

Titus 2 Women - Reverent Behavior

The Big Picture

The book of Titus outlines godly conduct for those who belong to Christ. Chapter 1 defines godly conduct for those leading the church. Chapter 2 outlines godly conduct in terms of gender and age, or roles and life-phrases. Chapter 3 gives instruction for believers and their behavior in the world. The thread Paul weaves through it all is that healthy doctrine always results in godly living – God’s Truth should positively change behavior!

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored (Tit 2:3-5 - NASB95).

In the middle of this call to godly living, God issues a mandate for women in Titus 2:3-5. Older women are instructed to train the young women in “sensible living,” so that a legacy will be established for succeeding generations. God wants each generation to know Him personally and have the joy of living an abundant life full of purpose and fruitfulness. Why? God wants the world to know that living life His way works. Again, why? Because He loves us and wants our best. Not only that, He wants His children to walk in obedience so that His Word is not dishonored.

Who are the older women? “Older women” (*presbutis*) is the feminine form which correlates to the masculine form (*presbutas*) referring to “older men” in Titus 2:2. The reference in 2:2 to “older

men” is not a reference to elders (*presbuteros*), local church officials who are referred to in Titus 1, but to an age class. Because of the parallel construction marked by “likewise” (*hosautos*) in reference to both the men and women, the text of Titus is referring to the older age groups of men and women in the church. The idea would translate, “just as the older men are to be... so, the older women are to be.”

Age alone, however, does not qualify an older woman to leave a godly legacy. Titus outlines character qualities that define who this older woman is to be in order for her to train young women. Thus, the commission to train the younger generation of women is given to older, mature Christian women who have faithfully built into their own lives the message they are to impart to others. In the normal course of life, this would be a reference to a godly woman who has done the work of raising her own family and honoring her husband. In God’s design, the task of discipling young women belongs to older women who have built God’s principles for living into their lives – women who are intentional about developing Truth-based thinking.

Just because a woman is older and has raised children doesn’t mean she is qualified to train young women in godliness. She needs to be one whose life is an example of God’s Truth in action. There

are four criteria that an older woman must fulfill in order to be effective at “encouraging” young women. Please note that these are character qualities, not talents, abilities, personality types, or gifts. Every woman can attain these qualities if she chooses to obey God. A Titus 2 older woman is to be 1) reverent in her behavior, 2) not a malicious gossip, 3) nor enslaved to much wine, 4) teaching what is good, so that she will be able to “encourage” young women in godliness.

What is “Reverent Behavior?”

Older women likewise are to be **reverent in their behavior**, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored (Tit 2:3-5 - NASB95).

The first characteristic which should be observed in the older women is captured in the phrase, “reverent in their behavior.” What does this phrase mean? The *NASB Concordance* defines terms as follows: “Reverent’ (*hieroprepes*, 2412, from *hieros*, sacred, a temple, and *prepo*, to be clearly seen, to resemble)” means befitting or resembling that which is sacred to God. “Behavior” (*katastema*, 2688) refers to external deportment, issuing from the inner life, the heart life. Together these words refer to conduct that is godly in all respects, where actions clearly flow from a heart that desires to live for God.

Definition: Reverent Behavior

God-centered daily living which flows from a personal relationship with God; a manner of living which illustrates and embodies what is important to God. Truth-based obedience that grows out of a love for God.

This older woman sees life, all of life, from God’s viewpoint and understands that even the mundane routines of life are important to God. Her lifestyle tells a watchful observer where her priorities are. Watch her walk through her day in order to see what is next to God’s heart. Her life revolves around things that matter to Him. She is a challenging, sharpening example.

Two Key Principles

How did this woman arrive at this place? She understands and applies two essential and foundational truths for growth: 1) God’s Word is the source of truth and power, and 2) God deserves first place in our hearts; He is our first love, or first priority.

Principle One: God's Word is the source of truth and power.

The Word of God is the foundation for all Christian growth. The woman who is reverent in her behavior consistently spends time studying God's Word, the source of truth and power, in order to stay in communion with the Father. She understands that the Word of God is the foundation for understanding God's character, His will, and what pleases Him. Several things are required in order to grow in Christ's likeness:

A Choice + Study the Bible + Obedience + Time = Maturity

There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity. We want to grow. How do we begin? The Word of God is primary. Note the principle from each of the following verses that underscores the value of studying the Bible

- Psalm 119:105 - We study the Bible to receive guidance from God.
- II Timothy 3:16-17 - The Bible equips us to do good works.
- Hebrews 4:12 - God's Word reveals what is in our hearts.
- II Timothy 2:15 - God approves of those who diligently learn His Word.

Response: Therefore, the reverent woman fears God, walking by faith, in obedience to God's Truth, the Bible.

It is impossible to be a woman who is reverent in her behavior without the foundation of God's Word, and without a choice to obey God by faith. Over time, the woman who consistently responds in obedience to God's principles will become mature. A mature woman possesses a "God consciousness" that influences her daily regimen. She evaluates every thought, action, and encounter by the standard of the Bible. Truth lights her path so that she can choose obedient behavior which is an outward expression of a heart that knows and communes with the Father. What does the Bible teach us about responding to God's Word?

- Romans 10:17 - The Truth is the starting point for faith.
- Proverbs 9:10 - Fearing God is the starting point for wisdom, or truth applied.
- Romans 14:23b - To not act on the basis of faith is sin.

- Hebrews 11:6 - Faith is required to please God.
- II Corinthians 10:5 - We are responsible to bring our thoughts into conformity with God's Word, to think accurately about Him and obey Him.
- James 1:22 - Healthy faith produces godly living.

Truth is the starting point. Obedience in response to God's Word is faith in action.

Principle Two: God deserves first place in our hearts; He is our first love.

The woman who is reverent in her behavior is passionately in love with her Savior; He has first place in her heart. Her reverence, or "God-fearing" behavior, flows from a cultivated heart-life with the Father. She loves the truth of the Bible, not as an end in itself, but as a vehicle which leads her into intimate communication with the Father. She understands who God is, and goes heart-to-heart to keep the fine edge of her walk with God sharply honed.

- Exodus 20:3 - God must have first place in our lives.
- Revelation 2:4 - God must be our first love.
- I Timothy 4:7-8 - Godliness requires discipline; it is intentional not accidental.
- Psalm 42:1-2a - The living God is the only One Who can satisfy.

Response:

Therefore, reverent women maintain passion for God through the disciplines of godliness. Mature women in Christ do not become conformed to His image by accident. They are intentional about time with God in prayer and in the Word. They protect that time.

PRACTICUM

Use the following verses and/or questions to help you evaluate where you are and what you should do.

1. Read II Peter 1:3-8. What has God provided for you?
2. It takes time to develop the disciplines of godliness. Read Ephesians 5:15-17. What does God say about the use of time? What other responsibilities or pressures in your day, or week, most easily crowd out your time with God? List those “time robbers.” What realistic and practical steps might you take to protect your time with God?

What is the difference, if any, between having “devotions” and being devoted to Christ?

3. Is Jesus your first love? In what ways have you demonstrated that to Him this week?
4. It is desirable to have godly examples. God told the church that His leaders should be examples to the flock. So, think about Titus 2 women you have known. What woman has had great spiritual impact on your life? What personal qualities does she possess that make you have a greater desire to become like Christ? Maybe there are several women in that category. List them and thank God for those women.
5. What are you doing to develop the disciplines of godliness? What one thing could you begin to do this week that would build your relationship with God?
6. Is there a verse from this week’s study that inspired you to go deeper with God. Write that verse out on a card and refer to it during the week.
7. If another woman were to become your shadow and follow you around each day for a week, what things might she see that would encourage her to be more like Christ? What things do you accomplish each day that would tell an observer God is number one?
8. Why do you think Paul adds the phrase “in their behavior” to the word “reverent?” Why didn’t he just say older women need to be “reverent?” How does the phrase “reverent in their behavior” reflect the message of the book of Titus?
9. Whether or not you have had a Titus 2 model to guide you, you have been given sufficiency through Christ and His Truth to change. We’ve seen that it takes time and obedience to become reverent. How are you spending your time? Are you surrounding yourself with friends who encourage you in the path of wisdom?