

Good Ways

Titus 2:1-5

In our last lesson, we learned the profound importance of sound doctrine, a responsibility that Paul exhorted Titus to establish in Crete. In Chapter 2, Titus is further instructed to set the standard for the church's men and women, young and old. Paul begins the chapter by underlining the weight of this task, saying these are the things that are proper for sound doctrine.

Read Titus 2:1-5.

1. What are the proper things for the older men?

2. What are the proper things for the older women?

3. What are the older women to teach the younger women?

4. According to verse 5, what reason does Paul give for living out these proper things?

The older women were instructed to be teachers of good things. This verse is a call to all. Older women – you are called to be wise and holy so you can mentor the younger women. And younger women, you need to be willing to receive and learn. It is a call to discipleship.

These *good things* are not just verses for the old, nor are they just for the young. In addition, these *good things* are not just for the married. We are all, regardless of age or marital status, equally called to be discreet, chaste, and good. This call unites us in our shared responsibility for our spiritual growth.

Next week, we will discuss the detailed requirements of older and younger women, but first, we must go back to the very beginning. When God created man and woman, He gave them a distinct order and roles that are reflected in all the Scriptures referring to

husbands and wives and the responsibilities God gave to each. In the beginning, God established the good ways.

In Genesis 1, we learn that “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”—all things.

5. Read Genesis 1:26-28 and answer the following questions:

- a. What pronoun is used for those who have dominion? _____
- b. Who was created in God’s image? _____
- c. Who was given the mandate to fill and subdue the earth? _____

6. What can you conclude from this verse about the equality of men and women?

7. What are some of the misconceptions today about God’s order for men and women? Have these cultural ideas shaped your views regarding men and women? If so, explain. If not, explain your Biblical view of men and women.

Genesis 1 and the first few verses of chapter 2 record the entire creation account. In Genesis 2:7, the perspective changes to a very detailed view of day six of creation.

8. Read Genesis 2:7-8, 15-17, and answer the following questions:

- a. How did God form man? _____

- b. Where did God put the man? _____
- c. What did God intend for the man to do there? _____
- d. What command did God give to the man? _____

- e. Is there a woman with the man yet? _____

9. Recount all of the responsibility God gave to Adam alone.

10. Read Genesis 2:18. What did God say was not good? What was God's solution?

11. Read Genesis 2:19-25 and summarize these verses.

This passage can be difficult for women today. However, these verses reveal that men have a God-given need for a helpmate. Women were created to be that helper. Today's culture misinterprets this as a demeaning role—if we are merely helpers, we are less.

This could not be further from the truth. We are his helpmate because he can't do it alone. He can't do it without us. He needs a companion - a co-laborer. He needs help.

God's Word never says that man is superior to woman. The verses we read in Genesis 1:26-28 support this - man and woman were both made in God's image. Both were given the mandate. (v. 28)

One is not greater than the other. We simply have different roles. God's plan is that we should fulfill our role as helpers.

If you are married, you are your husband's helper. If you are unmarried, you can still live out your role, learning to help and come alongside others—in the home (with parents), in the workplace, or caring for your own homes.

12. Think of Adam and Eve's roles. Practically speaking, how could Eve have helped Adam with the garden?

13. If you are married, consider God's calling on your husband. How can you be of help to him?

14. If you are unmarried and desire marriage, how can you prepare to be a husband's helpmate one day? If marriage isn't in your future, how can you help others now?

The Hebrew word for *helper* is **ezer**. Let's look at this word in Scripture to put aside any misunderstanding that the Bible treats women with low regard.

15. Look up the following verses. In each verse, the word *help* is the Hebrew word *ezer*. Write down whom *help/ezer* refers to.

Deuteronomy 33:29 _____

Psalms 33:20 _____

Psalms 121:2 _____

16. Read John 14:26. What word is used to describe the Holy Spirit? _____

17. How could our role as helper be considered menial when God the Father and God the Spirit are both referred to as *ezer*. This is exactly how God described the woman He created for man. Write down your thoughts about this amazing truth.

The man's role is to lead. God gave Him this role when He put Adam in the garden to care for it and when He gave the directions to him.

This is God's order.

18. God's order is for man to _____ and for women to _____.

God's order is perfect. Men were created to lead and carry out God's commands, and women were created to complement men and help them with what God has called them to do.

When we suppress our own desires and cultural pressures, harmony will result, not only in marriages but also in our families, workplaces, and churches.

So why do we struggle? Because sin entered the world.

19. Read Genesis 3:1-6. Summarize this passage.

20. Was Eve alone? What does this say about Adam's fulfillment of his role?

It started with perfection, God's order, but then – corruption entered, and we have been denying the order God established ever since.

Adam and Eve's sin brought a curse. Adam was cursed with toil in work, and Eve was cursed with sorrow and pain in childbirth.

21. Read Genesis 3:16. What would she have for her husband? _____

The word *desire* in this passage does not mean what you would think. The word is used in the very next chapter in the account of Cain and Abel.

22. Look up Genesis 4:7. What *desired* Cain? What was he instructed to do?

Sin desired to master Cain, to dictate his actions and control what he did. The sinful desire won out, and Cain murdered his brother.

From these two passages, "to have a desire for..." means a desire to dominate or rule. Sin had a desire to rule over Cain. Eve (or women) would have the desire to rule over her husband.

Fallen woman wants to dominate man. She wants to be his head. She wants a role reversal.

23. What is the last sentence in Genesis 3:16?

The antidote to women dominating men is to allow the husband to assert his rightful role as leader. Male-led marriage is not the curse; it was the plan. The strife within marriage is the curse.

We were not created to rule. We were not created to be the head. We were not created to lead. We were created to help. Men need our help, and we need their leadership so that God's order can be complete.

24. These concepts can be complex. If you have any questions you hope to have answered in the teaching or wish to ask your small group leader, write them here.

The order established at creation is still valid today. It is God's order for marriage and also the church.

Paul, in 1 Timothy, gives instructions for men and women in the church. After looking at the creation account, there should be no issue with these verses, which do not teach that men and women are unequal but rather continue with the distinctions in their tasks.

25. Read 1 Timothy 3:15. What is Paul writing for?

26. Read 1 Timothy 2:8-11 and answer the following questions:

a. How are women instructed to adorn themselves?

b. What are women to profess? _____

c. How are women to learn? _____

Hold tight! Don't get upset at these verses. They will make sense as we break them down.

27. What does being modest mean to you? Do you view it as wise? Why or why not?

28. The emphasis should always be on the inward, not the outward. What we wear and how we look on the surface should not be the focus. What we wear should not be a distraction. For more clarity, read 1 Peter 3:3-4 and answer the following questions:

a. Our adornment should not be _____ outward.
(This means it should not be the focus, it does not mean that braids or gold are bad.)

b. What is the focus to be? _____

The word *quiet* in 1 Peter 3 is very similar to the word *silence* in 1 Timothy 2. To be quiet is a good thing!

The word quiet is: hesychios (hay-sooh-kee-ohs), and it means quiet and peaceable. It refers to the quiet life **all** godly people should lead. It doesn't mean absolute silence, but **quietness that does not compromise the authority given.**

29. Read 1 Timothy 2:2. How are we instructed to pray for kings and those in authority?

It is not just for women to be *quiet* or *silent*. We are all called to live quietly and peaceably and to honor the order God established.

30. Read 1 Timothy 2:11-13. What are women not permitted to do?

31. Why not? (v. 13) _____

These three verses have been a source of contention and division inside and outside the church for centuries. But God's word is true, and His order is good. 1 Timothy 2:11 is reflective of verse 12. Women are quiet and, therefore, do not teach men Biblical principles. They are not to have authority over a man.

God established at the beginning that men lead. In verse 13, Paul goes back to creation and reminds us of the order. In his doing so, we learn the order still stands; it was not rescinded at the fall (Genesis 3). It is still good. It just got tainted, and we continue to struggle with it now.

Didn't God say we would do that in Genesis 3 – that we would want the role of leadership and authority?

These verses are for today; they were not just for then. The word 'for' in verse 13 is Paul saying, 'Here is the reason... God's perfect order.'

We are helpmates. In our role, we have the responsibility to yield to the leadership given to man by God. Therefore, the position of authority to teach in the church is not ours.

This order is once again affirmed in 1 Corinthians 11:3.

32. Look up 1 Corinthians 11:3.

- a. Who is the head of every man? _____
- b. Who is the head of woman? _____
- c. Who is the head of Christ? _____

While some may be upset by these verses, we must not forget that God's word is true and His order is perfect. Man is the head, the leader. However, don't forget that this has nothing to do with equality. Is Christ lesser than God? And yet the head of Christ is God—equal yet with different roles.

33. Does 1 Timothy 2:12 mean women can never teach anyone? Remember Titus 2:3? What is the last thing they are instructed to do?

34. Reflect on all you have studied thus far. How will you apply God's order to your marriage or life today?

A Character Study: Overcoming Obstacles and Examples to Follow

The struggle is real, but it helps to know there is a genuine reason for the struggle. Knowing what we are dealing with helps us be more aware of the problem and gives us the opportunity to do something about it.

35. In Hebrews 10, the author instructed his readers to consider how to stir one another up to do good works. Respecting God's order and accepting our role as helper is certainly a good work. Read Hebrews 10:24-25 and consider how you can be stirred up and how you can stir up the women around you to accept God's good way.

The good news is you are doing this right now by being part of this study, submitting yourself to the teaching of God's Word, and surrounding yourself with like-minded women who desire to serve God in a way that brings Him glory!

36. **THINK:** Read 1 Corinthians 13:11. How do you think this verse is relevant to accepting God's order for men and women?

Over the last twenty years, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of women pastors. Modern-day churches are making way for these women pastors by pointing to "examples" of women teachers in the Bible. Priscilla is often credited with teaching Apollos. Let's take a closer look.

37. Read Acts 18:24-26 and answer the following questions:

- a. Who was teaching in the synagogue? _____
- b. Who took him aside? _____
- c. What was explained to Apollos? _____

Nowhere in this passage does it say that Priscilla was teaching Apollos as a pastor in the church. What we are told is that Priscilla was with her husband when they approached Apollos, pulling him aside to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with him and fulfilling Jesus' great commission.

Phoebe is another example that is used by those trying to make a defense for women pastors.

38. Read Romans 16:1-2 and answer the following questions.

a. What two descriptors are given for Phoebe in verse 1?

b. How is she described in verse 2?

You might be wondering how this Scripture is used. Both the NIV and NLT translate the word “servant” as “deacon.” It is this translation that is used to make the case that Phoebe held a position of leadership in the church. Women holding a position of leadership in the church is not an issue if that woman has proper male leadership over her and if she is fulfilling her leadership role in a way that honors and follows God’s roles of responsibility. There is nothing in this passage to indicate that Phoebe was teaching men in her role within the church.

39. Read Exodus 15:19-21. How did Miriam, being under Moses and Aaron’s leadership, help as the Israelites were led out of Egypt?

40. Read Acts 12:1-19. In what ways did Mary, the mother of Mark, help Peter and the early church?

41. Read Acts 16:11-15. How did Lydia step into her role as helper when she met Paul?

Priscilla helped her husband as he led a church in their home (1 Cor. 16:9) and helped with evangelistic opportunities outside of their church. Phoebe helped and served in her local church and beyond as she helped with delivering Paul’s letter to the church in Rome. Miriam helped her brothers by leading the people in worship after watching the hand of God deliver the Children of Israel from the armies of Pharaoh. Mary opened her home for prayer and helped to provide a place of safety for Peter even when it put her at risk. Lydia opened her home to Paul and the other missionaries traveling with him.

42. As you consider God’s good way in the order and responsibilities of men and women, read Matthew 5:16 and write your response to God.
