

## **God's Plan for Younger Women, Part 2**

Titus 2:3-5

56-15

For this morning we go again in our study of the book of Titus to chapter 2, and we're looking at verses 4 and 5 specifically this morning. This is Paul's instruction to Titus for the young women of the church. Now remember, this whole chapter gives to us teaching on the character of a healthy church, that is, a church that is going to have an effective witness to the world, that is going to have an evangelistic impact. In order for a church to have that kind of impact, the people in it must conduct themselves in a godly way. You will remember in verse 5 he says, "This instruction is so that the word of God may not be dishonored"; in verse 8, "so that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us." And in verse 10, "so that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect." Because, as verse 11 says, "God's grace has appeared, bringing salvation to all men."

If the saving grace of Christ is to reach all men, it's going to depend on the character of the church. If we honor the Word, silence the critics, and demonstrate that God is a saving God by our transformed lives, then the gospel will be powerfully effective. How we live in the church is the issue here, and its evangelistic implications.

Now in giving this instruction he begins in verse 1 by just saying, "People need to be taught sound doctrine." And then starting in verse 2 and running all the way down more than half way through the chapter he says, "Having a foundation of sound doctrine, here is how the church is to live." The older men, in verse 2, are given prescriptions for godly living; the older women in verse 3; and then in verses 4 and 5, the young women; and verse 6 through 8, the young men. And then in verse 9 he discusses the virtue of those who are slaves or servants or employees in the world.

So what we learn here then is that evangelistic impact, the effectiveness of the church, how it reaches the world, is related to how it lives in very specific terminology. "Older men," as verse 2 says, "are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, and love, and perseverance." "Older women...are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, not enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good." Then we come to the next category, the one for today, young women, verse 4 and 5, "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, that the word of God may not be dishonored."

God has a magnificent and wonderful design for women. It is a design which will fulfill their created purpose, maximize their uniqueness, make them a blessing to the world, and bring fulfillment to their own lives and glory to the name of God. And that design is briefly stated there in those two verses. The instruction there is God's design for women - women in the church - so that the church can have a powerful witness and so that God can be glorified and His Word honored.

There are times and places in human history where this particular section of Scripture would be commonly believed, even in the culture, where there would not be a reaction to any of these things - it would be the accepted norm for society. But ours is not such a time nor is it such a place. In our culture what is being said in these verses to young women is the very opposite of what young women are being taught. Young women today are being taught to love whoever they want, farm their children out to somebody else, don't worry about being sensible, do whatever pleases you, don't worry about being pure, fulfill your physical and lustful desires, don't work at home, work outside the home, don't worry about being kind - you do whatever you want. You grab your moment in the sun. Take care of you, not somebody else. And by all means, don't be subject to your own husband.

When this comes into the church it therefore dishonors the Word of God. I mean, even an unbeliever can read those verses. The most unschooled non-believer can read that the Word of God says young women are "to love their husbands, love their children, be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, and subject to their own husbands." And if he can read the Bible and look at the church, he can make a very simple conclusion - "You Christians say you believe the Bible, why don't your women live like this?" You see, it brings discredit on the Scripture to say we affirm the Scripture, but we live however we like. Or worse, we live however the culture - being basically controlled by Satan, the prince of the power of the air - dictates us to live.

People in the Christian church who have problems with this text inevitably will come back to Galatians 3:28 and say, "But in Christ there's neither male nor female, in Christ we are free." But Christian women must not ever think that their equality in spiritual standing before God and their equality in salvation and sanctification and their great freedom in Christ has somehow obliterated God's created and spiritually beneficial order, because it hasn't. Young women are here addressed in the church, because it's always been a tendency for young women to kick over the traces of their responsibility, just as it would be for any person. You remember back in Genesis chapter 3 that when God cursed Eve one of the parts of that curse was that her "desire would be toward her husband," and that word "desire" means "a desire to dominate or to rule." That's part of fallenness. And the man would be overbearing in his leadership, and therefore you have the battle of the sexes that really can only be resolved in the power of the Holy Spirit in Christian marriages. So young women need to be reminded, because there's something in the fallen flesh that wants to dominate and be free and kick over the fences. And certainly there's something in the world that presses against the flesh when women are being told today what they're being told by the lying philosophy of Satan.

But young women have always needed instruction, just like young men and older women and older men do. And so here the Word of God is at stake - the honor of the Scripture and the glory of God and the silencing of the opponents of the gospel. In other words, this simple set of commands has immense implications, has far-reaching ramifications for the kingdom. If you love Christ, if you seek to honor God, if you want to lift up and exalt the Word, if you want to silence the critics, you will be eager to obey these commands. If you want to do what the society says, if you want to fulfill your own fleshly desire, you will disobey them. Jesus said it simply and concisely in the summary statement, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." And here are some of His commandments, given to us by the Holy Spirit through the pen of the apostle Paul.

So, a healthy church with healthy Christians is going to have a witness in the world because its young women pattern their lives according to what the Word of God says. So you need to understand the reason for all of this and the implications of it. If we continue as a church to fall victim to the satanic plotting of the Feminist Movement, we are allowing Satan to destroy the priority and

the purity and the integrity of the church. We are allowing him to pull down the Word of God from its lofty place. We're allowing him to give opponents plenty of reason to criticize us, and we're allowing him to muddy the waters in terms of God as a saving, transforming God. It is imperative, then, for the sake of the kingdom and the advancement of the kingdom and evangelization, we must respond. And as I said, this is just the most dominant issue in our culture, and other cultures reading this might be sufficient because women have built in to the culture some sense about this.

It also needs to be said that we have a new generation of young women being raised who from the very beginning have been taught the opposite of this. They have not been mentored by godly parents. They are now a second generation of people influenced by the Feminist Movement, and thus this runs against the grain of everything they have been taught, everything they have been exposed to in the media and then bears great emphasis. And that's why we did what we did last week in laying some historical foundation to the text for this morning.

Now before we look at verse 4, let's go to verse 3 for a moment because it's connected. One of the duties of the older women into which we looked a few weeks back, one of the duties comes at the end of the list in verse 3, "teaching what is good." Older women have as their responsibility "teaching what is good." Literally the Greek word here could be translated "teachers of what is good," *kalos didaskalos*, "teachers of good." "Good" being a word that means "noble, excellent, lofty." And the idea in the word is not some kind of formal thing. It's not conducting seminars, writing a book, making tapes, holding formal classes. It is the idea of the very life they live becoming a model of a pattern of goodness. Older women, when their children are grown and gone and they reach the senior years, are not supposed to just wander away from the church and travel around as if they had no responsibility. In their older years they are responsible to become teachers of the next generation. They do that by mentoring, by discipling, by modeling, by setting the example of godly living with regard to marriage and the family and the home.

Now they are then to be teachers of good, and the primary ones they teach are the young women. And that's the transition into verse 4 - they are to be teachers of what is good "in order that they may encourage the young women." The primary responsibility of older women is younger women. Their children are raised; the children are gone. Hopefully they've raised up a godly generation of their own. Now within the framework of the church the older women are to give themselves in a very informal, personal way to the modeling of godliness that only a woman can do to pass on to the next generation. They are to demonstrate virtue as wives and virtue as mothers, virtue as humble, loving, patient, kind, generous servants to the next generation. That verse 4 begins with a word "that." It's a purpose clause "in order that," "with the purpose or the result" that young women will be encouraged.

Now the word "encourage" is probably not translated the best way. It's a very interesting word. The root of it, *sophro*, is used all over the pastoral epistles - in fact, hardly anywhere else. I think I may have found one or two uses of the root somewhere other than the pastorals. But it appears in the pastorals many places, and it has various different endings which change the form of the word. And we'll see it several times even in our discussion this morning. But the form of it that appears uniquely here - *sōphronizō*, which is a verb ending - means "to train." It means "to train." To say it another way, "to teach someone self-control." Some lexicons translate it "to make someone sober-minded, to make someone balanced, to make someone steady, to provide someone guidance." But the best translation is "to train someone in self-control." There are other forms of this word. In chapter 1, verse 8; chapter 1, verse 2; and we'll see even in chapter 2, verse 5. In those cases it's translated "sensible." But it's a little bit of a different word - the root is the same but the form of it is different.

One form of it is translated "discipline." In Titus 2:12 it's translated "sensibly." In 1 Timothy 3:2, "prudent." We'll see later in 1 Timothy 2 it's translated "discreet." Has the idea of being discreet or chaste.

But the best way to understand this term is the idea of training in the art of self-control - learning self-restraint. In fact, the form of it is translated "self-restraint" in 1 Timothy 2:15. So the older women then are to teach the young women that self-discipline that trains them to be able to do their duty, which is to love their husbands, love their children, etc. Older women are engaged then in a training process - to raise a generation of sensible, disciplined, prudent, wise, discreet, restrained women who are committed to doing God's will. This is a tremendous challenge.

It's not easily done. A training process implies relationship, ongoing relationship and responsibility, confrontation and affirmation. You older women who no longer have the responsibility of your own children now have the responsibility of training the next generation of women.

Now let's talk about the idea of the young women - How young is young? Now, what I'm going to say is going to make some of you very happy. Young women - To what age does young women refer? Well, in a general sense we would say it refers to women who are able to bear children, or are still rearing children. We would say, generally speaking, that it is sort of a pre-menopause category of young women - those who are still able to have children. A good way to understand this is to go back to 1 Timothy 5. I would add even to that, women who are able to have children or are still rearing their children. And if you think about it, women can bear children well into their forties and, consequently, for the next say 10 to 15 years even after that they're going to be raising children. So that would push the sort of child-bearing, child-rearing responsibility up to maybe 60. If you're still having children at 46, 47 - remember, in ancient times, without the means to prevent pregnancy as we have them today, and with a devotion to bearing children that was very different in a society like ours that has been clobbered with the idea of reducing the population, people had children, and they continued to have children. The home was the center of life. They bore children well into their forties normally, and so as approaching sixty they would still be raising their own children. Now that's consistent with what we see in 1 Timothy.

In 1 Timothy chapter 5, and verse 9, it says, "Let a widow be put on the list," and we'll stop there for a moment. Now the early church had a number of spiritual responsibilities that were officially designated. There were elders, also known as pastors and overseers - we know about them. And there were deacons, both male and female, who served in the church. But in addition to that, apparently there was some official group of godly widows who served with the church. The church may well have helped to assist them in their needs, if indeed their husband didn't leave them support, or if their families couldn't support them, or if other women couldn't support them - all of those were to take place according to 1 Timothy chapter 5. In other words, if a woman was a widow, the other men in her family or extended family - sons, uncles, brothers, cousins, or whatever - were to support her. If she didn't have men who could, then other women were to support her. That's all outlined in the chapter. And if the other men and women weren't available to do that, then the church would care for her.

So, some of these widows would literally be physically cared for by the church. But apart from that there was a list of widows, whether cared for by the church or not, who were official servants of the church. And they would serve the church. They had a number of tasks. If you go back into the history of the church, they had fairly defined responsibility. They would visit the church's younger women -

that was a priority obviously drawn from Titus 2. They would visit these younger women to teach them, to instruct them, to help them in daily tasks, to show them things about being wives and about being mothers and about being homemakers, and they had an ongoing responsibility to be available to those women in the church who needed their help. They were also used to provide teaching and counseling when women had needs that were specific and problematic. They also visited the sick and the afflicted and those in prison. They provided hospitality to travelers, such as interim preachers, evangelists and missionaries, and traveling Christians who may be coming into town because they were being persecuted in another place. They had responsibility also to help with their own grandchildren and their extended family in whatever needs were there.

One of the ministries that they had that was quite unique was they would go through the city streets and the marketplace on a daily basis to pick up the babies that had been left there. Ancient times also experienced a woman's liberation movement, especially in the time of Paul. Women didn't have the means of abortion that people have today because they didn't have the medical advancement, so they gave birth to their baby and just left it in the marketplace. Male children would be picked up and trained to be gladiators. Female children would be picked up and trained to be prostitutes. In order to save these little lives, Christian widows - those who were on the church list - would comb the marketplace and the public places of the city daily, and they would scoop up the little lives and put them in Christian families so that they could be raised to be Christian young people. This was one of their responsibilities with abandoned babies.

And so, the church had these godly women on a list, and they represented the church. They were officially the church representatives. Now you'll notice that in order for a woman to be on the list she had to be 60 - put her on the list only if she's not less than 60 years, only if she is over 60 years of age. That seems to be the break point. And as I said, that would be the normal point in which your children are gone. Now many would be earlier than that in life, and maybe their children were gone. But they might have not gone through the menopause period; they might have still had physical desire for a man, and consequently it would be normal for them to remarry again, as the text will point out. But once they passed the point of 60, their-child bearing years are over, the years of sexual desire are over, and the responsibility of rearing children is over. They can then make a commitment to spend their life, the rest of the life that God gives them, in the service of the church. The Roman Empire, by the way, indicated 60 as the recognized age for someone who could be officially called old.

These women were to be models then of virtue. Their qualifications to be put on the list are quite interesting. Look at it in verse 9. First of all, they had to be at least 60 years or thereabouts. And they have to have had a reputation of being the wife of one man. That doesn't mean they only had one husband, it means "a one-woman man" in the Greek. I can only wish that they had translated that right, because every time it appears it's misleading. It is in the Greek a one-woman - they were a one-man woman. That's the idea. They were a one-man woman. That is to say, they were totally devoted to their husband. They may have been married a couple of times, perhaps widowed earlier in life, and would be instructed to marry again. It may have been they had an unbeliever depart and left them, and they then were free to remarry. The issue is not how many times they were married; the issue is were they known as a wife devoted to the man who was her husband. They were virtuous in that sense that they were loyal, faithful wives. That would be the moral qualification, a moral qualification.

Again I note, if a woman had lost her husband earlier in life and he had died, she is free to marry. In

fact, she's instructed to marry. Right here it tells us in the remaining part of the text that in verse 14, "Younger widows should get married again." First Corinthians 7:39 and 40 says that widows are to marry only in the Lord, so they should find a Christian husband and be married again, because they need their physical desire fulfilled. They may have time to bear more children. They need a father to care for the children. They have obvious reasons.

But in this situation you have a woman who is 60 years of age, her husband is gone. She has no compulsion for the physical aspects. She is willing to devote the rest of her life to Christ. She has no children in the home to raise. And she goes on the list of the church if she has been a moral woman, faithful to her husband. Then verse 10, if she had "a reputation for good works." That is to say, she has done those kinds of things that have demonstrated her excellent character. She is a noble woman. She has an unrelenting pursuit of doing good for others. She is unselfish. She is devoted to others like the woman of Proverbs 31, or like Dorcas who was always making garments for the poor.

And then, additionally, if she "has shown hospitality to strangers." "If she has washed saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress...if she has devoted herself to every good work." And then that one I skipped, which is really the heart of it, "if she's brought up children." This particular duty was for someone who had a godly reputation, who had cared for strangers, who had humbled herself to wash the dirty feet of those who walked in the dust or the mud - it was either one. She was known because she had devoted her whole life to every good work - utterly selfless - but she had brought up children. And the implication is they are godly children. She had lived in, as 1 Timothy 2:15 says, "faith, love and sanctity with self-restraint." And so she had preserved herself from the stigma that woman bears - having led the race into sin - by raising up a godly generation of children.

"Look in the congregation," says Paul. "You find those kinds of women, you put them on an official list, and you let them take care of the younger women. And you let them minister to the sick and the afflicted, and you let them take care of the abandoned babies and serve in any way they can - hospitality toward those who need it, care for those who need it, assisting all who are in distress." This is a woman who has relieved the afflicted. That's what "assisting those in distress" means. This is a woman who knows how to care for others. Her time has been spent. Her life has been spent on her children, on her husband, and on the needs of others. She is a woman known as one who does good work.

Now on the other hand, let's follow this text a little bit, verse 11, "Don't put younger widows on the list." Why? They don't want to be on it. Some will lose their husband, and they'll be so distressed and so bereft and mourning so deeply, and they'll say there never will be a man like him - "I never want to marry another; I don't want another man; he's the only man I ever want." And in the emotion of that moment and the devotion to that love that was there with that man, they will devote themselves to Christ and say, "I want to be on the list, I'll give the rest of my life to Christ, I don't ever want to marry again."

But, verse 11 says, "When they feel sensual desires," when the normal sex drive rises, "in disregard of Christ, they want to get married." And they will have made this public promise. And apparently there was some public forum in which this actually took place. And there will then be condemnation because either they will reluctantly keep their vow, or they will break their vow. In either place they will be condemned because they set aside their previous pledge. Don't let the younger women do this. They have a normal desire, which results in the bearing and the rearing of children, and the need for a husband, and all of that.

“At the same time,” he says in verse 13, “younger women who might be a bit immature will go around learning to be idle, going from house to house and not merely idle, but they'll gossip and be busybodies and talk about things not proper to mention.” They'll just go around talking. And instead of going and helping and teaching and instructing and counseling, they'll collect information here and move it over here. Collect more information here and move it over here. And pretty soon the thing will be all over the place. So don't let younger women do that. The younger women you must instruct, verse 14, “to get married, bear children, keep house, give the enemy no occasion for reproach; for some have already turned aside to follow Satan.”

That's sad. If they don't get married, their physical desire will lead them into sin. They need “to get married and bear children and keep house.” That's their domain. That's their area. That's their responsibility. That's their calling. That's their place. And that allows the enemy no occasion to bring reproach on those women who name the name of Christ and go out and scandalize the name of Christ by their sin. So don't put the younger women on the list.

So what we learn from that passage then is that there are younger women and older women. And the older women are kind of in the 60 and up category, and the younger women are below that, at least at the point where they're still bearing children - capable of bearing children, or rearing children. And if they're younger than that, they ought to get married. The desire, the physical desire, is still there, and perhaps there are even children still in the home from the husband who has died. And it's better for them to do what God has called them to do, and that is to care for those children, keep house, and don't give the enemy any opportunity to bring reproach on Christ.

Now the older women are the sixtyish and up, and we now know who the younger women are. And the duties and responsibilities of the older women, noted there in verse 10, really tell us what God expects a woman to do. She is to be devoted to her own husband; she is to bring up children; she is to show hospitality to strangers; she is to be a humble spirit, washing the saints' feet, even as Jesus and the disciples did in John 13. She is to assist the people under pressure. That means if somebody just lost a loved one, go make the meals, wash the clothes, care for the children. That's the kind of person she is to be. She is to be there assisting people under pressure and to be known as one who devotes herself to every good work on behalf of others and not herself. That's what she was when she was young, and that's what qualifies her to be on the list of widows when she grows old.

Now let's go back to Titus, and here with that as a background, in chapter 2, we hear some very familiar words. The young women were encouraged, you remember, in 1 Timothy 2 to - 1 Timothy 5 rather - to marry and bear children and all, and here's the same thing. “Encourage the young women to love their husbands, love their children, be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands.” And again I remind you that there's always a move against this, and it rises out of the fallen flesh of a woman who wants to lord it over her husband, who wants to express herself, who wants to run independent of the plan and purpose of God. That's what the sinful flesh does, and it's exacerbated by Satan as he develops the culture to call its siren call to the woman outside the home.

Now let's look at these ingredients very briefly because most of our time is gone, and I haven't even started the message. And if I spend two weeks - three weeks - on the women, I'll never hear the end of it because they'll think they got more than their share.

All right, verse 4, "Encourage these young women" - that is, "train them" - "in the matter of self-control to love their husbands." That's one word, *philandros*, "to be husband lovers." That's what it means in 1 Timothy 5, as we read, to be a one-man woman, totally devoted to your husband. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church." That's the key. "You love your wife like Christ loved the church." How did He love the church? He loved the church when the church was sinful. He loves us when we aren't worthy of His love. He loves us sacrificially. He loves us protectingly. That's how husbands are to love their wives, and that's how wives are to love their husbands. You're to be a husband lover. You're to love your husband.

You say, "You don't know my husband. I don't love my husband. My husband is not lovable. There is - he has turned me off. I don't love him anymore. I don't care for him anymore." My response to you is that is disobedience; that is disobedience to the clear Word of God. You are to love your husband. Listen, that doesn't mean that you're going to feel the rockets and hear the bells and whistles. I read *Newsweek* magazine two weeks ago. In their edition they said, "That goes in about two years because of chemical changes." Isn't that amazing? Marriage isn't all rockets and bells and whistles. It's a contented commitment, with an occasional rocket and maybe, and maybe a bell and a whistle now and then. It goes beyond that. It goes beyond that to a devotedness, to a level of friendship that runs deep and satisfying. And I'll tell you how it works. If you don't love your husband then you need to train yourself to love your husband. And the way you train yourself to love your husband is to continue to serve and serve, and do every good thing, and every kind thing, and every gracious thing, and every magnanimous thing. And you will make such a massive investment in him, you will say, "I got too much in this guy not to love him." It is a sin to disobey this command. It is a sacrificial love. It is not necessarily the love of emotion. It's the love of will and a deep commitment. And that's where healthy relationships begin. It's the kind of love Philippians 2 talks about when it says, "If there's any love then do this" - "let no man look on the things of his own life but the things of others; let each esteem others better than himself." It's that sacrificial, humble, condescending, self-effacing love.

Secondly, he says, "Teach these young women to love their children." That's one word, *philoteknos*, "to be children lovers," "to be children lovers." Women, this *is* your highest calling, to raise godly children (1 Timothy 2:15). We've been mentioning it all along. You will reverse the stigma of the curse by which women are stigmatized, because a woman led the race into sin. You will be preserved from that stigma when you rear a godly generation. That's your highest calling. Your greatest contribution comes in motherhood. That's generally true.

Now, let me hasten to say, there are some women that God wants to be single, and they're the exception. He doesn't want them to be married. They have what the New Testament calls a gift of singleness. First Corinthians 7 says that women who are single should remain single, if they can do that. So should men because they can devote their whole life to Christ and not be encumbered by having to care for a life partner, and a family, and children, and all of that. I understand that. I understand what immense freedom a man could have if he wasn't married and didn't have children. My God hasn't made me that way, obviously, but some are. And some women are designed by God to be single for the kingdom's sake. And, there are some women who are barren for the kingdom's sake, for God's divine purposes. There are some men who cannot produce children, and therefore their wives will never bear children. God knows that, and in His purpose and His providence that is a glorious and complete and total fulfillment for that individual woman. But those are the unique exceptions that God designs. The general rule is that women bear children and love the children they

bear.

Certainly in ancient times this would even go for those women who not bearing children would have adopted some of those children that the widows had scooped out of the marketplace and would therefore have the same responsibility for loving children who had been adopted. Obviously God doesn't want all women to be mothers or they would be. God has designed some women to have the uniqueness of singleness and others not to have children, for His own purpose. And we can thank God for what single women mean to the kingdom. And we can thank God - and I do daily - for what women who have no children mean to the kingdom because God has given them freedom to serve in unique ways. But generally speaking, women are mothers, and they are to bear children, and in bearing children they have then the responsibility to love those children. That means to sacrifice their life on the children's behalf. Again, the love is not an emotion. It's not standing in the corner gloating when your little child is all dressed up at how handsome or how beautiful she is. It is the responsibility of pouring your life sacrificially into that little life so that that child grows up to love Christ.

Women are to be taught, according to verse 5, "to be sensible." There's that *sōphrōn* root again – "to have sound judgment, common sense, right thinking, right priorities" - very basic. The older women come along and they teach the young women the common sense stuff of life, just the normal processes of knowing your priorities, thinking right, making sound judgment, applying wisdom.

You know - and so many young women today don't understand this – I, Patricia and I, have talked about this through the years. We can't imagine ever going to a marriage seminar. We can't imagine ever going to some kind of a child-raising seminar. And people say, "Why can't you imagine that?" And the reason is simply this, we were both raised in families where the biblical pattern was modeled. I'll tell you something that will shock you. I never in my lifetime have seen my father and mother argue. It's hard to pick a fight with me. I've never seen my parents argue. I've seen a model of a commitment to one another. I watched my parents raise children. My wife watched her parents raise children. Nobody needs to give me a book on how to do this. There's something built into the fabric of a home that becomes reproductive in the next generation. And when that gets severed, you have a major problem of trying to undo the bad modeling and restructure the whole thing.

That's why the Old Testament says, "Where you have wickedness in the family, it takes three or four generations to turn it around." It's not easy, and it's going to be a long time before it gets turned around in our own culture. But where we're living today in this society, it is desperately needed that some women come along and teach the young generation how to think right, what we think is common-sense parenting. That's why the whole parenting process is taught with such zeal in our church because we have to fill in the gap here with a second generation of women exposed to a feminist agenda, and coming out of broken homes, devastated marriages - some of them divorced, and some of them stayed together, but equally devastating.

Then he says, "Teach the young women to be pure" - *hagnos* in Greek – "chaste, morally pure, virtuous, sexually faithful" to their husbands. Teach them that they are devoted to one man and that's it. Morally pure. First Peter 3:3 says that women are not to adorn themselves merely on the external. It's fine to do a little work out there; we all appreciate it. But mostly - This is true, isn't it? - but mostly he says, don't be worried about "braiding your hair and wearing gold jewelry and putting on dresses; but you worry about the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit...precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times, the holy women...also used to

adorn themselves." So if you want to be a holy woman, you work on the inside. And that's what he's saying. Teach women to be adorning their heart. Teach women to be virtuous and godly on the inside.

Back in 1 Timothy chapter 2, and verse 9 and 10, that this same thing is said. Women are not to adorn themselves in any way that would call attention to themselves but they are to put on "proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with the braided hair and gold and pearls and costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as befits women and making a claim to godliness." So if you're going to claim godliness and virtue and holiness and purity, it ought to show up on the outside.

Those two words in 1 Timothy 2, "modestly and discreetly," very interesting. "Modestly" means "with a sense of shame, with a healthy blush." Not ashamed that you're a woman, but ashamed that you might cause someone to be distracted from worshiping God, or ashamed that you might cause someone to look at you and lust. You want to have that kind of sense of shame - the thought of inciting lust or distracting someone from worshiping God. And the idea of "discreetly" is the same root again, *sophro*, and again it means "controlling all your passions." Women who make a claim to godliness have their passions under control. They wouldn't do anything to excite lust. They wouldn't do anything to draw attention to themselves when God's people come together for worship. Holy women have always conducted themselves that way, so Paul says "you teach the young women to be pure like that."

And then he says, "workers at home." And here's the one that gets all the heat nowadays, because women don't want to work at home. Frankly, they're not at all interested in working at home if they can help it. Forty-five percent of the American workforce is women. *Megatrends 2000* says in the past twenty years U.S. women have taken two-thirds of the millions of new jobs, and that will continue. By the way, that directly contributes to continued male unemployment in the inner city, according to a Harvard University report done by a man named Harris. Because people will hire a woman before they'll hire a male black, sometimes even a Hispanic black male - a Hispanic male rather - or a black male. And so what happens is two out of three new jobs are taken by women because they'd rather deal with women than men, and that contributes to a rise in unemployment of the men. Fifty-six percent, says *Megatrends*, fifty-six percent of mothers with children under six work outside the home. Seventy-three percent of mothers with children six to seventeen work outside the home. By the year 2000 - that's in six years or so, seven years - ninety percent of women between sixteen and sixty-five will be at work outside the home. Nobody will be home, nobody.

Women don't want to be workers at home. Why? Because Satan sells the system on that. Why? Because it's anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Bible, and it devastates the testimony of the church. The word "workers at home" - one word in the Greek, *oikourgous* - from two root words, *ergon*, which means "work," and *oikos*, which means "house." It's simply the sphere of a woman's life is her home, that's her domain. It doesn't mean she has to be there 24 hours a day and can never leave. What - I'm not saying that because you don't want to lock her up with soap operas either, but what it does mean is that is the sphere of her life. That is her domain. It is not that she is simply to be home, but that the home is her sphere. The woman in Proverbs 31 left home when she needed to to buy a field. She left home to prepare that field. She left home and went afar to find things that would help the family. The woman did what she needed to do, but the focus of everything was the home. And that's where she poured her life, and she got up early and she went to bed late for the sake of the home. She is to be a home keeper. That's the sphere of her responsibility. That's her place of employment. That's where she should pour her life. For a mother to get a job outside the home and send the children to some

kind of daycare place is to shirk her God-given responsibility. It also is failure to understand that her husband is to be the provider, as Ephesians 5 makes very clear. Even if you wanted to work outside the home to pay for your children to go to a Christian school, you made a big mistake. Better that you should stay in the home and raise your own children to be godly than to pass it on to somebody else.

Now we know today that there are a lot of wonderful things that we have in the home that ancient people didn't have. I mean, you're not in there with some kind of a stone pot beating out the grain to make flour. And you're not down at the creeks slapping your clothes on a rock. We know that. And you're not spinning thread so that you can sew fabric - make fabric so you can sew garments - so we know you have more time. You need to be very careful how you use that time discreetly. You do have more time, and there may be things outside the home you can do that will assist the home, that will assist others, that may even be enterprising, like the Proverbs 31 woman and bring in a little bit of income. But any of those kind of things that you do, the home remains the constant and ongoing priority. Everything focuses on that.

When your children are grown and gone, or if God doesn't give you any children, you have a certain freedom. But even then in what you choose to do outside the home, you don't lose the responsibility for the home. You may be able to care for your home, and because you have no children still do some things outside. Your home may still be a haven for your husband. It may be a place where you can show hospitality. You may have opportunity to wash the saints' feet and do every good work and still do something outside the home, something noble. I always think it's wonderful when women work in Christian ministry when they don't have children at home, or when they teach little ones in school, or when they're involved in a Christian mission enterprise, or when they're involved in ministering to people in jail, or when they work in a hospital or with doctors and those who help people.

But you need to be careful even in doing that that you don't get yourself in a position where you are tempted. Because we all know, and the statistics are very clear on this, women who work outside the home have an exponential number of marital, extra-marital affairs when compared with women who are in the home, because of exposure, temptation. Plus, they find themselves not being subject to their own husbands, but subject to somebody else's husbands. You must make wise choices if you're going to take the freedom that you have in terms of time because your children are grown, because you can care for that home because of conveniences and choose where it is you're going to use your gifts and talents and abilities. And women have them to teach and lead and administrate and coordinate and serve and help and give and all of that, just like all of the gifts that are mentioned in the New Testament. You must choose wisely so you don't compromise yourself in any way. But your place is the home.

It's also tragic to realize that many women want nothing more than that. And they have an unfaithful husband who leaves them, they're stuck, aren't they, with children, no source of income, and forced in many cases to work outside the home to support the family. That's not right. First Timothy 5 makes it very clear: number one, other men in the extended family should care for that woman so she doesn't have to do that. They've already lost a father; now you're going to make them lose a mother, those little ones. If there's no other men in it, then it says in 1 Timothy 5 some other women ought to come to her aid, and if there are no women to do that, then the church ought to take care of her. But churches aren't even willing to do that. We've been involved in doing that for years at Grace Church where we have widows, or where we have single women whose husbands have been divorced, or in some cases where we have women with little children whose husbands are serving long prison

sentences, even life imprisonment. They lost a father; should they lose a mother?

The family, if you have some woman like that in your family, you need to support that woman. And if there's no one there, the church can come alongside, and we do much counseling in that area. But "a woman's place is in the home" only says half of it. "A woman's place is in the home," to me, doesn't sound right. A woman's responsibility is in the home. To say her place is in the home makes you think she just ought to sit there because that's where she belongs. No, that's where her duty and responsibility is. That's where her opportunity is to have the greatest impact on the world. A woman doesn't impact the world by getting a briefcase and going downtown. She impacts the world by raising a godly generation of men and women.

Obviously this is, this is very simple, direct teaching, and we know how to respond to it. At the same time, there are questions, and I know they can come up in your heart. You say, "Well, you know, what if I have an opportunity to be gone two hours in the morning or three hours, or what if I can go to the Christian school and help there for a few hours?" The answer to all of that is, if it does not impact your home, if it enhances and enriches the life in the home, if it accomplishes all the spiritual goals, then that's between you and the Lord and your husband and your family to work those things out. You understand the plan and the pattern that God has laid out. The specifics of how it fleshes out in your home are for you and the Lord and your family to work out. But what grieves me is this massive onslaught that says we've got to stamp out this whole idea of women staying at home.

And if you don't think that's it, listen to the agenda. Vivian Gornek, feminist author, University of Illinois, "Being a housewife is an illegitimate profession. That's the whole thrust. The choice to serve and be protected and planned toward being a family maker is a choice that shouldn't be." And then she says, "The heart of radical feminism is to change that."

Why do they care? You tell me. Why does some feminist woman care whether you're a homemaker? Why does she care? I'll tell you why, because her agenda isn't her agenda. It's the agenda of the enemy. It is an anti-God agenda intended to destroy the credibility of the church, because if you can get women who claim to be Christians to abandon the home, then you can pick up a Bible and stick it in their face and say, "You say you believe this? I don't think so. Therefore it must not be believable because you know what it says and you're not interested in believing it, and you claim to be a Christian." The agenda is - they don't care. They don't know what they're doing, but they don't care really whether you work. Satan cares to discredit the Bible; that's the issue. That's the level of the attack. See it for what it is and don't become victimized.

The home is where a woman provides the expressions of love for her husband and her children. The home is where she leads and guides and teaches and raises the godly generation. The home is where she is protected and secured from other men and potentially wicked relationships and abuses. The home is where she lodges strangers, washes saints' feet, shows hospitality, and devotes herself to every good work. That's her sphere. And whatever of that home and whatever of the goodness of her life she can take outside and not sacrifice the home is between her and the Lord, and her husband.

Proverbs 7:11 gives a definition of a prostitute. This is what it says, "She is boisterous and rebellious, her feet do not remain at home." She's not content to be at home. She's not content with that domain with that man. She wants to explore other options.

People today say, "Oh, a woman must work. She has to work to fulfill herself." That is ridiculous. That is not true. Her place that God has designed her to express herself most magnanimously is in the home for her family and friends and those in need.

In spite of all the clear teaching, Satan has allowed the church to get sucked into the lesbian-feminist agenda. This is of great consequence to the church for a couple of statistical reasons. Sixty percent of the church population is women. And in Bible-believing churches, only thirty-seven percent are men. And so this great, massive force of people who name the name of Christ are either living in affirmation of Scripture or in denial of it. Very important in terms of Christian testimony.

Then it says - and this is wonderful in verse 5 - "she should be kind," "she should be kind." What needs to be said about that? "Gentle, tender-hearted, merciful, thoughtful." And then lastly, "being subject to their own husbands." Not somebody else's husband but their own. That's an echo of Ephesians 5:22, "subject to their own husbands." A woman doesn't know how to bow her knee to God until she learns how to bow her knee to her husband. That doesn't mean a servile way. It simply means that she submits as God has designed the order. Christ, God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of the man, 1 Corinthians 11 says; and the man is the head of the woman, subject to her own husband.

I worry about women who get out and get under powerful male dominated environments. I worry about that because a woman responds, and a woman can be easily abused. I understand why all of this hue and cry of sexual harassment is going on, though it is way beyond any kind of rational approach, though it is way out of whack, and though as only another way for the feminists to achieve their agenda. It is nonetheless true that women in a male dominated place are going to get abused; there's no question about it. They're going to get exposed, at best, to innuendo, at worst to sexual involvement. A woman needs the protection, the saving sense of protection that a husband and a home provides. And all of that "so that the word of God may not be dishonored." It isn't so much for you. It's for God's Word so that it will not be *blasphēmēō*, "blasphemed." The honor of Scripture is at stake. And as I said at the beginning, an unbeliever can read this text and know whether we're obeying it. I mean, what do you think the unbeliever thinks of current Christianity if he knows anything about the Bible? He'd have to say, "Well, Christians certainly aren't serious about the Bible." It's really amazing.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon made this tribute to his wife. "She delights in her husband, in his person, his character, his affection. To her he is not only the chief and foremost of mankind, but in her eyes he is all in all. Her heart's love belongs to him and to him only. He is her little world, her paradise, her choice treasure. She is glad to sink her individuality in him. She seeks no renown for herself. His honor is reflected upon her and she rejoices in it. She will defend his name with her dying breath. Safe enough is he where she can speak for him. His smiling gratitude is all the reward she seeks, even in her dress she thinks of him and considers nothing beautiful which is distasteful to him. He has many objects in life, some of which she does not quite understand. But she believes them all, and anything she can do to promote them she delights to perform. Such a wife as a true spouse realizes the model marriage relation and sets forth what our oneness with the Lord ought to be."

Boy, what a joy to be married to someone like that. And you wonder why he was the man of God that he was? He had some tremendous support. And so it is that God has said, you want your church powerful in the world, this is how you are to live.

Father, we come to You now at the close of this service, very much aware of the fact that these things we have taught are clearly from You and clearly against everything that this culture stands for. First of all, Lord, we know that turning this thing around is a major enterprise that only You can do. But, Lord, we can deal with our own lives, and so I pray for the dear families of this church, the precious women of this church, old and young, the fathers and husbands. I pray, O God, that these things will be lived out in the homes and the families of our church that it might ignite a movement across this country that can bring back honor to Your Word. How can so many people say they're Christians and believe the Bible and live in total disregard of what it says and thus shame the very testimony of the One they proclaim? Lord, make us faithful in the disciplines of life to do what honors You. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

As I said in conclusion, I know there are a myriad of things that may flood your mind - exceptions here and there and everywhere - and what about a woman who is single, working in the world, and what about a woman who has no children working? And again I just remind you, those things you need to pray about and decide in your own family and then follow the leading of the Lord. And the first time there's indication that any environment like that is compromising your commitment to Christ, compromising your commitment to your husband, compromising your commitment to your home, you need to change that. And I can only pray that every gift and every talent and every opportunity that you have as a woman will be maximized with the home as the center priority, and then in whatever extending circumference God will allow, but always for His glory.

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