

Reverent in Behavior

Discussion Guide for Titus 2:3-5

Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

We spend a lot of time in texts like these that speak to how Godly men and women ought to live in their respective gender roles. This is necessary because our post-enlightenment, post-Christian, mainstream American and even our split evangelical cultures have badly messed it up.

Many Christians spend so much time criticizing the world's view of gender that they never take time to live faithfully as Godly husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers. However, it shouldn't be a surprise to us when people who don't know God reject what He says about femininity and masculinity.

The world outside of the Church is painfully lost in the way it regards gender roles. I hate to use alarmist language, but I truly believe we are at the point of a crisis in how American youth identify as males and females.

Young women are devalued. They're fed the lie that their only worth is either as a sex object or to become more like a man.

Young men are told that masculinity is toxic or that they should exploit women. Moral, upright, and courageous leadership is discouraged.

Within the church, people often twist Scripture to fit whatever they already think men and women ought to be doing. For example, these three verses in Titus have been used to teach that women are commanded to hold the office of pastor in a church. They have also been used to teach that women should not hold jobs outside of their homes. Neither command is present in this text and is simply made up based on whether a person wants women to be pastors in the church or doesn't want women to earn a paycheck.

Instead, our conversation should focus on how Christians find value and worth in Christ and should always be seeking to mentor younger men and women by "teaching what is good."

When reading Scripture, it's critical to focus on what the text actually says. This can be difficult because we have to step outside of our own cultural bias. We shouldn't read Titus 2:3-5 as either feminists or as people beholden to patriarchy, but as people who simply want to be faithful and obedient in our own lives.

These verses immediately made me think about 1 Peter 3:1-6.

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Just as the women in Crete had to live lives counter to the prevailing culture, women today need to hear that their beauty in Christ is immensely greater than the value the world places on them. Marriages are often in crisis because women only find their value in what their husbands or others think about them, or in what they can do for themselves. Even a good friend or spouse makes a terrible god.

A woman who asks herself daily “What does God think about me and what does God want me to do?” is immensely more helpful to her family. She is a precious jewel indeed.

Many women struggle with issues of confidence. Young women are particularly vulnerable to this. We see it played out in social media addiction and the compulsion to get more “likes.” Unfortunately, that quick hit of dopamine only provides a short-lived sense of false confidence.

Social media itself is nothing but a mirage. We take huge amounts of time to cultivate an image that has nothing to do with who we actually are. Our own self-confidence is lacking so we create a fake self that is guaranteed to impress all the other fake people who respond with superficial “likes” from people who are not actually our friends.

Take time to review Austin's sermon for what Paul means by the phrase “reverent in behavior.”

A woman who lives a Gospel-centered life is extremely confident in her true identity. She is a daughter of God whose eternal worth is testified by the Gospel that the God of the universe would die for her redemption. She is not a doormat for the world, but a person of dignity and strength whose confidence in Christ gives life to everyone around her.

Discussion Questions

- Talk about a woman whom you admire as “reverent in behavior.”
- What makes that woman dignified?
- How has she made an impact on younger women?
- How do you balance the commands of Titus 2:4 (love husbands and children, be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their husbands) with the

pressures of modern life?

- Does “working at home” mean that a woman has no influence outside of her home?
- Does our society place enough value on the role of a mother to nurture and influence her children?
- Why do women have such a struggle with self-confidence?
- How does your relationship with Christ give you confidence as a woman?
- How can husbands and fathers nurture their wives and daughters to be confident in Christ?