. NKJV*

Listen to how the NIV and NASB render this word correctly, as it is translated everywhere else it shows up in the New Testament:

*Titus 2:5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, **and to be subject to their husbands**, so that no one will malign the word of God. NIV*

*Titus 2:5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, **being subject to their own husbands**, that the word of God may not be dishonored. NASB*

God's Spirit led Paul to use a word (***hupotassumenas***) translated "be subject to" because it does not mean 'obey'. God does not say wives (like He does to children) "obey your husbands". Rather it means that a grace-energized woman accepts the

relationship of marriage that God has designed, and willingly subjects herself to God's order for her marriage, because:

### **Submission is Biblical**

No teaching of Christ's church is more disliked within and without than this doctrine. However, God blesses those who honor what He values. Biblical submission is vital for godly living.

Biblical submission is only understood in context of all that God has said. Submission is not just for women, nor just for wives—it is commanded at every level among all believers. Submission is an attitude of humbly living out what God has called us to be and to do. Among believers submission is always a two-way subjection and never one-way.

God has established roles for the church and the home. Men are to fulfill the place of the leader as fathers and husbands. When a wife willingly follows her husband she is acknowledging to God her husband's role as planned and directed by God's Word.

In the church, the husband to whom v.2 was written was to have repented of any behavior that would be seen as impatient, unfaithful, unloving, or tyrannical. The wife has already been instructed that God expects her to never be rebellious, undermining her husband's authority or contradicting his leadership. This grace-energized submission is part of spiritual maturity.

This grace-energized wife fulfills the responsibilities in her marriage and home that God gave her, in God's power, for God's glory—and only in God's gracious power. This submission described in God's Word never means or implies any inferiority (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18; I Peter 3:1, 5), because:

### **Submission is Mutual**

God designed marriage so that husbands and wives see their roles in the context of a spiritual partnership, godly love, and a Biblical covenant. In God's plan husbands are not to make every decision in the marriage, nor does the role as leader make every decision a correct one.

Thus in mutual submission a husband should always consider his wife's opinion or he is foolish. Paul wrote to husbands in Eph. 5:26, and described a leadership that involved sacrificial love for the ones being led. A husband who misuses his role as leader is just as sinful as a wife who refuses to follow.

Believers who consider marriage should always come to an understanding of the implications of Biblical submission for their lives together. It is impossible for a man and woman to marry and remain independent. There are some decisions that a couple will eventually face that no matter how long they discuss them—they will not agree. It is at

that point that the godly wife submits to her husband's role—and he leads as best he can with his understanding of God's will.

This means that a godly woman must come to the place of practical submission as revealed by the following questions. You may wish to answer these silently in your mind if you are married to see how you are doing in the realm of Biblical submission as a husband and wife. Biblical submission means a positive response should be made by both husbands and wives on these two questions.

- Husband: Am I ready to answer to the Lord for the decisions I make in which I have overruled my wife's opinions and gone forward with what I thought best in the situation?
- Wife: Can I voluntarily submit to my husband's decision after I have shared my heart, and yet we still differ on this decision?

When both marriage partners are believers and want to honor the Lord, submission is not a problem.

- Biblical husbands energized by grace are servant-leaders who lead and serve in Christ's love as we see in John 13:1-7 as Jesus washed His disciples' feet.
- Biblical wives are energized by grace to submit and resist fearing or despising their husbands as they lead by loving servanthood. Paul describes this amazing partnership in I Cor. 7:1-40 and Eph. 5:22-33.

But why is this grace-energized submission so important? Because Paul said when grace-energized submission or any of the other six elements of Titus 2:4-5 are lacking God is not glorified and His Word is discredited. Look back at those words that conclude v. 5.

*Titus 2:5 ...that the **word of God may not be blasphemed.** NKJV*

As we live out our marriages and personal lives before a watching world we either point them to an Awesome God or we give them ammunition to use against us and God.

When we don't live the way God asks us to live we are denying not only God's Word but also Him who gave us His Word to live for the glory of our Redeemer and Savior who died to purchase us.

For the world to be convinced that God can save them from sin they need to see people who live holy lives. God is mocked when we do not live what His Word commands us to live (Mat. 5:16; I Pet. 2:9).

The idea of wifely submission is therefore not a very popular topic in our day. Some resistance to submission is simply sinful rebellion against the will of God; but sometimes it reflects a wrong understanding of what the biblical wife's submission really involves.

Therefore, to clarify a wife's role in biblical submission, we need to correct common misconceptions, and then discuss what Scripture really says about submission.

### What Biblical Submission Is *Not*

God says, in the second chapter of Genesis, “[*It is*] *not good for man to be alone: I will make a help meet **for** him*” (Genesis 2:18, KJV). The key word in that verse is the word “for.” God made the woman for Adam—to complete him by adding a quality of life that previously did not exist.

Eve was a precious gift to Adam—to fulfill him as a person. And the Lord said that this was “very good.” (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:23), and Galatians 3:28 all assert the spiritual, mental, and physical equalitarian status and dignity of women and men. However, in spite of this, there are still five common misconceptions about submission:

- § **Misconception #1: Submission is only for women.** Actually, we are all commanded to submit to one another in Christ's body. So this is a universal responsibility, not merely for wives. (Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:3-4; I Pet. 5:5; Rom. 13:1; Heb. 13:17)
- **Misconception #2: Submission is bondage.** Wrong. Jesus said that submission to obey what God has commanded is actually a tremendous picture of love. (Jn. 14:21)
- **Misconception #3: Submission means muting.** Never. The Scriptures which describe godly wives never state or imply that she may not speak. Rather, she is to become the treasured confidant, advisor, and completer for her man who stands in front protecting her—not silencing her. (Pr. 31:26; Ac. 18:26; Judges 13:21-23)
- **Misconception #4: Submission means invisibility.** Actually, a submissive wife opens the doors to endless opportunities because by obedience she frees God to give all that He in His plan wants to give to her. It is rebellion which hides anyone's true potential for God. (Proverbs 31 woman)
- **Misconception #5: Submission means inferiority.** God has ordained gender-specific roles for men and women within the church and home. The Scriptures never imply that a woman is anything less than equal with a man. In history many women have excelled men in many areas. But to excel with God, submission equals obedience to a God-given role. Jesus said, “*I can do nothing on my own initiative, as I hear I judge; ... I do not seek my own will but the will of Him who sent me*” (John 5:30, NASB).

So, if those are the errors, what is the truth?

### When Energized by Grace—We Obey

A wife's proper relationship to her husband is as a lovely act of worship of Christ in our heavenly Father's eyes. Submission “as to the Lord” provides daily opportunities for the wife to show the Lord's “worth ship” through service to her husband. The Lord has prescribed for women, wives, and mothers, a gender-specific role within three realms:

the church, the marriage, and the family. This wonderful act of worship is reflected in the following truths:

**Truth #1: Submission is a choice.** Believing wives are asked by God to submit as an obedient response to God. God never *makes* us obey—He *asks* us to obey. Husbands are not commanded to demand submission, but to win it by love (Eph. 5:22; 1 Pet. 3:1).

The Holy Spirit applies submission for a godly woman by the structure of Scripture. Submission was inspired as a present tense (that means “ongoing”) imperative (that means “non-optional”). So submission is a not a choice of whether to obey or disobey a husband, *but a choice to obey or disobey the Lord.*

**Truth #2: Submission is unto the Lord.** Submission is really between a woman and her Lord God Almighty. It is a choice to do what He says, whether it is agreeable, understandable, or even possible.

It is also only presented in a positive way (what she should do), and never negatively (what she should not do). It is “as to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22). The same One who said, “*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*” (John 14:15, NASB) goes on to say, “[*Be subject*] to your own husbands ...” (Ephesians 5:22).

**Truth #3: Submission multiplies the blessings of our marriage.** When Genesis 2:24 says that two become one, this merging is a public declaration that all the gifts, talents, strengths, goals, dreams, hopes, and desires of two lives are poured into one vessel. That results in a multiplication. Each is doubled.

And contra wise, any weaknesses, cares, concerns, and deficits which are lacking are all poured into that larger sphere, and are now reduced greatly.

**Truth #4: Submission draws us closer as a couple.** A unity candle is often used in weddings to symbolize two becoming one. First, the two outside candles are lit to indicate that the bride and groom were two individual lives, just like the two individual candles.

Then they merge their two individual lights into a single center candle, and once it is lit, they extinguish their individual candles. That is the precious truth that unifies a couple as they share all of life.

**Truth #5: Submission liberates us to be what God made us to be.** When we see submission as God designed it to be, we are amazed. It is not a dungeon, but a delight. It is not bondage, but liberty. It is not a bitter pill to swallow, but a lifelong meal prepared for our enjoyment by our Creator: “*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work*” (John 4:34, NASB).



Did Jesus just dutifully obey? No, He delighted in obeying His Father. When we truly submit, we shall also delight.

**Truth #6: Submission opens all of our lives to each other.** A godly wife gets to share every part of the life of the one she loves most on earth. That is what Paul said in Ephesians 5:24, NASB: *“Wives ought to be [subject] to their husbands in everything.”* Of course, wives are still first of all believers, so God would never ask them to sin or dishonor Him to fulfill their husband’s wishes (Ac. 5.28-29).

But any wife who loves God, offers herself in every possible way to willingly be her husband’s helper, completer, and companion—one who delights him at all times.

### **What Happens When a Wife Submits to Her Husband?**

A grace-energized wife will lovingly and respectfully submit to her husband’s direction. Just like the Proverbs 31 woman, she will evidence a servant’s heart toward her life partner. What are some ways that a wife can display a servant’s heart? What are the characteristics of such a woman?

1. **A grace-energized woman of submission draws her husband.** A Grace-energized wife realizes how hard it is for her husband to live and work in the world. Temptations swirl around him all day long. Weariness and discouragement come at him from all sides. So a wise wife decides that home will be a magnet for him—a shining beacon on a hill that beckons her husband to come. It should be the place he would rather be when he is at work and at play.

It should be his place to refocus, be refreshed, and be renewed. She is the guardian of that place. When activities and the urgent overrun this priority, all must be stopped and the home reset to be the place of refuge her husband needs: *“The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain”* (Proverbs 31:11).

2. **A grace-energized woman of submission pleases and honors her husband.** What man can ever resist this kind of a woman? She has a lifelong desire to do what pleases him: *“She does him good and not evil all the days of her life”* (Proverbs 31:12). She also honors him in her words, attitudes, and actions: *“Let the wife [see] that she respects [her] husband”* (Ephesians 5:33b).

Only the Lord has a higher place for this Grace-energized wife. No house, no job, no child, no ministry can hold her; she wants to please and honor the man God made for her. That is her calling and role given by the Lord himself.

3. **A grace-energized woman of submission serves her husband.** The Lord designed the men to be out “sweating” to provide, and the women to be inside

making his entire world ready for his homecoming. A grace-energized wife directs the house, the children, the schedule, and the meals to all make her husband's life a joy:

*"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue [is] the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband [also], and he praises her: 'Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all' " (Proverbs 31:26-29).*

The reason the Proverbs 31 woman is so amazing is that her marriage was at the center of all she did. It was her primary ministry!

4. **A grace-energized woman of submission blesses her husband.** The Lord said that our words flow from our heart. That means a godly wife, full of the Holy Spirit, would never speak wickedly about her husband or to him. She gives her mouth to God and meditates upon:

*"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26).*

*"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers... And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:29, 32).*

5. **A grace-energized woman of submission trusts her husband.** If you are married, it is God's will. And since it is His will, you need to trust God with the details. The Lord can get your husband to shape up in an infinitely greater way than you ever could. All the Lord asks is this: **"Trust Me with your husband."** So what should you do? Trust your husband as God's man for you—for life!

*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).*

6. **A grace-energized woman of submission waits for her husband.** Many wives are miles ahead of their husbands and can get so frustrated at their plodding. Don't discourage your husband; don't push him—wait for him.

*"Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1b-3).*

7. **A grace-energized woman of submission challenges her husband.**

Husbands can't resist godly wives. That is what Peter said. So, maintain a spiritual life full of devotion to God. A dynamic ongoing relationship with Christ is the key to being enabled to lovingly and respectfully submit to your husband's leadership.

*"Wives, likewise, [be] submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct [accompanied] by fear" (1 Peter 3:1-2).*

8. **A grace-energized woman of submission forgives her husband.** Christ's love causes a Grace-energized wife to forgive her husband's failures, weaknesses, and struggles. God's grace allows her to look at him with eyes of love and to think the truth. Love him as Christ loves you is her motto.

*"Love suffers long [and] is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a).*

### Submission is a Divine Calling

Wives, you are called by God to be in submission to your husband—to be his unique and suitable helper. In this section we have seen what that means. But knowing what it means is of little value unless it is applied to your relationship with your husband. Knowing these facts will not promote oneness in marriage. Performing them will. I therefore ask you to examine your relationship to your husband in the light of these truths. Are you *really* practicing submission with a servant's heart? Are you *really* practicing being your husband's helper?

Marriage is God's training ground to prepare husbands and wives for greater service for Christ. Ever changing, each unique personality is used by the Lord as heavenly sandpaper on the other. It is in the nitty-gritty events of daily living that our true character comes out—not the one we present to others, but the real us.

Learning how to biblically handle that day-in-day-out give and take is essential if we are to have a successful marriage. I suggest that where you find yourself to be failing, prayerfully consider this checklist:

- Confess those failures to one another (James 5:16).
- Accept the washing and cleansing that Jesus wants to bring to us through His precious blood, as Revelation 1:5 reminds us.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for power to be different (Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

A Grace-energized wife genuinely believes that her primary ministry is her marriage. She willingly moves out in obedience to the Word of God, making any necessary changes the Holy Spirit brings to mind (Phil. 2:12-13; Js. 1:19-24). A Grace-energized marriage is a small snapshot of the delights of heaven—a living portrait of the perfect love of Jesus!

## What is Grace-Energized Submission? Part II

### EBG: Message Fifty (070916AM)

When God looks down upon us humans who live on Earth He only sees two kinds of hearts: saved hearts and lost hearts. God's Word classifies everyone as either: having Christ or not. Listen to John:

*1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. NKJV*

There are several types of behavior that distinguish between God's people (the saved) and Satan's people (the lost), but none is more clearly contrasted than: submission to authority (the saved) and a casting off of authority (the lost).

As we turn a couple of short books towards the end, in Jude v.8 God reveals that key characteristics of Satan's realm. God tells us that Satan's team "rejects authority" (NKJV/NAS/NIV). That is just another way of saying—resisting submission.

*Jude 8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority (NAS/NIV), and speak evil of dignitaries. NKJV*

These are two interesting words "reject" (***atheteo*** means "despise, reject, cast off") and "authority" (***kuriotes*** means "Lordship or dominion"). So at the deepest level, lost people cast off or reject, or even despise the Lordship or rule, or dominion of Christ.

In fact, when Paul is guided to record the decline and fall of the human race in Romans 1, one of the clearest elements is seen in humanity's constant desire to cast off all restraint (again resisting submission to any authority other than self).

We could simply summarize God's Word by saying that God's people are submissive and Satan's people aren't.

Since we were born, as Isaiah 53:6 says, wanting our own way—only a second birth can change that.

*Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. NKJV*

Remember that Jesus reduced life to one simple goal—seeking God's rule over each day of my life. Christ's simple yet powerful words:

*Matthew 6:33 "But seek **first the kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. NKJV*

But when we submit to God we begin to trust in Him with all our being, we stop leaning on finding our own way, our lives start reflecting God—and He directs our steps.

*Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. NKJV*

That is the ultimate life: empowered by God, to follow God as our Guide through life. It all starts with submission and that is exactly where we begin our study. Paul is explaining to Titus that

### **Wives Energized By God Will Submit to Their Husbands**

This comes in God's final lesson for younger women in the church, which is a lifestyle and attitude of Biblical submission. That is our lesson to learn in Titus 2:5.

As we saw last time, both the NIV and NASB render this word correctly, as it is translated everywhere else it shows up in the New Testament:

*Titus 2:5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, **being subject to their own husbands**, that the word of God may not be dishonored. NASB*

God's Spirit led Paul to use a word (*hupotassumenas*) translated "be subject to" which means that a grace-energized woman accepts the relationship of marriage that God has designed, and willingly subjects herself to God's order for her marriage.

But why is this grace-energized submission so important? Because Paul said when grace-energized submission or any of the other six elements of Titus 2:4-5 are lacking God is not glorified and His Word is discredited. Look back at those words that conclude v. 5.

*Titus 2:5 that the **word of God may not be blasphemed**. NKJV*

Submission in Biblical terms is when we submit to wanting God's way.

Biblical submission in marriage can only be understood and practiced when seen in the wider context of God's plan. We want to go God's way and not our own (Isaiah 53:6); then we trust His way not ours (Pr. 3:5-6); and we surrender daily to God and seek first His rule over our lives (Mt. 6:33). That is the grace-energized life of submission for all believers. But specifically, what happens when wives do not heed God's call? They begin to exhibit what I like to call the:

### **Danger Signs of Women Not Energized by Grace**

Grace-energized lives submit to God's Word—if not, what will happen? Without a commitment to faithfully follow Christ's Word, wives can end up with one or several of the following five common *1[1]* regrets:

- **Without the grace-energized foundation of God's Word, she will become an irresponsible wife.** This wife is nothing but a little girl in search of a daddy, and she seems to have found one in her husband. She is thoroughly self-centered, but manages to appear to others as a loving and devoted wife.
- **Without the grace-energized power of God's Word, she will become an emotionally-detached wife.** This woman may be recognized as one of the most stable and even-tempered women in her community. She is frequently asked to serve on the boards of numerous ministries because of her organized mind and methodical way of making decisions. However, in her home, she is about as detached and emotionally unavailable as a woman can be.
- **Without grace-energized obedience to God's Word, she will become a dictatorial wife.** This woman's idea of wifehood means that nothing happens without her approval. When her husband dares to question her decisions, she resorts to manipulation or intimidating tactics and, if that doesn't work, goes into a blind rage.
- **Without the grace-energized pattern of God's Word, she will become a workaholic wife.** This woman never quits working mentally or emotionally. She lives under pressure, and sprays her family with her frustrations.
- **Without the grace-energized nurture of God's Word, she will become a spiritually- apathetic wife.** This woman is a believer and church attendee. But beyond that, she's generally unresponsive to spiritual matters; she therefore never exercises a sound spiritual testimony in her home. And that void blocks the relationship a godly husband longs to have.

The idea of wifely submission is therefore not a very popular topic in our day. Some resistance to submission is simply sinful rebellion against the will of God; but sometimes it reflects a wrong understanding of what the biblical wife's submission really involves. Therefore, to clarify a wife's role in biblical submission, we need to correct common misconceptions, and then discuss what Scripture really says about submission.

### **What Biblical Submission Is *Not***

Eve was a precious gift to Adam—to fulfill him as a person. And the Lord said that this was “very good.” (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:23), and Galatians 3:28 all assert the spiritual, mental, and physical equalitarian status and dignity of women and men. However, in spite of this, there are still five common misconceptions about submission:

1. Misconception #1: Submission is only for women.
2. Misconception #2: Submission is bondage.
3. Misconception #3: Submission means muting.
4. Misconception #4: Submission means invisibility.
5. Misconception #5: Submission means inferiority.

So, if those are the errors, what is the truth?

### When Energized by Grace—We Obey

A wife's proper relationship to her husband is as a lovely act of worship of Christ in our heavenly Father's eyes. Submission "as to the Lord" provides daily opportunities for the wife to show the Lord's "worth ship" through service to her husband. The Lord has prescribed for women, wives, and mothers, a gender-specific role within three realms: the church, the marriage, and the family. This wonderful act of worship is reflected in the following truths in Ephesians 5:22:

**Truth #1: Submission is a choice.** Believing wives are asked by God to submit as an obedient response to God. God never *makes* us obey—He *asks* us to obey. Husbands are not commanded to demand submission, but to win it by love (Eph. 5:22; 1 Pet. 3:1).

The Holy Spirit applies submission for a godly woman by the structure of Scripture. Submission was inspired as a present tense (that means "ongoing") imperative (that means "non-optional"). So submission is not a choice of whether to obey or disobey a husband, *but a choice to obey or disobey the Lord*.

**Truth #2: Submission is unto the Lord.** Submission is really between a woman and her Lord God Almighty. It is a choice to do what He says, whether it is agreeable, understandable, or even possible.

It is also only presented in a positive way (what she should do), and never negatively (what she should not do). It is "as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). The same One who said, "*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*" (John 14:15, NASB) goes on to say, "*[Be subject] to your own husbands ...*" (Ephesians 5:22).

**Truth #3: Submission multiplies the blessings of our marriage.** When Genesis 2:24 says that two become one, this merging is a public declaration that all the gifts, talents, strengths, goals, dreams, hopes, and desires of two lives are poured into one vessel. That results in a multiplication. Each is doubled.

And contra wise, any weaknesses, cares, concerns, and deficits which are lacking are all poured into that larger sphere, and are now reduced greatly.

**Truth #4: Submission draws us closer as a couple.** A unity candle is often used in weddings to symbolize two becoming one. First, the two outside candles are lit to indicate that the bride and groom were two individual lives, just like the two individual candles.

Then they merge their two individual lights into a single center candle, and once it is lit, they extinguish their individual candles. That is the precious truth that



unifies a couple as they share all of life, or as Peter calls it (1 Peter 3:7) "...being heirs together." NKJV

Husbands and wives are called to be "heirs together." When wives willingly accept submission and the husband's gently give then loving consideration, they are both in submission to Christ, following His example, then they enjoy God's best, His plan for their marriage.

Anything less than that shared and mutual submission leads to a marriage that misses out on God's best, and produces a spiritual life robbed of blessing and growth. "The grace of life" may refer to the opportunity to have children, which are certainly a gift from God (Ps. 127:3); but couples who have no children are still promised spiritual riches if they will obey God's plan. Why not pause and take inventory of your marriage today?

Here are some great questions we can ask ourselves, based on what Peter wrote.

1. Are you partners or competitors in your marriage?
2. Have you settled into the dangerous rut of taking each other for granted?
3. Are you helping each other to grow more spiritual?
4. Are you focused on your partner's external looks and behavior or on their eternal direction?
5. Do you want your partner to become more and more artificial or more and more real?
6. Do you seek every day some way to understand each other better?
7. Are you practicing becoming more sensitive to each other's feelings and ideas?
8. Are you praying as a couple, keeping a ledger of prayer deposits, and watching for God's answers to your prayers?
9. Are you becoming more and more spiritually enriched because of your marriage, or is the way you are treating each other robbing your lives of God's blessing?

Stop and honestly think about your answers to these questions. If you will, and then take some simple actions, little by little your life and marriage will change into what God has designed for us to have!

**Truth #5: Submission liberates us to be what God made us to be.** When we see submission as God designed it to be, we are amazed. It is not a dungeon, but a delight. It is not bondage, but liberty. It is not a bitter pill to swallow, but a lifelong meal prepared for our enjoyment by our Creator: *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work"* (John 4:34, NASB).

Did Jesus just dutifully obey? No, He delighted in obeying His Father. When we truly submit, we shall also delight.

**Truth #6: Submission opens all of our lives to each other.** A godly wife gets to share every part of the life of the one she loves most on earth. That is what Paul said in Ephesians 5:24, NASB: *“Wives ought to be [subject] to their husbands in everything.”* Of course, wives are still first of all believers, so God would never ask them to sin or dishonor Him to fulfill their husband’s wishes (Ac. 5.28-29).

But any wife who loves God, offers herself in every possible way to willingly be her husband’s helper, completer, and companion—one who delights him at all times.

### What Happens When a Wife Submits to Her Husband?

A grace-energized wife will lovingly and respectfully submit to her husband’s direction. Just like the Proverbs 31 woman, she will evidence a servant’s heart toward her life partner. What are some ways that a wife can display a servant’s heart? What are the characteristics of such a woman? Look with me back there in that beautiful description of a grace-energized woman of submission in Proverbs 31.

- A grace-energized woman of submission **draws her husband.** A Grace-energized wife realizes how hard it is for her husband to live and work in the world. Temptations swirl around him all day long. Weariness and discouragement come at him from all sides. So a wise wife decides that home will be a magnet for him—a shining beacon on a hill that beckons her husband to come. It should be the place he would rather be when he is at work and at play.

It should be his place to refocus, be refreshed, and be renewed. She is the guardian of that place. When activities and the urgent overrun this priority, all must be stopped and the home reset to be the place of refuge her husband needs: *“The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain”* (Proverbs 31:11).

- A grace-energized woman of submission **pleases and honors her husband.** What man can ever resist this kind of a woman? She has a lifelong desire to do what pleases him:

*“She does him good and not evil all the days of her life”* (Proverbs 31:12).

She also honors him in her words, attitudes, and actions: *“Let the wife [see] that she respects [her] husband”* (Ephesians 5:33b).

Only the Lord has a higher place for this Grace-energized wife. No house, no job, no child, no ministry can hold her; she wants to please and honor the man God made for her. That is her calling and role given by the Lord himself.

7. A grace-energized woman of submission **blesses her husband**. The Lord said that our words flow from our heart. That means a godly wife, full of the Holy Spirit, would never speak wickedly about her husband or to him. She gives her mouth to God and meditates upon:

*"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness"* (Proverbs 31:26).

*"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers... And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:29, 32).

6. A grace-energized woman of submission **serves her husband**. The Lord designed the men to be out "sweating" to provide, and the women to be inside making his entire world ready for his homecoming. A grace-energized wife directs the house, the children, the schedule, and the meals to all make her husband's life a joy:

*"She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband [also], and he praises her: 'Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all' "* (Proverbs 31:27-29).

The reason the Proverbs 31 woman is so amazing is that her marriage was at the center of all she did. It was her primary ministry!

8. A grace-energized woman of submission **forgives her husband**. Christ's love causes a Grace-energized wife to forgive her husband's failures, weaknesses, and struggles. God's grace allows her to look at him with eyes of love and to think the truth. Love him as Christ loves you is her motto.

*"Love suffers long [and] is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails ..."* (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a).

7. A grace-energized woman of submission **waits for her husband**. Many wives are miles ahead of their husbands and can get so frustrated at their plodding. Don't discourage your husband; don't push him—wait for him.

*"Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Ephesians 4:1b-3).

- A grace-energized woman of submission **trusts her husband**. If you are married, it is God's will. And since it is His will, you need to trust God with the details. The Lord can get your husband to shape up in an infinitely greater way than you ever could. All the Lord asks is this: **"Trust Me with your husband."** So what should you do? Trust your husband as God's man for you—for life!

*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).*

- A grace-energized woman of submission **inspires her husband**. Husbands can't resist godly wives. That is what Peter said. So, maintain a spiritual life full of devotion to God. A dynamic ongoing relationship with Christ is the key to being enabled to lovingly and respectfully submit to your husband's leadership.

*"Wives, likewise, [be] submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct [accompanied] by fear" (1 Peter 3:1-2).*

### Submission is a Divine Calling

Wives, you are called by God to be in submission to your husband—to be his unique and suitable helper. In this section we have seen what that means. But knowing what it means is of little value unless it is applied to your relationship with your husband. Knowing these facts will not promote oneness in marriage. Performing them will. I therefore ask you to examine your relationship to your husband in the light of these truths. Are you *really* practicing submission with a servant's heart? Are you *really* practicing being your husband's helper?

Grace-energized living means our personal, daily application of the spiritual disciplines.

A Grace-energized wife genuinely believes that her primary ministry is her marriage. She willingly moves out in obedience to the Word of God, making any necessary changes the Holy Spirit brings to mind (Phil. 2:12-13; Js. 1:19-24). A Grace-energized marriage is a small snapshot of the delights of heaven—a living portrait of the perfect love of Jesus!

Marriage is God's training ground to prepare husbands and wives for greater service for Christ. Ever changing, each unique personality is used by the Lord as heavenly sandpaper on the other. It is in the nitty-gritty events of daily living that our true character comes out—not the one we present to others, but the real us. Learning how to biblically handle that day-in-day-out give and take is essential if we are to have a successful marriage. I suggest that where you find yourself to be failing, prayerfully consider this checklist:

- **Confess** those failures to one another (James 5:16).
- **Accept** the washing and cleansing that Jesus wants to bring to us through His precious blood, as Revelation 1:5 reminds us.
- **Ask** the Holy Spirit of God for the power to be different (Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

## APPENDIX: Titus Two is Part of God' Plan

Paul puts it best in his epistle to the Thessalonians: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Women who are highly useful to God have these characteristics. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus two woman and the Titus two man.

The whole goal of a Titus two woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

1. Titus two women have in their wake a grateful army of **husbands who feel deeply loved by their wives**. What was the first thing that the Holy Spirit chose to have taught to the young married women believers? LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS. Can you imagine what a deep and lasting impact upon this local body of Christ's church to have men coming home to a wife who is earnestly being taught how to love her own husband. In a world where women are being pressed into the mould of the worldly, self-seeking, independent, do-their-own-thing women. If nothing else, every family at TBC would be enriched if every younger woman was taught in a practical, simple, and personal way how to love their own husband.
2. Titus two women train younger women in one of the hardest and yet most rewarding investments in life—**children who feel deeply loved by their mothers**. The key the Holy Spirit emphasizes very clearly that the key to children is LOVING them. Titus 2 women train, teach, model, and mentor moms into the deepening of love for their children that can be felt. One of the most common complaints of 21<sup>st</sup> century children is that don't feel loved. Most mothers love their children, but many children are not feeling that love. Titus 2 women are coaches that tutor and mentor young moms in ways to show love that can be felt.
3. Titus two women train younger women to be **discreet, sensible, wise in the decisions and choices they make**. What a rich resource for new marriages and families to have a young woman walked through those days side-by-side with a godly, Spirit-filled woman who will regularly, personally, individually mentor, mother, coach, and cheer on younger women in skillfully living as a wife, mother, and woman of God on a day to day basis. A Titus two woman isn't found in a

classroom or lecture hall—they are in the kitchen with a younger woman, in the dining room, in the nursery, at the grocery store. Titus two women are hands on tutors; and they nurture younger women in the laboratory of life--walking through life together praying, sharing, learning, and loving.

4. Titus two women train younger women in the ***holiness and purity that pleases God and unleashes the power of the Spirit***. The training that a Titus two older woman gives is a seven-part package, that is immensely practical not theoretical. Modesty, purity, chaste behavior must be learned, modeled, and practiced. The power of a godly, Spirit-filled woman of Biblical maturity sitting over a cup of tea discussing what pleases God in dress, in behavior, conduct, and so on. Modesty is understood through Bible study that applies God's Word to daily life.
5. Titus two older women teach younger women the ***centrality in God's plan of a woman's priority being her home***. Home making is a learned art and so many women never have the hands on training that is needed. Life is so full, our culture has moved away from homemaking and few young women get mentored in the godly, Biblical art of home making. If the highest calling in the Titus two list is to love husbands, and to love children, and younger women are called to be homemakers then that is exactly what the grace-energized woman, in step with God's Spirit wants to be.
6. Titus two older women teach younger women the ***utter necessity of kindness being the law of her tongue and the flavor of her life***. Since everything will be measured by Christ as whether or not it was done for His good, and for His glory—she learns that means being done in Christ-like goodness and kindness. Her husband, her children, and her friends see a growing kindness that spreads through all her life.
7. Titus two older women teach younger women the ***supreme joy in life and ministry that comes from voluntarily embracing submission as God's plan for our role in the home and church***. Submission to husbands is a learned way of life that godly older women model and train younger women to embrace and display. Since God designed both men and women, husbands and wives for His Divine purposes, the more we follow His plans the more we know Him, His power, blessings, and favor in our lives.

## The Eternal Reward of Grace-Energized Kindness

### EBG: Message Forty-Eight (070902AM)

Can you imagine how liberating it would be to know how to choose the best in life? We live in a complex world of multiplied choices, many of which are good. We have more new information and more new opportunities offered to us each week—than the average 18<sup>th</sup> century person was offered in a lifetime.

Often this leads to an overloaded mind, and overloaded life—and a short-circuited decision making system. We just don't know which opportunity and what activity to choose to spend our time doing. Wouldn't it be incredible to confidently go to work or school and know that you are doing exactly what God wants done? And think of life at home, as you travel, in your free time and everywhere you are—just to know that we are pleasing God by our actions? We can only make one investment of that portion of the river of time that flows by our lives at the speed of 60 minutes-per-hour. We can't get time to use over—but we can redeem time as an investment for God.

Does God offer a plan to help us know what is our best use of time for His Kingdom and His Glory? Yes, and it is simple. Paul explains this way of life in Philippians 3.

Paul learned how to live a simple, singularly-focused life as a believer. He knew why he was here, what he was doing—and he did both with all of his strength. In fact, Paul says in Philippians 3 that he was straining every ounce of his body towards the goal of his life which was Christ-like living.

Paul made the Christian life simple because he simply lived life for Christ. He stated his simple goal in Philippians 3.

*Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; **but one thing I do**, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 **I press toward the goal** for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. NKJV*

Paul confidently could say—

### One Thing I Do

One thing I do.

Have you come to that point?

It's a life of many things—done for one supreme purpose.

Paul was consumed with one goal in life, one purpose for living. He did many things—

- he had a skill in tent-making that he used to earn a living,
- he had a love to travel,
- he had a tremendous communication skill set in both speaking and writing,
- he was a genius in making and staying in touch with friends,
- he loved to sail around the Mediterranean Sea,
- he was somewhat of a power-walker (walking hundreds of miles in walks around the Roman Empire),
- he had social skills that made him able to comfortably move among the highest circles of the wealthy,
- he was very sensitive to the needs and concerns of the poor—and on and on we could go picking out the multi-faceted life of this accomplished person.

But, here in Philippians 3 Paul confesses that everything he did was harnessed to one dominating purpose in his life. One thing connected every other thing.

“Paul had reduced the whole of sanctification to the simple and clear goal of doing “one thing”—pursuing Christlikeness”.<sup>1[1]</sup>

Paul had connected with the very purpose of God in election and predestination. As he had previously stated in Romans 8, he was focused on his reason to even be alive. We like Paul were divinely chosen to be conformed to Christ-likeness. As Paul says to the church at Rome:

*Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined **to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*  
NKJV

Conformity to Christ is Christ-like living.

Christ-like living, as we saw last time, is personal sanctification.

### I Press Toward the Goal

Personal sanctification is a life long ‘pressing towards the goal’ of Christ like behavior. This singular goal can pull together all the rest of the many pieces of life.

We look at everything we must do and weigh each one as to whether or not it contributes to the one great finish line of our life—Christ-conformity!

So what exactly is Christ-like behavior? How do we know where to point our lives, our time, and our energies? Last time we saw in Philippians 2:12-13 we were to work on something in our progressive sanctification.

*Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own***



**salvation** with fear and trembling;<sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. NKJV

Paul said we are to pursue living God's desires for our life. And where would we find that? Paul would say, "That's simple!"

So that there is no confusion of what we should work on, God wrote it down. We have it this morning.

God's Word is God's plan for our life. No matter where you go in this book we find the will of God for us His children. Paul saw his purpose was to obediently yield his life to ever increasing levels of Christ-conformity. He saw life as being more and more conformed to Christ.

*2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image** from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. NKJV*

This morning our quest for personal, progressive sanctification—or living life continually surrendering my life to God's plan, is what's written down in Titus.

Paul left Titus in Crete with a simple assignment—do everything you can to help these new believers become like Christ. Note the purpose Titus had in chapter 1.

*Titus 1:5 **For this reason** I left you in Crete, that you should set in order (also KJV, NASB; NIV 'straighten out') the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—NKJV*

What did Paul want Titus to set in order or straighten out? He was to address the wrong doctrine and practices that were going on in the Cretan church. Now look at chapter 2.

*Titus 2:1 But as for you, **speak** [present active imperative "I command you to keep on speaking"] the things which are proper for **sound doctrine**: NKJV*

The best way to get the whole church headed in the right direction was to get them focused on "healthy" doctrine. The word "sound" is **hugiano** (we get the word hygiene from this word) it means healthy—and Paul uses this word 9 times in the pastoral epistles (5 times in Titus). Paul always emphasized that truth produces spiritual well-being.

The "things" (v. 1) Paul commands to be taught in vv. 2–10 are the doctrinal truths of godly attitudes, Christ-like behavior. "In order not only to please God, but also to have an effective witness to unbelievers, God's people must know the truth that leads to spiritual health."<sup>1</sup>[2]

The plan was that the older believers, who are living the life, train the younger ones in how to do likewise.

Paul then spells out a list of the 24 character qualities, 12 each for godly men and women. We are now in the 11<sup>th</sup> of 12 virtues or godly character qualities God wants in women. This quality in God's 12 part list for women is the quality of being "good" or "kind". Kindness energized by grace is what we are all called to demonstrate.

God's Word portrays in a very clear way exactly how God measures kindness. And that is what we want to open our hearts to as we look into His Word today.

### God Seeks Grace-Energized Kindness

In Titus 2:5 Paul says grace-energized women ought to be characterized by being gentle, tender-hearted, and merciful toward others. As His children, there is nothing we want more than to please Him. And when we think of Heaven, and when we seek to have a crown to cast at Christ's feet—think of living life, doing good works with grace-energized kindness.

God wants older women of the faith who have surrendered to the Spirit of God and have become examples of kindness. Paul asks Titus to train women in the church how to become kind in their personal life, marriage, home life, and in their ministry to others in Christ's Name.

Is there any example to follow? Is there a clear pathway God has laid down for us? If this is what determines my eternal rewards, it is something God must have very clearly explained, right?

Yes, and Paul illustrates exactly what those "good or kind" characteristics look like in I Timothy 5:10 where he said that women of kindness were:

"well reported for **good** works: if she has **brought up children**, if she has **lodged strangers**, if she has **washed the saints' feet**, if she has **relieved the afflicted**, if she has **diligently followed every good work**" NKJV.

Grace-energized women of kindness are the models to follow; and they are the teachers to be revered.

They are the women of God, useful to Him, rewarded by Him!

So these five simple choices should become the daily goal for every woman in Christ's church this morning. Grace-energized women of kindness are:

1. intentionally family first.
2. purposefully hospitality conscious.
3. prayerfully humble servants.

4. compassionately Good Samaritans.
5. energetically devoted to ministry.

This is Christ's list of "Who is valuable for my church". Here is who enriches my church in a strategic way; and that helps my church grow in godliness, grow in ministry, and grow in worship.

Last time we met the first two priorities of these godly women.

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness are Intentionally Family First in Their Priorities**

"well reported for **good** works: if she has **brought up children...**"(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul describes the first grace-energized good work this woman of renown has done is she "brought up children". This means that they church would actually ask: "What kind of mother was she?"

And based on the high calling to be a homemaker in God's plan, the church would find out: "Was her home her priority?"

This reminds a godly woman that part of her assignment God gave her in the home is to watch over both the house and the people within. The meals, the schedule, the clothes, the health, and so much more are done as an offering of worship to the God who called and assigned this highest of duties.

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness are Purposefully Hospitality Conscious for Christ's Church**

"if she has **lodged strangers**"(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her second grace-energized good work as whether she "lodged strangers".

This is another way of asking, "how did she use her home"? When her God-given priority for caring for her children was done, did she offer her home to be opened to ministry to others in an unselfish way? This means, were sacrifices made to serve others through her home for Christ's sake?

Hospitality to strangers is a quality God esteems highly. He made hospitality one of the clear qualifications for elders in Christ's church (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).

God's Word also say hospitality is often one of the marks of spiritual maturity (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:1-2; I Peter 4:9).

So Paul says that older women in the faith are to train the younger women how to use their home in a godly, hospitable way for 'strangers', those not yet connected and nurtured in Christ's church.

### **Grace-Energized Women Prayerfully Invest Their Time in Humble Ministry**

"if she has ***washed the saints' feet***"(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her third grace-energized good work as whether she has "washed the saint's feet".

The New Testament Gospel was spread down the dirty and dusty roads of the ancient world. In those times the care of feet was a daily chore. At the Last Supper Passover Seder (John 13), do you remember how Jesus used this common and menial task to demonstrate the servant-hearted humility He desired to see in all of us?

Paul says that this grace-energized servant of Christ's church will share her humble heart in serving others. This woman is Christ-like because she also came not to be served, but to serve. She is not above humble ministry, she is characterized by it!

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness Compassionately do Selfless and Sacrificial Deeds**

"if she has ***relieved the afflicted***"(I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Paul next describes her fourth grace-energized good work as whether she has "relieved the afflicted".

This grace-energized woman has surrendered her life to be on the lookout for selfless ways to serve others. She knows that Jesus said even a cup of cold water held out to a child in the Name of the Lord will never lose its reward. She has that Good Samaritan heart of reaching out to those stricken with need.

For all the centuries of Christ's church, and in all the cultures of this world, the Spirit of God finds these willing servants and He gives them the strength to spend their life doing selfless deeds of kindness and sacrificial service for others.

### **Grace-Energized Women of Kindness Energetically Devotes Their Life Towards Works that Please God**

"if she has ***diligently followed every good work***" (I Timothy 5:10 NKJV).

Finally Paul tells Timothy these grace-energized women are characterized as one who **has devoted herself to every good work**. The Greek word Paul uses is a very strong verb (***epakolutho*** translated 'has devoted herself to') and it captures the idea that this

widow devoted her life towards the pursuit of good deeds like Dorcas, energetically and diligently.

Since Paul states that this is the kind of woman that should be sought out to be a paid servant of Christ's church, that makes this life-choice the standard that should be recognized and sought out by every woman in Christ's church. Each woman who wants to please God by her life should follow this quality now, so that at the end of her life she will be a sought out as a qualified servant to Christ's church.

These five qualities laid down in God's Word are the plan of God for a godly, useful woman. Any woman that pursues these qualities in her priorities of life will accomplish a profound and eternal impact through the ministry of her life.

Everything we ever lived for that wasn't offered to God the way He desired it done will be incinerated. It isn't just **what** we do—it is also **why** we do it that matters so much to the Lord!

Every deed, every word, every motive, every moment lacking this one quality of goodness or kindness will in an instant be reduced to a puff of smoke and then forever be gone. Because that Judgment Seat of Christ is coming, the Lord asks for five areas of your life to be surrendered to the control of His Spirit.

Grace-energized women of kindness are:

1. —intentionally family first.
2. —purposefully hospitality conscious.
3. —prayerfully humble servants.
4. —compassionately Good Samaritans.
5. —energetically devoted to ministry.

Someday we are going to stand in front of Jesus Christ and watch him open the history files of our lives. Better than any web program God has logged the keystrokes of our lives. Our actual motivations, our genuine intentions, our literal thoughts will all be exposed as the frames around each action. There at last will be exposed the complete picture of God's servants. And everything done for Jesus that was done in grace-energized kindness will last forever.

### Appendix One:

**Grace-energized Women have the 'law of kindness' on their tongues.**

One final word about how vital this quality must be to God. We can conclude from God's Word that when the love of God is not in a woman's heart, the law of kindness is absent from her lips.

This means that grace-energized women of kindness must *speak* well of people, even their enemies. As Jesus said, '*Bless them that curse you*'. "When we speak to them, we must answer their revilings with courteous and friendly words, and *not render railing for*

*railing*; behind their backs we must commend that in them which is commendable, and when we have said all the good we can of them, not be forward to say any thing more. See 1 Pt. 3:9. They, in whose tongues is *the law of kindness*, can give good words to those who give bad words to them.”<sup>1[3]</sup>

The words of a grace-energized woman of kindness must be guided by this law of kindness, as well as truth and justice. Remember how Solomon made this a necessary part of the character of the virtuous woman, *that she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness* (Prov. 31:26). This quality is imperative and must be a part of the character of every true Christian. Consider what James said so strongly (James 4:11) ‘*Speak not evil one of another*’.

*“Since Christians are brethren, they should not defile nor defame one another. It is required of us that we be tender of the good name of our brethren; where we cannot speak well, we had better say nothing than speak evil; we must not take pleasure in making known the faults of others, divulging things that are secret, merely to expose them, nor in making more of their known faults than really they deserve, and, least of all, in making false stories, and spreading things concerning them of which they are altogether innocent.”*<sup>1[4]</sup>

As Jesus reminds us, it is ‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh’ (Matthew 12:34). A grace-energized woman has a heart full of love and opens her mouth with wisdom, and in her lips there is that law of kindness. But if her heart is full of prejudice, anger, suspicion, or any unkind temper, she will surely open her mouth “in a manner corresponding with the disposition of her mind. And hence will arise, if not lying and slandering, (which yet will hardly be avoided,) bitter words, tale bearing, backbiting, and evil-speaking of every kind”.<sup>1[5]</sup>

**To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men [Titus 3:2].**

“Speak evil of no man” means we are to malign no one, and we are not to repeat gossip. It has been said that you can’t *believe* everything you hear today, but you can *repeat* it! That is what he is talking about here—we are *not* to repeat what we hear. Many evil reports are passed from person to person without even a shred of evidence that the report is true. Another old saying is that some people will believe anything if it is *whispered* to them!<sup>1[6]</sup>

**Appendix Two: Grace-Energized Women Meditate Upon Jesus And The Fruit Of The Spirit Gal. 5:22-23**

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting His mind, through the Word, dominate everything that is thought and done. Being filled with the Spirit is the same as walking LIKE Jesus did on earth!

Fullness of the Spirit is first described as a change in our Personal Relationship with God. The Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way

in each of these areas.

**First, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Personal Relationship with God.**

1. LOVE is the absence of selfishness.
2. JOY is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances.
3. PEACE is the internal serenity that only God can give. Troubles are not absent. Rather, God is present!

**Secondly, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Public Walk with Others.**

4. PATIENCE is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. Patience is also one of the supreme attributes of God. It is His character that is revealed as being gracious and longsuffering. This is patience—the ability to endure injuries inflicted by others and the willingness to accept irritating or painful situations. If I am not increasing in patience, is it because I am not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit?
5. KINDNESS is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives. It is the absence of an abrasive manner in my dealings with people. Kindness will soften any word or act that might hurt another. God's Spirit gives us a tender concern for others, that is reflected in our desire to treat others gently, just as the Lord treats us as believers (Matt. 11:28, 29; 19:13, 14; 2 Tim. 2:24). Kindness becomes a beautiful reflection of God through our every day lives when we choose to avoid any abrasive words or deeds in our dealings with people. Grace-energized kindness grows as we choose to live out Ephesians 2:8 and 4:32 in self-sacrifice and love—even toward the unlovely and undeserving. Grace-energized kindness softens our words or actions so they don't hurt others.
6. GOODNESS is being Godlike! Do people see me in active kindness, exemplifying goodness (6:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:11), living in faithfulness, showing loyalty and trustworthiness (Lam. 3:22; Phil. 2:7–9; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; Rev. 2:10)?

**Finally, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Private Life with our Self.**

7. FAITHFULNESS is the idea here. A trustworthy and dependable life. The kind of person that keeps their own life in order so that you can count on them. Like Psalm 15 describes, this type of person always keeps his word. Faithfulness is the same as loyalty and trustworthiness.

8. MEEKNESS is the opposite of asserting ourselves. It is a humble and gentle attitude that is patiently submissive in every offense, while having no desire for revenge or retribution. In the NT, it is used to describe 3 attitudes: submission to the will of God (Col. 3:12), teachability (James 1:21), and consideration of others (Eph. 4:2). The Lord said the meek are the ultimate winners. Those who are servants of the Lord must not strive. They must resist selfish ambition because that is a reflection of Satan, not God.
9. Discipline refers to restraining passions and appetites and is defined by the Greek dictionary as “a virtue, which consists in mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones.” The only force that can control our flesh is the Holy Spirit. When yielded to the Spirit, we become vessels that are worshipful sacrifices to Him, and no longer to self. Self cannot control self; flesh is not able to harness flesh. Only the Spirit can discipline us.

When God’s Spirit is at the helm, there is a remarkable change in our homes, churches, and lives. We see that as believers we are in the same family—God is our Father. We are headed toward a common goal—heaven. We serve a common Master—Jesus. We follow the same Guide—His Word. And share the same passion—Christ, who gets all the glory.

Prayer Example: Dear Lord, I pray that You will make Colossians 3:12-17 a reality in my family’s lives! Help us to put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering. Enable us to be bearing with one another, and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, even as You have forgiven us, so help us to forgive others. And above all these things, help us to put on love, which is the bond of perfection. May Your peace rule in our hearts and home. May we always be thankful in all circumstances because Your Word dwells in us richly in all wisdom! Enable us to be teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to You, oh Lord. And whatever we do in word or deed, may it be done all in Your name, giving thanks to God the Father through You!



## What is Grace-Energized Submission?

### EBG: Message Forty-Nine (070909AM)

Jesus reduced life to one simple goal—seeking God’s rule over each day of my life. Do you remember Christ’s simple yet powerful words? Please open there with me:

*Matthew 6:33 “But seek **first** the **kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. NKJV*

Ever since the Garden of Eden, and mankind’s fall into sin—we humans have wanted our own way. Submission in Biblical terms is when we submit to wanting God’s way.

When sin entered the world, the woman desired to rule over the man; the man desired to rule over the woman, and both departed from their God-ordained roles in life. The fall has impacted every part of life, including marriage--as husbands and wives compete for first place.

Now, instead of being the Christ-like leader of his home, as the biblical head over his wife, the typical man has become either dominant and forceful—or passive and uncaring; in reaction, the typical woman has either resisted his control or had to become the leader she was never designed by God to be. And that whole distortion began way back in the Garden!

Biblical submission in marriage can only be understood and practiced when seen in the wider context of God’s plan. First and before all other commands--God commands each of us that we first submit to Him (James 4.7). We surrender to God and seek first His rule over our lives on a daily basis (Mt. 6:33).

Then, after submission to Him, God also commands that we each submit to others He has established in His Divine plan:

- Congregations are to submit to their elders (Heb. 13:17);
- Citizens are to submit to their rulers (I Peter 2:13);
- Younger believers are to submit to older (mature) believers (I Peter 5:5; Titus 2), and so on. Because:

### Mutual Submission is Part of God’s Plan

The whole “Spirit-filled” life is described in Ephesians 5:1-20. Do you remember how it culminates with the great imperative of Ephesians 5:18?

*Ephesians 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; **but be filled with the Spirit**, NKJV*

And then, what comes next? God applies this Spirit-filled walk with an explanation how the Holy Spirit graciously fills our hearts with a submission that overflows into every aspect of life.

That means that our topic this morning—grace-energized submission for wives fits as just one piece of a much larger plan.

The clearest statement of submission for a wife comes in the middle of this much larger teaching about Spirit-prompted submission. If you trace the word and concept of submission in **Ephesians 5:21-6:9**, it is actually stated or implied seven times. Let's turn there and note these truths.

It is, in other words, a complete (as in the meaning of number 7) guide to the work of God's Spirit empowering us to be like Jesus. Here is the larger context of a wife's submission:

- We all are to submit to each other (5:21).
- Wives are to submit to their husbands (5:22).
- Husbands are to submit to the picture of Christ and the church (5:23-33).
- Children are to obey (submit to) their parents (6:1-4).
- Bondservants are to submit to their masters, as in an employee-to-employer relationship today (6:5-8).
- Masters (business owners and managers of today) are to submit to their heavenly Master (6:9a).
- Everyone is to submit to their Master in heaven (6:9b).

### Wives Energized By God Will Submit to Their Husbands

God's final lesson for younger women in the church is submission as we see in Titus 2. Unfortunately, the KJV and NJKV obscure the complete message Paul gave to Titus.

*Titus 2:5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, **obedient to their own husbands**, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. NKJV*

Listen to how the NIV and NASB render this word correctly, as it is translated everywhere else it shows up in the New Testament:

*Titus 2:5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, **and to be subject to their husbands**, so that no one will malign the word of God. NIV*

*Titus 2:5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, **being subject to their own husbands**, that the word of God may not be dishonored. NASB*

God's Spirit led Paul to use a word (***hupotassumenas***) translated "be subject to" because it does not mean 'obey'. God does not say wives (like He does to children) "obey your husbands". Rather it means that a grace-energized woman accepts the

relationship of marriage that God has designed, and willingly subjects herself to God's order for her marriage, because:

### **Submission is Biblical**

No teaching of Christ's church is more disliked within and without than this doctrine. However, God blesses those who honor what He values. Biblical submission is vital for godly living.

Biblical submission is only understood in context of all that God has said. Submission is not just for women, nor just for wives—it is commanded at every level among all believers. Submission is an attitude of humbly living out what God has called us to be and to do. Among believers submission is always a two-way subjection and never one-way.

God has established roles for the church and the home. Men are to fulfill the place of the leader as fathers and husbands. When a wife willingly follows her husband she is acknowledging to God her husband's role as planned and directed by God's Word.

In the church, the husband to whom v.2 was written was to have repented of any behavior that would be seen as impatient, unfaithful, unloving, or tyrannical. The wife has already been instructed that God expects her to never be rebellious, undermining her husband's authority or contradicting his leadership. This grace-energized submission is part of spiritual maturity.

This grace-energized wife fulfills the responsibilities in her marriage and home that God gave her, in God's power, for God's glory—and only in God's gracious power. This submission described in God's Word never means or implies any inferiority (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18; I Peter 3:1, 5), because:

### **Submission is Mutual**

God designed marriage so that husbands and wives see their roles in the context of a spiritual partnership, godly love, and a Biblical covenant. In God's plan husbands are not to make every decision in the marriage, nor does the role as leader make every decision a correct one.

Thus in mutual submission a husband should always consider his wife's opinion or he is foolish. Paul wrote to husbands in Eph. 5:26, and described a leadership that involved sacrificial love for the ones being led. A husband who misuses his role as leader is just as sinful as a wife who refuses to follow.

Believers who consider marriage should always come to an understanding of the implications of Biblical submission for their lives together. It is impossible for a man and woman to marry and remain independent. There are some decisions that a couple will eventually face that no matter how long they discuss them—they will not agree. It is at

that point that the godly wife submits to her husband's role—and he leads as best he can with his understanding of God's will.

This means that a godly woman must come to the place of practical submission as revealed by the following questions. You may wish to answer these silently in your mind if you are married to see how you are doing in the realm of Biblical submission as a husband and wife. Biblical submission means a positive response should be made by both husbands and wives on these two questions.

- Husband: Am I ready to answer to the Lord for the decisions I make in which I have overruled my wife's opinions and gone forward with what I thought best in the situation?
- Wife: Can I voluntarily submit to my husband's decision after I have shared my heart, and yet we still differ on this decision?

When both marriage partners are believers and want to honor the Lord, submission is not a problem.

- Biblical husbands energized by grace are servant-leaders who lead and serve in Christ's love as we see in John 13:1-7 as Jesus washed His disciples' feet.
- Biblical wives are energized by grace to submit and resist fearing or despising their husbands as they lead by loving servanthood. Paul describes this amazing partnership in I Cor. 7:1-40 and Eph. 5:22-33.

But why is this grace-energized submission so important? Because Paul said when grace-energized submission or any of the other six elements of Titus 2:4-5 are lacking God is not glorified and His Word is discredited. Look back at those words that conclude v. 5.

*Titus 2:5 ...that the **word of God may not be blasphemed.** NKJV*

As we live out our marriages and personal lives before a watching world we either point them to an Awesome God or we give them ammunition to use against us and God.

When we don't live the way God asks us to live we are denying not only God's Word but also Him who gave us His Word to live for the glory of our Redeemer and Savior who died to purchase us.

For the world to be convinced that God can save them from sin they need to see people who live holy lives. God is mocked when we do not live what His Word commands us to live (Mat. 5:16; I Pet. 2:9).

The idea of wifely submission is therefore not a very popular topic in our day. Some resistance to submission is simply sinful rebellion against the will of God; but sometimes it reflects a wrong understanding of what the biblical wife's submission really involves.

Therefore, to clarify a wife's role in biblical submission, we need to correct common misconceptions, and then discuss what Scripture really says about submission.

### What Biblical Submission Is *Not*

God says, in the second chapter of Genesis, “[*It is*] *not good for man to be alone: I will make a help meet **for** him*” (Genesis 2:18, KJV). The key word in that verse is the word “for.” God made the woman for Adam—to complete him by adding a quality of life that previously did not exist.

Eve was a precious gift to Adam—to fulfill him as a person. And the Lord said that this was “very good.” (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:23), and Galatians 3:28 all assert the spiritual, mental, and physical equalitarian status and dignity of women and men. However, in spite of this, there are still five common misconceptions about submission:

- **Misconception #1: Submission is only for women.** Actually, we are all commanded to submit to one another in Christ's body. So this is a universal responsibility, not merely for wives. (Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:3-4; I Pet. 5:5; Rom. 13:1; Heb. 13:17)
- **Misconception #2: Submission is bondage.** Wrong. Jesus said that submission to obey what God has commanded is actually a tremendous picture of love. (Jn. 14:21)
- **Misconception #3: Submission means muting.** Never. The Scriptures which describe godly wives never state or imply that she may not speak. Rather, she is to become the treasured confidant, advisor, and completer for her man who stands in front protecting her—not silencing her. (Pr. 31:26; Ac. 18:26; Judges 13:21-23)
- **Misconception #4: Submission means invisibility.** Actually, a submissive wife opens the doors to endless opportunities because by obedience she frees God to give all that He in His plan wants to give to her. It is rebellion which hides anyone's true potential for God. (Proverbs 31 woman)
- **Misconception #5: Submission means inferiority.** God has ordained gender-specific roles for men and women within the church and home. The Scriptures never imply that a woman is anything less than equal with a man. In history many women have excelled men in many areas. But to excel with God, submission equals obedience to a God-given role. Jesus said, “*I can do nothing on my own initiative, as I hear I judge; ... I do not seek my own will but the will of Him who sent me*” (John 5:30, NASB).

So, if those are the errors, what is the truth?

### When Energized by Grace—We Obey

A wife's proper relationship to her husband is as a lovely act of worship of Christ in our heavenly Father's eyes. Submission “as to the Lord” provides daily opportunities for the wife to show the Lord's “worth ship” through service to her husband. The Lord has prescribed for women, wives, and mothers, a gender-specific role within three realms:

the church, the marriage, and the family. This wonderful act of worship is reflected in the following truths:

**Truth #1: Submission is a choice.** Believing wives are asked by God to submit as an obedient response to God. God never *makes* us obey—He *asks* us to obey. Husbands are not commanded to demand submission, but to win it by love (Eph. 5:22; 1 Pet. 3:1).

The Holy Spirit applies submission for a godly woman by the structure of Scripture. Submission was inspired as a present tense (that means “ongoing”) imperative (that means “non-optional”). So submission is a not a choice of whether to obey or disobey a husband, *but a choice to obey or disobey the Lord.*

**Truth #2: Submission is unto the Lord.** Submission is really between a woman and her Lord God Almighty. It is a choice to do what He says, whether it is agreeable, understandable, or even possible.

It is also only presented in a positive way (what she should do), and never negatively (what she should not do). It is “as to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22). The same One who said, “*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*” (John 14:15, NASB) goes on to say, “[*Be subject*] to your own husbands ...” (Ephesians 5:22).

**Truth #3: Submission multiplies the blessings of our marriage.** When Genesis 2:24 says that two become one, this merging is a public declaration that all the gifts, talents, strengths, goals, dreams, hopes, and desires of two lives are poured into one vessel. That results in a multiplication. Each is doubled.

And contra wise, any weaknesses, cares, concerns, and deficits which are lacking are all poured into that larger sphere, and are now reduced greatly.

**Truth #4: Submission draws us closer as a couple.** A unity candle is often used in weddings to symbolize two becoming one. First, the two outside candles are lit to indicate that the bride and groom were two individual lives, just like the two individual candles.

Then they merge their two individual lights into a single center candle, and once it is lit, they extinguish their individual candles. That is the precious truth that unifies a couple as they share all of life.

**Truth #5: Submission liberates us to be what God made us to be.** When we see submission as God designed it to be, we are amazed. It is not a dungeon, but a delight. It is not bondage, but liberty. It is not a bitter pill to swallow, but a lifelong meal prepared for our enjoyment by our Creator: “*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work*” (John 4:34, NASB).

Did Jesus just dutifully obey? No, He delighted in obeying His Father. When we truly submit, we shall also delight.

**Truth #6: Submission opens all of our lives to each other.** A godly wife gets to share every part of the life of the one she loves most on earth. That is what Paul said in Ephesians 5:24, NASB: “*Wives ought to be [subject] to their husbands in everything.*” Of course, wives are still first of all believers, so God would never ask them to sin or dishonor Him to fulfill their husband’s wishes (Ac. 5.28-29).

But any wife who loves God, offers herself in every possible way to willingly be her husband’s helper, completer, and companion—one who delights him at all times.

### **What Happens When a Wife Submits to Her Husband?**

A grace-energized wife will lovingly and respectfully submit to her husband’s direction. Just like the Proverbs 31 woman, she will evidence a servant’s heart toward her life partner. What are some ways that a wife can display a servant’s heart? What are the characteristics of such a woman?

2. **A grace-energized woman of submission draws her husband.** A Grace-energized wife realizes how hard it is for her husband to live and work in the world. Temptations swirl around him all day long. Weariness and discouragement come at him from all sides. So a wise wife decides that home will be a magnet for him—a shining beacon on a hill that beckons her husband to come. It should be the place he would rather be when he is at work and at play.

It should be his place to refocus, be refreshed, and be renewed. She is the guardian of that place. When activities and the urgent overrun this priority, all must be stopped and the home reset to be the place of refuge her husband needs: “*The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain*” (Proverbs 31:11).

3. **A grace-energized woman of submission pleases and honors her husband.** What man can ever resist this kind of a woman? She has a lifelong desire to do what pleases him: “*She does him good and not evil all the days of her life*” (Proverbs 31:12). She also honors him in her words, attitudes, and actions: “*Let the wife [see] that she respects [her] husband*” (Ephesians 5:33b).

Only the Lord has a higher place for this Grace-energized wife. No house, no job, no child, no ministry can hold her; she wants to please and honor the man God made for her. That is her calling and role given by the Lord himself.

4. **A grace-energized woman of submission serves her husband.** The Lord designed the men to be out “sweating” to provide, and the women to be inside

making his entire world ready for his homecoming. A grace-energized wife directs the house, the children, the schedule, and the meals to all make her husband's life a joy:

*"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue [is] the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband [also], and he praises her: 'Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all' " (Proverbs 31:26-29).*

The reason the Proverbs 31 woman is so amazing is that her marriage was at the center of all she did. It was her primary ministry!

5. **A grace-energized woman of submission blesses her husband.** The Lord said that our words flow from our heart. That means a godly wife, full of the Holy Spirit, would never speak wickedly about her husband or to him. She gives her mouth to God and meditates upon:

*"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26).*

*"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers... And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:29, 32).*

6. **A grace-energized woman of submission trusts her husband.** If you are married, it is God's will. And since it is His will, you need to trust God with the details. The Lord can get your husband to shape up in an infinitely greater way than you ever could. All the Lord asks is this: **"Trust Me with your husband."** So what should you do? Trust your husband as God's man for you—for life!

*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).*

7. **A grace-energized woman of submission waits for her husband.** Many wives are miles ahead of their husbands and can get so frustrated at their plodding. Don't discourage your husband; don't push him—wait for him.

*"Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1b-3).*



8. **A grace-energized woman of submission challenges her husband.**

Husbands can't resist godly wives. That is what Peter said. So, maintain a spiritual life full of devotion to God. A dynamic ongoing relationship with Christ is the key to being enabled to lovingly and respectfully submit to your husband's leadership.

*"Wives, likewise, [be] submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct [accompanied] by fear" (1 Peter 3:1-2).*

9. **A grace-energized woman of submission forgives her husband.** Christ's love causes a Grace-energized wife to forgive her husband's failures, weaknesses, and struggles. God's grace allows her to look at him with eyes of love and to think the truth. Love him as Christ loves you is her motto.

*"Love suffers long [and] is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a).*

### Submission is a Divine Calling

Wives, you are called by God to be in submission to your husband—to be his unique and suitable helper. In this section we have seen what that means. But knowing what it means is of little value unless it is applied to your relationship with your husband. Knowing these facts will not promote oneness in marriage. Performing them will. I therefore ask you to examine your relationship to your husband in the light of these truths. Are you *really* practicing submission with a servant's heart? Are you *really* practicing being your husband's helper?

Marriage is God's training ground to prepare husbands and wives for greater service for Christ. Ever changing, each unique personality is used by the Lord as heavenly sandpaper on the other. It is in the nitty-gritty events of daily living that our true character comes out—not the one we present to others, but the real us.

Learning how to biblically handle that day-in-day-out give and take is essential if we are to have a successful marriage. I suggest that where you find yourself to be failing, prayerfully consider this checklist:

- Confess those failures to one another (James 5:16).
- Accept the washing and cleansing that Jesus wants to bring to us through His precious blood, as Revelation 1:5 reminds us.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for power to be different (Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

A Grace-energized wife genuinely believes that her primary ministry is her marriage. She willingly moves out in obedience to the Word of God, making any necessary changes the Holy Spirit brings to mind (Phil. 2:12-13; Js. 1:19-24). A Grace-energized marriage is a small snapshot of the delights of heaven—a living portrait of the perfect love of Jesus!

## What is Grace-Energized Submission? Part II

### EBG: Message Fifty (070916AM)

When God looks down upon us humans who live on Earth He only sees two kinds of hearts: saved hearts and lost hearts. God's Word classifies everyone as either: having Christ or not. Listen to John:

*1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. NKJV*

There are several types of behavior that distinguish between God's people (the saved) and Satan's people (the lost), but none is more clearly contrasted than: submission to authority (the saved) and a casting off of authority (the lost).

As we turn a couple of short books towards the end, in Jude v.8 God reveals that key characteristics of Satan's realm. God tells us that Satan's team "rejects authority" (NKJV/NAS/NIV). That is just another way of saying—resisting submission.

*Jude 8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority (NAS/NIV), and speak evil of dignitaries. NKJV*

These are two interesting words "reject" (***atheteo*** means "despise, reject, cast off") and "authority" (***kuriotes*** means "Lordship or dominion"). So at the deepest level, lost people cast off or reject, or even despise the Lordship or rule, or dominion of Christ.

In fact, when Paul is guided to record the decline and fall of the human race in Romans 1, one of the clearest elements is seen in humanity's constant desire to cast off all restraint (again resisting submission to any authority other than self).

We could simply summarize God's Word by saying that God's people are submissive and Satan's people aren't.

Since we were born, as Isaiah 53:6 says, wanting our own way—only a second birth can change that.

*Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. NKJV*

Remember that Jesus reduced life to one simple goal—seeking God's rule over each day of my life. Christ's simple yet powerful words:

*Matthew 6:33 "But seek **first the kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. NKJV*

But when we submit to God we begin to trust in Him with all our being, we stop leaning on finding our own way, our lives start reflecting God—and He directs our steps.

*Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. NKJV*

That is the ultimate life: empowered by God, to follow God as our Guide through life. It all starts with submission and that is exactly where we begin our study. Paul is explaining to Titus that

### **Wives Energized By God Will Submit to Their Husbands**

This comes in God's final lesson for younger women in the church, which is a lifestyle and attitude of Biblical submission. That is our lesson to learn in Titus 2:5.

As we saw last time, both the NIV and NASB render this word correctly, as it is translated everywhere else it shows up in the New Testament:

*Titus 2:5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, **being subject to their own husbands**, that the word of God may not be dishonored. NASB*

God's Spirit led Paul to use a word (*hupotassumenas*) translated "be subject to" which means that a grace-energized woman accepts the relationship of marriage that God has designed, and willingly subjects herself to God's order for her marriage.

But why is this grace-energized submission so important? Because Paul said when grace-energized submission or any of the other six elements of Titus 2:4-5 are lacking God is not glorified and His Word is discredited. Look back at those words that conclude v. 5.

*Titus 2:5 that the **word of God may not be blasphemed**. NKJV*

Submission in Biblical terms is when we submit to wanting God's way.

Biblical submission in marriage can only be understood and practiced when seen in the wider context of God's plan. We want to go God's way and not our own (Isaiah 53:6); then we trust His way not ours (Pr. 3:5-6); and we surrender daily to God and seek first His rule over our lives (Mt. 6:33). That is the grace-energized life of submission for all believers. But specifically, what happens when wives do not heed God's call? They begin to exhibit what I like to call the:

### **Danger Signs of Women Not Energized by Grace**

Grace-energized lives submit to God's Word—if not, what will happen? Without a commitment to faithfully follow Christ's Word, wives can end up with one or several of the following five common *1[1]* regrets:

- **Without the grace-energized foundation of God's Word, she will become an irresponsible wife.** This wife is nothing but a little girl in search of a daddy, and she seems to have found one in her husband. She is thoroughly self-centered, but manages to appear to others as a loving and devoted wife.
- **Without the grace-energized power of God's Word, she will become an emotionally-detached wife.** This woman may be recognized as one of the most stable and even-tempered women in her community. She is frequently asked to serve on the boards of numerous ministries because of her organized mind and methodical way of making decisions. However, in her home, she is about as detached and emotionally unavailable as a woman can be.
- **Without grace-energized obedience to God's Word, she will become a dictatorial wife.** This woman's idea of wifehood means that nothing happens without her approval. When her husband dares to question her decisions, she resorts to manipulation or intimidating tactics and, if that doesn't work, goes into a blind rage.
- **Without the grace-energized pattern of God's Word, she will become a workaholic wife.** This woman never quits working mentally or emotionally. She lives under pressure, and sprays her family with her frustrations.
- **Without the grace-energized nurture of God's Word, she will become a spiritually- apathetic wife.** This woman is a believer and church attendee. But beyond that, she's generally unresponsive to spiritual matters; she therefore never exercises a sound spiritual testimony in her home. And that void blocks the relationship a godly husband longs to have.

The idea of wifely submission is therefore not a very popular topic in our day. Some resistance to submission is simply sinful rebellion against the will of God; but sometimes it reflects a wrong understanding of what the biblical wife's submission really involves. Therefore, to clarify a wife's role in biblical submission, we need to correct common misconceptions, and then discuss what Scripture really says about submission.

### **What Biblical Submission Is *Not***

Eve was a precious gift to Adam—to fulfill him as a person. And the Lord said that this was “very good.” (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:23), and Galatians 3:28 all assert the spiritual, mental, and physical equalitarian status and dignity of women and men. However, in spite of this, there are still five common misconceptions about submission:

6. **Misconception #1: Submission is only for women.**
7. **Misconception #2: Submission is bondage.**
8. **Misconception #3: Submission means muting.**
9. **Misconception #4: Submission means invisibility.**
10. **Misconception #5: Submission means inferiority. G**

So, if those are the errors, what is the truth?

### When Energized by Grace—We Obey

A wife's proper relationship to her husband is as a lovely act of worship of Christ in our heavenly Father's eyes. Submission "as to the Lord" provides daily opportunities for the wife to show the Lord's "worth ship" through service to her husband. The Lord has prescribed for women, wives, and mothers, a gender-specific role within three realms: the church, the marriage, and the family. This wonderful act of worship is reflected in the following truths in Ephesians 5:22:

**Truth #1: Submission is a choice.** Believing wives are asked by God to submit as an obedient response to God. God never *makes* us obey—He *asks* us to obey. Husbands are not commanded to demand submission, but to win it by love (Eph. 5:22; 1 Pet. 3.1).

The Holy Spirit applies submission for a godly woman by the structure of Scripture. Submission was inspired as a present tense (that means "ongoing") imperative (that means "non-optional"). So submission is not a choice of whether to obey or disobey a husband, *but a choice to obey or disobey the Lord.*

**Truth #2: Submission is unto the Lord.** Submission is really between a woman and her Lord God Almighty. It is a choice to do what He says, whether it is agreeable, understandable, or even possible.

It is also only presented in a positive way (what she should do), and never negatively (what she should not do). It is "as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). The same One who said, "*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*" (John 14:15, NASB) goes on to say, "*[Be subject] to your own husbands ...*" (Ephesians 5:22).

**Truth #3: Submission multiplies the blessings of our marriage.** When Genesis 2:24 says that two become one, this merging is a public declaration that all the gifts, talents, strengths, goals, dreams, hopes, and desires of two lives are poured into one vessel. That results in a multiplication. Each is doubled.

And contra wise, any weaknesses, cares, concerns, and deficits which are lacking are all poured into that larger sphere, and are now reduced greatly.

**Truth #4: Submission draws us closer as a couple.** A unity candle is often used in weddings to symbolize two becoming one. First, the two outside candles are lit to indicate that the bride and groom were two individual lives, just like the two individual candles.

Then they merge their two individual lights into a single center candle, and once it is lit, they extinguish their individual candles. That is the precious truth that unifies a couple as they share all of life, or as Peter calls it (1 Peter 3:7) "...being heirs together." NKJV

Husbands and wives are called to be "heirs together." When wives willingly accept submission and the husband's gently give then loving consideration, they are both in submission to Christ, following His example, then they enjoy God's best, His plan for their marriage.

Anything less than that shared and mutual submission leads to a marriage that misses out on God's best, and produces a spiritual life robbed of blessing and growth. "The grace of life" may refer to the opportunity to have children, which are certainly a gift from God (Ps. 127:3); but couples who have no children are still promised spiritual riches if they will obey God's plan. Why not pause and take inventory of your marriage today?

Here are some great questions we can ask ourselves, based on what Peter wrote.

Are you partners or competitors in your marriage?  
 Have you settled into the dangerous rut of taking each other for granted?  
 Are you helping each other to grow more spiritual?  
 Are you focused on your partner's external looks and behavior or on their eternal direction?  
 Do you want your partner to become more and more artificial or more and more real?  
 Do you seek every day some way to understand each other better?  
 Are you practicing becoming more sensitive to each other's feelings and ideas?  
 Are you praying as a couple, keeping a ledger of prayer deposits, and watching for God's answers to your prayers?  
 Are you becoming more and more spiritually enriched because of your marriage, or is the way you are treating each other robbing your lives of God's blessing?

Stop and honestly think about your answers to these questions. If you will, and then take some simple actions, little by little your life and marriage will change into what God has designed for us to have!

**Truth #5: Submission liberates us to be what God made us to be.** When we see submission as God designed it to be, we are amazed. It is not a dungeon, but a delight. It is not bondage, but liberty. It is not a bitter pill to swallow, but a lifelong meal prepared for our enjoyment by our Creator: *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work"* (John 4:34, NASB).

Did Jesus just dutifully obey? No, He delighted in obeying His Father. When we truly submit, we shall also delight.

**Truth #6: Submission opens all of our lives to each other.** A godly wife gets to share every part of the life of the one she loves most on earth. That is what Paul said in Ephesians 5:24, NASB: *“Wives ought to be [subject] to their husbands in everything.”* Of course, wives are still first of all believers, so God would never ask them to sin or dishonor Him to fulfill their husband’s wishes (Ac. 5.28-29).

But any wife who loves God, offers herself in every possible way to willingly be her husband’s helper, completer, and companion—one who delights him at all times.

### What Happens When a Wife Submits to Her Husband?

A grace-energized wife will lovingly and respectfully submit to her husband’s direction. Just like the Proverbs 31 woman, she will evidence a servant’s heart toward her life partner. What are some ways that a wife can display a servant’s heart? What are the characteristics of such a woman? Look with me back there in that beautiful description of a grace-energized woman of submission in Proverbs 31.

- A grace-energized woman of submission **draws her husband.** A Grace-energized wife realizes how hard it is for her husband to live and work in the world. Temptations swirl around him all day long. Weariness and discouragement come at him from all sides. So a wise wife decides that home will be a magnet for him—a shining beacon on a hill that beckons her husband to come. It should be the place he would rather be when he is at work and at play.

It should be his place to refocus, be refreshed, and be renewed. She is the guardian of that place. When activities and the urgent overrun this priority, all must be stopped and the home reset to be the place of refuge her husband needs: *“The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain”* (Proverbs 31:11).

- A grace-energized woman of submission **pleases and honors her husband.** What man can ever resist this kind of a woman? She has a lifelong desire to do what pleases him:

*“She does him good and not evil all the days of her life”* (Proverbs 31:12).

She also honors him in her words, attitudes, and actions: *“Let the wife [see] that she respects [her] husband”* (Ephesians 5:33b).

Only the Lord has a higher place for this Grace-energized wife. No house, no job, no child, no ministry can hold her; she wants to please and honor the man God made for her. That is her calling and role given by the Lord himself.



8. A grace-energized woman of submission **blesses her husband**. The Lord said that our words flow from our heart. That means a godly wife, full of the Holy Spirit, would never speak wickedly about her husband or to him. She gives her mouth to God and meditates upon:

*"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness"* (Proverbs 31:26).

*"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers... And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:29, 32).

7. A grace-energized woman of submission **serves her husband**. The Lord designed the men to be out "sweating" to provide, and the women to be inside making his entire world ready for his homecoming. A grace-energized wife directs the house, the children, the schedule, and the meals to all make her husband's life a joy:

*"She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband [also], and he praises her: 'Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all' "* (Proverbs 31:27-29).

The reason the Proverbs 31 woman is so amazing is that her marriage was at the center of all she did. It was her primary ministry!

8. A grace-energized woman of submission forgives her husband. Christ's love causes a Grace-energized wife to forgive her husband's failures, weaknesses, and struggles. God's grace allows her to look at him with eyes of love and to think the truth. Love him as Christ loves you is her motto.

*"Love suffers long [and] is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails ..."* (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a).

9. A grace-energized woman of submission waits for her husband. Many wives are miles ahead of their husbands and can get so frustrated at their plodding. Don't discourage your husband; don't push him—wait for him.

*"Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Ephesians 4:1b-3).

- A grace-energized woman of submission **trusts her husband**. If you are married, it is God's will. And since it is His will, you need to trust God with the details. The Lord can get your husband to shape up in an infinitely greater way than you ever could. All the Lord asks is this: **"Trust Me with your husband."** So what should you do? Trust your husband as God's man for you—for life!

*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).*

- A grace-energized woman of submission **inspires her husband**. Husbands can't resist godly wives. That is what Peter said. So, maintain a spiritual life full of devotion to God. A dynamic ongoing relationship with Christ is the key to being enabled to lovingly and respectfully submit to your husband's leadership.

*"Wives, likewise, [be] submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct [accompanied] by fear" (1 Peter 3:1-2).*

### Submission is a Divine Calling

Wives, you are called by God to be in submission to your husband—to be his unique and suitable helper. In this section we have seen what that means. But knowing what it means is of little value unless it is applied to your relationship with your husband. Knowing these facts will not promote oneness in marriage. Performing them will. I therefore ask you to examine your relationship to your husband in the light of these truths. Are you *really* practicing submission with a servant's heart? Are you *really* practicing being your husband's helper?

Grace-energized living means our personal, daily application of the spiritual disciplines.

A Grace-energized wife genuinely believes that her primary ministry is her marriage. She willingly moves out in obedience to the Word of God, making any necessary changes the Holy Spirit brings to mind (Phil. 2:12-13; Js. 1:19-24). A Grace-energized marriage is a small snapshot of the delights of heaven—a living portrait of the perfect love of Jesus!

Marriage is God's training ground to prepare husbands and wives for greater service for Christ. Ever changing, each unique personality is used by the Lord as heavenly sandpaper on the other. It is in the nitty-gritty events of daily living that our true character comes out—not the one we present to others, but the real us. Learning how to biblically handle that day-in-day-out give and take is essential if we are to have a successful marriage. I suggest that where you find yourself to be failing, prayerfully consider this checklist:

- **Confess** those failures to one another (James 5:16).
- **Accept** the washing and cleansing that Jesus wants to bring to us through His precious blood, as Revelation 1:5 reminds us.
- **Ask** the Holy Spirit of God for the power to be different (Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

## APPENDIX: Titus Two is Part of God' Plan

Paul puts it best in his epistle to the Thessalonians: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Women who are highly useful to God have these characteristics. The long-term goal of their lives is geared towards being useful to God. Parents who want their children be useful for the Lord begin early on to point their children towards the high calling and great joy of being a Titus two woman and the Titus two man.

The whole goal of a Titus two woman is to train younger women in Biblical, simple-to-measure, Spirit-empowered, love-based living.

8. Titus two women have in their wake a grateful army of **husbands who feel deeply loved by their wives**. What was the first thing that the Holy Spirit chose to have taught to the young married women believers? LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS. Can you imagine what a deep and lasting impact upon this local body of Christ's church to have men coming home to a wife who is earnestly being taught how to love her own husband. In a world where women are being pressed into the mould of the worldly, self-seeking, independent, do-their-own-thing women. If nothing else, every family at TBC would be enriched if every younger woman was taught in a practical, simple, and personal way how to love their own husband.
9. Titus two women train younger women in one of the hardest and yet most rewarding investments in life—**children who feel deeply loved by their mothers**. The key the Holy Spirit emphasizes very clearly that the key to children is LOVING them. Titus 2 women train, teach, model, and mentor moms into the deepening of love for their children that can be felt. One of the most common complaints of 21<sup>st</sup> century children is that don't feel loved. Most mothers love their children, but many children are not feeling that love. Titus 2 women are coaches that tutor and mentor young moms in ways to show love that can be felt.
10. Titus two women train younger women to be **discreet, sensible, wise in the decisions and choices they make**. What a rich resource for new marriages and families to have a young woman walked through those days side-by-side with a godly, Spirit-filled woman who will regularly, personally, individually mentor, mother, coach, and cheer on younger women in skillfully living as a wife, mother, and woman of God on a day to day basis. A Titus two woman isn't found in a

classroom or lecture hall—they are in the kitchen with a younger woman, in the dining room, in the nursery, at the grocery store. Titus two women are hands on tutors; and they nurture younger women in the laboratory of life--walking through life together praying, sharing, learning, and loving.

11. Titus two women train younger women in the ***holiness and purity that pleases God and unleashes the power of the Spirit***. The training that a Titus two older woman gives is a seven-part package, that is immensely practical not theoretical. Modesty, purity, chaste behavior must be learned, modeled, and practiced. The power of a godly, Spirit-filled woman of Biblical maturity sitting over a cup of tea discussing what pleases God in dress, in behavior, conduct, and so on. Modesty is understood through Bible study that applies God's Word to daily life.
12. Titus two older women teach younger women the ***centrality in God's plan of a woman's priority being her home***. Home making is a learned art and so many women never have the hands on training that is needed. Life is so full, our culture has moved away from homemaking and few young women get mentored in the godly, Biblical art of home making. If the highest calling in the Titus two list is to love husbands, and to love children, and younger women are called to be homemakers then that is exactly what the grace-energized woman, in step with God's Spirit wants to be.
13. Titus two older women teach younger women the ***utter necessity of kindness being the law of her tongue and the flavor of her life***. Since everything will be measured by Christ as whether or not it was done for His good, and for His glory—she learns that means being done in Christ-like goodness and kindness. Her husband, her children, and her friends see a growing kindness that spreads through all her life.
14. Titus two older women teach younger women the ***supreme joy in life and ministry that comes from voluntarily embracing submission as God's plan for our role in the home and church***. Submission to husbands is a learned way of life that godly older women model and train younger women to embrace and display. Since God designed both men and women, husbands and wives for His Divine purposes, the more we follow His plans the more we know Him, His power, blessings, and favor in our lives.

## The Complete Woman— A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Woman of Grace EGG: Message Twenty-Three

In a full and rich life like many of us lead, there are those satisfying moments here and there, when one thing is “complete” in our lives. That’s why I love Jiffy Lube—they do a *complete 16 point check of everything vital for my safety and the best operation of my car*. So when I drive away that task is complete, all done, nothing left to do.

Things completed, give such a great feeling: a completed assignment so our work is done; a completely balanced diet so we are healthy; all our requirements completed, so the pressures are off...all of those feel so good.

### The Joy of Completion

The dictionary defines this word so well:

com·plete *adj.*, = Having all necessary or normal parts, components, or steps; Having come to an end; concluded; Entire: *a complete meal*. Accomplished: *a complete musician*. Thorough; consummate: *a complete coward*. Caught in bounds by a receiver: *a complete pass*.

In our spiritual lives God says that we are ‘complete in Christ’ (Col. 2:9).

*Colossians 2:9-10 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and **you are complete in Him**, who is the head of all principality and power.*  
NKJV

The word Paul used for complete is **pleroo** means ‘full or filled to the full’. That is one amazing spiritual truths we’d all do well to ponder for long enough, until we started realizing that all we need for life and godliness God has overflowed into our lives through Christ. We know that, believe that, rest in that—and then often feel so incomplete on a day-to-day basis.

Have you ever felt less than ‘complete’? Are their parts of your life that you are unsure about what it is exactly that God wants for you? Anything that is important to God that involves our life—He has clearly explained His wishes.  
God has left a complete way of life for us in His Word.

Anything that God desires for us to know and do—He has written down and given to us.

And, for every woman and young woman who are believers this morning, God has reduced your items needed to be ‘complete’ to a list containing just 33 words<sup>56</sup> in the Greek language.

That complete list of God’s expectations for women to completely please Him by their daily lives contains just 12 qualities every woman is to use to measure their lives against. This morning we can read that amazing list found in God’s Word at Titus 2:

*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—4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,<sup>5</sup> to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. NKJV*

Stand, read, and then pray.

### God is not looking for Superwoman

One of the most beloved chapters for women, wives, and mothers is that venerable old chapter 31 of Proverbs. There we see in the Old Testament that incredible woman of virtue whose “pricelessness” is beyond rubies—she is the woman of excellence, the mother of mothers, and the wife that excels them all.

For centuries the Proverbs 31 woman has been extolled and held forth as a model for all, but for many she seems to be superwoman. In fact when this passage is read, often on Mother’s Day, many women sit a little lower in their seats as this Proverbs 31 woman seems to never sleep, never tire, never fail, and seems to be just plain perfect.

Much as we love the example of Proverbs 31, ***the passage never says that this is God’s command for every woman***—it is just a picture of what one virtuous woman’s life was like. This passage was never intended to be a one size fits all for all women of all ages. It is just to be an inspiring look at what a virtuous woman was like 3,000 years ago.

So God does not expect every godly woman: to stay up all night, to sew clothes for every member of her household, to be a gourmet chef, to sell her wares to others on the side. Proverbs 31 is an inspiring picture of all the ways a woman can bless her husband and children. Most of us could never do all that she did and survive.

---

<sup>56</sup> presbutida" wsautw" en katasthmati ieroprepei" mh diabolou" mh oinw pollw dedoulwmena" kalodidaskalou" <sup>4</sup> ina swfronizwsin ta" nea" filandrou" einai filoteknou" <sup>5</sup> swfrona" agna" oikourou" agaga" upotassomena" toi" idioi" andrasin ina mh o logo" tou qeou blasfhmhtai *Stephen’s Textus Receptus (1550)*

But on the opposite end of the spectrum from the inspirational Proverbs 31 woman is the God designed Titus 2 grace-energized woman.

### Titus 2 is God' Plan for ALL Women in Christ

Titus 2 is not meant to be an inspirational picture of some yesteryear woman of virtue from 2,000 years ago.

God's Word presents the Titus Two woman as God's plan, God's desire, and God's marching orders for all women in Christ of any age in any era of Christ's Church.

If there is one passage every young lady should memorize it is right here.

If there is one paragraph in the Bible every bride-to-be should have down as a part of her preparation to be married—this is it.

If there are a handful of verses every tired mother and busy wife need as the ones they hold to as they have just enough strength to make it through one more day—look no further.

Welcome to the complete woman of God, the “Complete Woman” as defined and described by God.

The Complete Woman of Grace is saved by grace, and energized by the Spirit of God to live such an extraordinary life that the world, her husband, and her children all notice that she is different because she is in step with the Spirit and Word of God.

Ministry in Christ's church was never easy even from the start. Turn back in Paul's letter to Pastor Titus, missionary church-planter to Crete—and look at the description of the cultural background of the congregation Titus served two thousand years ago.

*Titus 1:12-13 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith (NKJV)*

Wow, just think of what a miracle it was to find group of believers saved out of such a godless society. They came from centuries of culture dominated by **total** ('always') **untrustworthiness** ('liars'), **total out-of-control living** ('evil beasts'), and the **total undisciplined pursuit of personal lust-filled appetites** ('lazy gluttons').

Again we see from these two verses that when the Gospel of Jesus Christ entered the Roman world of the New Testament the landscape was very bleak. Christ's church was born into a sin-warped, sin-darkened world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

I really believe that this insight into the Cretan culture can stir our hearts to glorify the amazing grace and saving power of God.

- If the Gospel of Christ can reach into a culture of people who were the descendents of the wicked, pagan Old Testament Philistines (as in Goliath and David) and build them into grace-energized servants of Christ's church—***He can work with anyone.***
- If God can make saints out of people who had so descended in their personal character until Paul describes them with this trio of disparaging words “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons”—***He can change anyone no matter how weak, how wicked, how undisciplined.***

What was the plan God had in mind to transform these very un-saintly people? The same plan He has for all of us this morning. Save them by His grace and sanctify them by His Word.

Paul did not call for Titus as the pastor to train all the women in these qualities God wanted them to cultivate; rather he called upon the godly older women of Christ's church. He singles out the women of faith, those who had already learned to love their husbands, learned to love their children, and learned to be reverent, godly, modest and wise—and charged them with seeking out and meeting with every younger woman in the church.

### Older Women are to be Mentors

***v. 3a “the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior” (1)***

The Greek word translated “reverent” is used only here in the Bible, and it conveys the idea of priest-like. That word for ‘acting as a representative of a god’ is the word Paul uses to describe the devout and godly character of the Titus 2 woman. Older women are to live like holy priests serving in the presence of God. Their sacred personal devotion to the Lord has slowly come to influence every aspect of their lives.

They have presented themselves to the Lord, they have begun to live life the way God asked them to live—as a walking temple of God, as a consecrated priest of God, as a living sacrifice, and as a bondservant of the Lord.

Godly women seek to be reverent in their behavior.

***v. 3b “not slanderers” (2)***

Next Paul turns the spotlight on the hardest member of the body to control, according to James--the 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. 1 Timothy 3:11 “In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, **not malicious talkers** but temperate and trustworthy in everything” (NIV).

In fact the word “slanderers” here in Titus 2:3 is **diabolos**, the very name of Satan used of him 34 times in the New Testament. Satan has been a false accuser and so each time he incites a believer to do so they are doing Satan's work. Satan is the ultimate source of all evil, the root of all wrong behavior; and since James says the tongue is capable of causing great evil, Satan is always close at hand.

Godly Titus 2 women never are to surrender their tongues to the devil.

**v. 3c “not given to much wine” (3)**

Paul here focuses upon the self-controlled, moderation that is to characterize women of every age in Christ's church.

Most women in the early church were formerly pagans. Drunkenness was the norm for many women in that society. Drinking was the best way to forget about the problems of life.

Coming to Christ changed everything, but old habits are hard to break. The old ways of their husbands would come back, old pains from emotional and physical abuse would resurface, and the temptation to slip back to the intemperance of slavery to wine would grow strong. A lack of physical control of any appetite, points to a spiritual immaturity. Both Timothy and Titus were told to beware of women returning to their old habits in this realm of drinking.

Godly women are Spirit-controlled in every part of their life. They resist excess in any area of daily life. They are not slaves to any substance, slaves to any amusement, any fashion, or any attitude that does not please their Master in Heaven.

Godly women seek to be reverent in their behavior, careful in all their conversations, and never enslaved to anything but Christ.

**v. 3d “teachers of good things” (4)**

Paul starts and ends this third verse with the same thought. Godly women are “show-and-tellers”. They live what they teach. They train others in the pattern they have learned. Their walk speaks louder than their talk. Their life is under God's control in all areas: their tongues, their appetites, and their habits. They do not overindulge themselves, they are not overweight-gluttons, they are not pleasure-hungry, they are not malicious-talkers.

These godly older women were noble in everything and in the way they lived life they taught by their actions what is good! Titus 2:3 Likewise, teach the older women to be

reverent ***in the way they live***, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but ***to teach what is good***. NIV

A godly woman teaches by her life what is good in God's sight. She carefully chooses the "better part" as Mary did over Martha. Titus 2 women see every area of their lives as an open book that should and does teach Christ's gracious Lordship. They can say as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. NKJV

Godly women seek to be reverent in their behavior, careful in all their conversations, never enslaved to anything but Christ, and teaching by example the way to follow Christ.

#### ***v.4a "that they admonish" (5)***

In teaching what is good they "encourage the young women" (Titus 2:4). This opening phrase of Titus 2:4 "that they admonish" is one Greek word in Paul's letter, the word is ***sophronizo*** and means, "to train someone in self-control, restore to senses, admonish and exhort earnestly".

This one word is variously rendered into 4 different English words by the top 4 versions: "teach" (KJV); "admonish" (NKJV); "train" (NIV); and "encourage" (NAS).

The first four spiritual qualities are all present to make this quality work. God wants a godly woman whose life speaks louder than her words; a woman whose character is noticed and prompts other women to examine their own lives and seek to emulate her joy, her peace, her walk in the Spirit in evident and practical ways. The Titus 2 older-woman-in-the-faith's life is a pattern for others to use in shaping their own lives.

### **Younger Women are to be Mentored**

Those new believers, fresh out of paganism needed coaching, training, modeling, and encouraging in a one-on-one relationship. Godly behavior is a series of choices; and those men and women had to be nurtured in daily skills that would lead to loving marriages and families.

#### ***v.4b "the young women to love their husbands," (6)***

Titus 2 women encourage a grateful army of ***husbands who feel deeply loved by their wives***.

- What was the first thing that the Holy Spirit chose to have taught to the young married women believers? LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS.
- Can you imagine what a deep and lasting impact upon this local body of Christ's church to have men coming home to a wife who is earnestly being taught how to love her own husband?

- Such love is a powerful testimony in a culture where women are being pressed into being worldly, self-seeking, independent, and do-their-own-thing women.

**v. 4c “to love their children” (7)**

Titus 2 women train younger women in one of the hardest and yet most rewarding investments in life—***children who feel deeply loved by their mothers.***

- The Holy Spirit emphasizes very clearly that the key to raising children is LOVING them.
- Titus 2 women train, teach, model, and mentor moms into the deepening of love for their children that can be felt.

**v. 5a “to be discreet” (8)**

Titus 2 women train younger women to be ***discreet, sensible, wise in the decisions and choices they make.***

- What a rich resource for new marriages and families to have a young woman walked through those days side-by-side with a godly, Spirit-filled woman who will regularly, personally, individually mentor, mother, coach, and cheer on younger women in skillfully living as a wife, mother, and woman of God on a day to day basis.
- Titus 2 women were hands on tutors nurturing younger women in the laboratory of life--walking through life together praying, sharing, learning, and loving.

**v. 5b “chaste” (9)**

Titus 2 women train younger women in the ***holiness and purity that pleases God and unleashes the power of the Spirit.***

- The training that a Titus 2 older woman gives is a seven-part package, that is immensely practical not theoretical. Modesty, purity, chaste behavior must be learned, modeled, and practiced.
- God directed the power of godly, Spirit-filled women of Biblical maturity sitting over a cup of tea discussing with younger women what pleased God in dress, in behavior, conduct, and so on.
- Christ's church needed younger women who learned Biblical modesty through a godly older woman lovingly applying God's Word to daily life.

**v. 5c “homemakers” (10)**

Titus 2 older women teach ***younger women the centrality in God's plan of a woman's priority being her home.***

- Home making is a learned art and so many women never have the hands on training that is needed.
- Life is so full, our culture has moved away from homemaking and few young women get mentored in the godly, Biblical art of home making.
- God placed the first two priorities on the Titus 2 list as loving husbands and loving children. Younger women are called to see the priority of their homes; and the only way they can learn that priority is by a long-term relationship with a godly woman that has mastered that art.

***v. 5d “good” (11)***

Titus 2 older women teach younger women the **utter necessity of kindness being the law of her tongue and the flavor of her life**. Since everything will be measured by Christ as whether or not it was done for His good, and for His glory—she learns that means being done in Christ-like goodness and kindness. Her husband, her children, and her friends see a growing kindness that spreads through all her life.

***v. 5e “obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” (12)***

Titus 2 older women teach younger women the **supreme joy in life and ministry that comes from voluntarily embracing submission as God’s plan for our role in the home and church**.

- Submission to husbands is a learned way of life that godly older women model and train younger women to embrace and display.
- Since God designed both men and women, husbands and wives for His Divine purposes, the more we follow His plans the more we know Him, His power, blessings, and favor in our lives.

So there is the complete woman of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

That is God’s desire for every woman of any age in Christ's church today!

---