Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

God's Plan for Younger Men
Scripture: Titus 2:6-8
Code: 56-16

Open your Bible, if you will, to Titus chapter 2. We are continuing in our series in this chapter on the character of a healthy church, the character of a healthy church. We, the church of Jesus Christ, as I'm sure you know if you've been a part of our fellowship for any time, are here on earth for the purpose of being human agents to bring salvation to the lost. That's really what we're here for. We're here for the purpose of evangelism. We also engage in edification. We engage in ministry. We engage in prayers, worship, fellowship. But all of that will be perfected in heaven. Evangelism won't have any place there at all because the Bible is clear at the end of Revelation that no one who is a sinner unsaved will ever enter heaven.

And so, the Lord has put on hold the fullness of our fellowship and the fullness of our praise and worship, the fullness of our bliss and blessing, and left us here for the express purpose of being human agents of salvation for the lost. And I really think that, for the most part, the evangelical church understands that. For the most part, they agree on that purpose. However, they do not necessarily agree on the means for carrying it out. I suppose that isn't anything new. The church has always struggled with what technique or what methodology or what style it should use - what approach to reach the lost. The church has in the past, and I think is today as much as at any time in my life, been confused about how we are to evangelize, how we are to reach the unsaved.

It can even reach somewhat bizarre proportions. I doubt there has ever been anyone like Sister Paula. You may have read about her in *People* magazine. She describes herself as an open, transsexual Christian, preaching the gospel - Tammy Faye with a five-o'clock shadow. Sister Paul was born Larry Neilson and supposedly became a Christian in 1950 as a twelve-year-old, innately effeminate boy. After Larry became Paula in a sex change operation a few years ago, some female, Pentecostal, televangelist friend urged Larry/Paula to start a television ministry. *People* magazine describe Sister Paula as 53 years old, six feet one and a half inches tall and built like a linebacker.

Now obviously this is ultimately unthinkable, inconceivable, absolutely bizarre. And yet it does illustrate the fact that people think you can go to extreme lengths to become like the world and have a better chance of reaching the world. Can you imagine anything more incongruous or more profane than a transsexual evangelist? Yet Sister Paula believes that she can have a more effective ministry

to people in our generation, she says, than the, quote, "typical straight Christian." Sister Paula's philosophy is fundamentally the same philosophy as much of the church marketing that goes on today, although certainly none of them would want to see it taken to such an extreme. But the philosophy is if we're going to win the world we've got to get alongside them, become enough like them so they're not threatened by us. The notion that the church is to become like the world to win the world has frankly taken evangelicalism by storm today. That's why I'm writing a book on that very subject called *Ashamed of the Gospel*, which should be out in the summer.

We've really done everything we could to sidle up along with the world and sort of become a Christian counterpart to every worldly attraction. We have Christian motorcycle gangs, Christian body building teams, Christian dance clubs, Christian amusement parks, and I even read about a Christian nudist colony. Now wherever Christians got the idea that we would win the world by imitating the world, they didn't get it out of the Bible. There's not a shred of biblical justification for that kind of thinking. In fact, James made it very clear when he said friendship with the world is enmity with God. And John put it this way: "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." Those things are all in the process of perishing and have nothing to do with eternal issues.

If the marketing strategists are wrong, and if we don't have to become and shouldn't become like the world to win the world, then what do we do? What is to be our strategy? And not so much in terms of actually speaking the gospel, but what is the underlying issue that gives us a platform on which to speak? How do we win the attention of the world of sinners so they will at least listen to the truth? What should be our strategy? What should be our methodology, our technique, our marketing posture?

I think the principle is utterly foundational, and it is stated for us in Matthew chapter 5. Jesus put it as simply and directly as He could, and it cannot be improved upon. He said this: "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Jesus basically said the ultimate evangelistic platform is created by the virtue of your lives. When Carey was singing "We Are Called to Holiness," he was expressing that very truth. Our credibility in the world is our testimony. The platform from which we speak is virtue, godliness, righteousness, transformation. The greatest and the most powerful element of evangelism is not technique, it is not some marketing strategy, it is not cultural relevance, it is the power of a transformed life - collectively, the power of transformed lives in the church.

When the world looks and sees a person or people who are holy, righteous, virtuous; who are at peace, experiencing joy, blessed, happy, satisfied, fulfilled, and have hope in their hearts for eternity, they see the evidence of God's transforming power. That's the proof. That's the test. That's how you market the product - by letting people see what it is.

To convince a man that God can save, I need to show him a man He saved. To convince a man that God can give hope, I need to show him a man with hope. To convince a man that God can give peace, joy, love, I need to show him a man with peace, joy, and love. To convince a man that God can give complete and total and utter satisfaction, I need to show him a satisfied man. You see, the way we, the way we lay down the platform is by living the life. I'll say it again - the greatest and most powerful element of evangelism is not technique, it is not marketing strategy, it is not cultural relevance - it is the power of transformed lives.

We are so to live, said Jesus, so to live to the glory of God that men can see the beauty of what God has done in us. It's what we've already looked at and we shall see again in Titus 2:10 – “we adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.” What does that mean? We demonstrate the beauty of a saving God by showing saved lives. Sinners have to see the transforming power of Christ's presence, not in some clever technique but in someone's life.

That is exactly what Paul is calling for here in Titus. He knows what the evangelistic strategy is to reach the remainder of the island of Crete and wherever else the Cretan Christians might journey. He knows what the issues at hand are. He knows what has to be done to make the Word of God to be honored, as he says in verse 5; to silence the opposers, as he says in verse 8; and “to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect,” as he said in verse 10. He knows exactly what to do, and that's what he calls for in chapter 2 - godly living.

We must proclaim the saving message, yes. We must give a clear word about sin and judgment and repentance and faith. But it has to be made believable by our lives. It does no good to speak about a God who can save when you show a life that doesn't evidence it.

Down in verse 11 of our chapter; look at it for a moment. It is affirmed to us that “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men." That ties in with verse 10 where God was called “our Savior.” God is a saving God; that's Paul's point. He's all about the business of saving people. And because He is a saving God and His grace has appeared to bring salvation to all men, He has therefore, verse 12, “instructed us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and live sensibly, righteously, godly in the present age,” because that is the way we will make the gospel credible. He

saves us, empowers us unto godliness, so that that godliness becomes the platform for the gospel. Where you have godly lives you have people who can by the impact of their transformed lives reach the lost. That's why Peter says in 1 Peter 1:16, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," quoting God. That's why Peter says that God has called us to be “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession,” in order that we might so live to silence the ignorance of foolish men who would think to criticize God.

But what the contemporary church is into is not holy living, it is worldliness. They think that rather than being separate from the world and thereby laying a foundation of credibility on which to witness, you need to be like the world. They don't call it worldliness. They have a new word for it; it's called contextualization, which is a fancy word for worldliness. The contextualization of the gospel today has infected the church with the spirit of the age. It has opened the church's doors wide for worldliness and shallowness, and in some cases a crass party atmosphere. The world now sets the agenda for the church.

This has been demonstrated clearly in a book by James Davidson Hunter, who is a sociology professor at the University of Virginia. And Hunter surveyed students in evangelical colleges and seminaries and concluded that evangelical Christianity has changed dramatically in the past three decades, so we've lived right through the heart of the change. He found that young evangelicals have become significantly more tolerant of activities once viewed as worldly or immoral, such as smoking, using marijuana, attending R-rated movies, and premarital sex. Hunter writes, quote: "The symbolic boundaries which previously defined moral propriety for conservative Protestantism have lost a measure of clarity. Many of the distinctions separating Christian conduct from worldly conduct have been challenged if not altogether undermined. Even the words ‘worldly’ and ‘worldliness’ have within a generation lost most of their traditional meaning. The traditional meaning of ‘worldliness’ has indeed lost its relevance for the coming generation of evangelicals," end quote.

Here is an outside observer simply saying the church has become worldly. How is it that they know that and we don't? What Hunter noted among evangelical students is a reflection of what has happened in large measure to the evangelical church as a whole. The average church, I'm afraid, may care far more about the world's opinion than they do about God's. They're so engrossed in trying to please non-Christians they may have little thought for pleasing God Himself. And you might conclude that the church has been so over-contextualized as to become worldly.

Now if we're going to accomplish the goal of evangelism, the God-given task of reaching the lost, it all starts with the kind of people we are - not the technique. Ephesians 2:10 says that the Lord saved us

“unto good works, which God before ordained that we should walk in them.” And Philippians chapter 2 - that very dramatic and powerful text - verse 15, we are “to be blameless, innocent children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world." It is our blamelessness, it is our innocence, it is our godliness in the midst of crooked, perverse people that lay the platform on which we hold fast the Word of life.

Now, because that is so essential and basic, Paul instructs Titus here in chapter 2 to bring the churches at Crete up to a standard of virtue. That's what chapter 2 is all about. God is a saving God, and God has saved people in order that they might live godly lives, in order that others might also be saved. So in the second chapter Paul is writing to his young son in the faith, Titus, and he is telling him how to get the church in every city throughout Crete - and you remember there were many of them - up to the place they need to be in terms of virtue to make the gospel believable.

First of all, in verse 1, he gave him a general command when he told him to “speak the things fitting for sound doctrine.” He knows that godly living is dependent upon a proper understanding of God's Word. You can't live a good theology unless you've got one. And so he starts out by saying you've got to “speak the things fitting for sound doctrine.” You lay the foundation of divine truth.

Then he says you've got to approach every group in the church. The older men, verse 2, are to be taught “to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and perseverance.” The older women, in verse 3, are to be taught “to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good.” And then the younger women are to be taught “to love their husbands, love their children, be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.”

In other words, as a shepherd and a pastor, you've got to do for old men what is most needful for them to maintain their testimony; and for old women what is needful for them; and for young women, what is needful for them. And this morning we come to the fourth category, young men. Verse 6, "Likewise, urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity and doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us."

Having discussed the old men, the old women, the young women, and now he comes to the young men. This is most important to Titus because he is one of them - very likely a little bit younger than Timothy, who was probably in his upper thirties, we find Titus maybe in his early thirties. Much younger than Paul, who now describes himself as the aged - he has gone past the sixty mark -

somewhere in his middle sixties. But Titus is specifically a young man himself, and so he has a unique contribution to make to young men that he couldn't make to old men - nor could he make it to old women or young women since he does not understand personally the role that they uniquely play. So this is really his group. Therefore, though verse 6 is directed at the young men, verses 7 and 8 are directed at Titus.

You say, "Is this a change? Is there only one verse, verse 6, very briefly addressed to young men and then he goes on to talk to Titus?" No, I think the whole thing relates to young men, and what he says to young men in general in verse 6 he says to Titus in specific, in verses 7 and 8, because Titus is to be the example to all young men. This is setting a pace of spiritual character and spiritual devotion that he couldn't set for older men, not having reached that point in life, and he couldn't set for older women or younger women because he does not know fully and personally the role of women. This is his group, and so he is called on not only to exhort them in verse 6, but to set the example for them in verses 7 and 8. All of it then relates through him to the young men.

Three aspects of responsibility become obvious here: exhortation, example, and effect. Let's start with exhortation, verse 6. "Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things." “Likewise” is just a word transition that introduces a new category, like the prior three categories. In the same way as other groups have been called to live a godly standard and the unique things of their particular role are addressed, so in the case of young men. Here Titus is encouraged to take up personal leadership and personal care over young men of which he is one. And this would be, no doubt, the greatest emphasis of his life and ministry. Older men would need to be taught by other older men; older women would need to be encouraged and instructed by other older men or older women; younger men were to be instructed by - I should say, younger women were to be instructed by older women. And now the young men are instructed by one of them who is godly, though young, namely Titus.

Now what about young men? How young is young? Well, men, you're going to rejoice as the ladies did a few weeks ago to know that this relates to anyone under sixty. You would consider yourself to be young; enjoy it while you can. It refers, generally speaking, to men under sixty since sixty seems to be not only the cultural break point in that time, but even the one which Paul identifies in 1 Timothy when he talks about widows who are over the age of sixty. Young men fill up a large category, then, somewhere from say twenty to sixty, or thereabouts. And young men have their own set of special problems and dangers. They are maybe more intense in some ways in the earlier part of that vast period called young. But they seem to stretch through the whole period. There, the time when men are still basically virile and strong and aggressive, to one degree or another, and healthy and somewhat ambitious. And those are dangerous years for all of us men.

I thought about the dangers that come to young men, and I thought I might share some of them with you. First of all, there is the danger of laziness, laziness. You might call it indulgence. This is usually programmed. But it's also innate in fallenness. Man, generally speaking, is lazy. He needs some compunctions and some controls and some strong motivations to work. But general laziness can be exacerbated in the home when men are young. Lazy men are usually produced that lack discipline, where they're never really taught to pull in the loose ends of their life and be constructive. Lazy men are also produced in homes where there is partiality, where for whatever reason the parents have selected this particular individual for particular benefit and partiality. And so he does not see himself as one among many but one above many, and therefore looks not at what he can do to serve others but what others can do to serve him, and that creates laziness.

Lazy men are usually produced also in homes where they were never taught hard work, homes where they were indulged and had plenty of money and plenty of goods. Lazy men are produced in homes where parents are absent, where there is no father. Lazy men are produced in homes where there is no particular concern about watching over them, and they are left to themselves without caring, without discipline, without work. And left to do what they please, young men will choose to do nothing beneficial. They become victims of their own program - lethargy. It's a dangerous time to be young if you don't learn discipline, if you don't learn work, if you don't learn diligence.

Secondly, another danger of youth is freedom, freedom. Turning young people loose from the family confines, the family accountability, the family scrutiny, too soon, too fast, too far - they get a car and they have total freedom. They're out from under strong influence; they're out from under restraint. They're out from under consequences of their behavior. They're out from under instruction. They're out from under discipline. They're out from under fatherly control. And when they begin to do what they please in their freedom they usually please to do what is not honoring to God or productive.

The third danger is a decadent culture. Young men being raised in a decadent culture are accustomed to vice. Listen carefully. Familiarity with vice does not produce disgust, it produces attachment. Familiarity with vice does not produce disgust, it produces attachment. Moral perceptions are blurred, sensibilities to evil are dulled, and when young people - young men - become accustom to vice they are victimized by its allurements.

Fourthly, another danger that comes to young men is godless education. They are exposed in their education to attacks on God, attacks on Christ - both overt and covert. They are exposed to attacks on the Bible. Christianity is either ignored, laughed at, jeered at, or not considered at all as

intellectual. They go through a process of education that basically leaves God out or defines Him in human terms, and it's powerful stuff because mentors and teachers and professors carry authority with them. It's a dangerous time as the foundations of life and the belief in God, which is so innate to the human heart and the reasonings as indicated in Romans 1, are attacked and devastated and shattered in the educational process and men lose their sense of reality about God.

And then in a general category, number five, I would say it's dangerous just because of overall immaturity. Immaturity has its own problems. Somebody said it's too bad youth has to be wasted on the young, but that's how it is. And youth, because it is youth, is immature. Because it's immature it has its own set of problems. For example, temptation is strongest in youth. Lusts are most compelling at that time. Habits are formed that rarely can be killed, even in old age. I have stood by the bed of dying men who have confessed to me with tears that they have never been able to overcome the habits of pornography that they began when they were youth. Youth is a time that presents more opportunity for sin, more frequent opportunity for sin. Youth is a time when ambition is strong, when pride is controlling. Youth is a time of unwarranted confidence - confidence you don't deserve because it's never been tested and you've never been proven. It's a time of imagined invincibility. It's a time of lacking of experience, and experience mellows and softens and brings reality. It's a dangerous, dangerous time. And the future of the church is yet dependent on young men growing up in such dangerous times.

So says Paul to Titus – “urge the young men to be sensible,” “to get control of themselves,” he means. The word "urge" *parakale*, “come alongside and exhort or encourage” - a familiar New Testament word. It means “to instruct, to teach, to counsel, direct, to guide, to exhort, to admonish.” It's a method of influencing through the spoken word, is what it is; a method of influencing through the spoken word – “come alongside and instruct them to be sensible.” Now that word simply means “to control themselves.” It's that same word, *sphrone*. We've looked at it a number of times. We saw it in chapter 1, verse 8; chapter 2, verse 2, 4, 5. We'll see it again down in verse 12. That common word that simply means “to develop self-mastery, self-control, balance”; “to get their faculties and their appetites, their longings and the desires into harness, to develop discernment and judgment.” Such exhortation, by the way, appears similarly to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:22. It appears in 1 Peter 5:5. Young men must have self-control, self-mastery, balance. They must exhibit power over their appetites and their faculties. These are essential if they are to be godly. They've got to control their lives. That means, parents, that when you are raising your children you need to teach your children conformity to holy standards, and that means you need to control them so that your control becomes their control in time.

And then would you please notice the first three words of verse 7 - they really belong at the end of verse 6. The verse numbers are not inspired. They were put in later by men, and I think that there are a number of reasons why we would include that phrase at the end of verse 6 so that it reads, "Likewise urge the young men to be sensible in all things," “in all things." First of all, that means that verse 7 begins with "Show yourself" and moves to the example model - "Show yourself to be an example" - from the exhortation emphasis of verse 6. The word "yourself" then, in verse 7, becomes properly emphatic and introduces a new thought.

So the phrase "in all things" fits better at the end of verse 6 and stretches this matter of mental balance and self-mastery and self-control and balanced behavior in the Christian life to an almost infinite level – “in *all* things.” Young men - so potentially volatile, impulsive, passionate, arrogant, ambitious, inexperienced - need to become the masters of all the areas of their lives. Everything needs to come under control. Paul said, "I beat my body to bring it into submission." He reminded us “to walk in the Spirit,” Galatians 5, “and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.”

So, Paul says you exhort young men to walk in the Spirit, to seek with all their might, to harness themselves and live in spiritual balance and self-control, and not to become victimized by those dangers that are lurking all around them.

Having given that exhortation he then turns to the second point, example, and sets up Titus to be an example of how one lives a balanced life. You'll notice in verse 7 the word "example," and that's obviously the key to it. He is now going to say to Titus, "Look, for the sake of the young men exhort them, and that is to confront them verbally, but also for the sake of the young men set an example, and that is to confront them with the pattern of your life so that they can copy what you are." Any exhortation lacks force and impact and power without an example. In fact, exhortation without example is that old word "hypocrisy." And hypocrisy never teaches people to do right; it always teaches people to do wrong.

Paul taught and lived. In Acts 20 he could have just quoted, "It is more blessed to give than receive," to instruct them that they should be generous givers. But he didn't just quote that saying of Jesus. He said, "You know how I was when I was with you. You know that for the space of three years I ceased not night and day with tears to give you what you needed by way of warning. You know that I never coveted any man's silver, any man's gold, or any man's clothing. You know the sacrifices I made to earn my own living and the living of everybody around me, and now I say to you, ‘It is more blessed to give than receive,’ and you know what I mean because you saw it in my life.”

In Hebrews chapter 13, verse 7, we are told to follow the faith of those who are over us, not just to hear what they say but to follow their faith, to live the way they lived. In Philippians chapter 3, and verse 17, Paul says, "Join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us." In 1 Corinthians 4:16 Paul says, "Be imitators of me." In 1 Corinthians 11:1 he says, "Be imitators of me,...as I...am of Christ." There is the issue of example.

And nowhere is it more delineated than in 1 Timothy 4:12, you might want to look at that for a moment, a familiar verse. First Timothy 4:12, writing to another young man, Timothy, Paul says, "Don't let anybody look down on your youthfulness" - “Don't let anybody criticize you just because you're young” - "but rather show yourself an example" - the very same phrase he gave to Titus. But here he delineates five categories: speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. In all those areas of life you be a pattern that others can follow.

“Speech” - that's your conversation, what comes out of your mouth. “Conduct” - that's your lifestyle, the things you do, the places you go, the possessions you accumulate - every aspect of life. “Love” - that's your self-sacrificing service on behalf of others. Don't ask them to do it unless you're demonstrating your sacrificial life as well. “Faith” - that means faithfulness, or consistency; demonstrate that you're not a flash in the pan, you're not a shooting star, you're not a comet, you're there for the long haul. You're not a spiritual sprinter. You're consistent; you're trustworthy; you're faithful; you're unwavering; you're uncompromising; you're from start to finish. And then he adds “purity” - *hagneia,* which has to do with moral, sexual purity on the inside and the outside. “Be an example in all those areas - what you say, what you do, how you treat other people, your consistency, and your moral purity. Be an example.”

Absolutely crucial, and I'll go so far as to say it is the single greatest aspect of leadership. It doesn't matter what you say if you don't live it - you're nothing but a hypocrite. People will cancel out what you say and descend to where you live. Now let's go back to Titus.

So, example is crucial in the teaching of Paul. It's crucial in the teaching of the New Testament. It's crucial in the life of the church. And young men have a responsibility to set an example - certainly Titus is one - an example that others can follow. This, of course, is a challenge to every young man in ministry, as it is to me even now as one who is on the top hand of being a young man but once was on the bottom end of being a young man. All through the years of ministry here it has been of equal concern to me, along with my preaching the truth to you, that I live the truth before you lest my preaching become shallow, unbelievable, and hypocritical. And so he says to Titus, "It's absolutely

crucial that you be an example."

The word "example," a very interesting word. It literally means “a blow,” like you would do with a hammer. In fact, in John 20:25 the same word is used - "example" - to describe the print of the nails in the hands of Jesus. When the hammer went in and drove the nail through, it left the print of the nail. That's the idea. It's the word for “a die, a mold, a model, a pattern you would trace over, some imprint or impress.” You're to be that. You're to be the perfect living imprint of virtue, the model that others can follow, the life they can trace their own life on. This is crucial in influencing young men because young men look up to other men. They look up to men; they want a hero that they can follow - crucial that you live to become that spiritual hero.

Contrast with that Matthew 23:3, when Jesus indicted the Pharisees and said, “You don't want to be like them, because they say and they don't do. You don't want to be like that.” Titus was called to be an example in a very broad area. Look at this, “be an example of good deeds.” That's about as broad as you can get. “Good” is *kalos*. It doesn't mean superficial, cosmetic good. It means “inherent good, righteousness, nobility, moral excellence.” So he says, “You be an example in the whole range of deeds, works, efforts” - that could be called righteous. You be a pattern of spiritual goodness and righteousness that shows up in every single thing you do. This is referring, obviously, to general conduct and general behavior. Your life is to be full of good works as an example to other young men of how they're to live. Young men, that's to be your life. You begin to control your life when you begin to understand that God wants your life to be full of good, righteous, holy deeds.

Then there's another matter presented to him - not only in this broad category of good deeds, but notice what he adds in verse 7. In the New American Standard text it reads, "with purity in doctrine." I want to talk to you about that a moment because I think it can be best understood in a way other than what appears by reading it. It sounds like he's telling Timothy to make sure - Titus rather - to make sure he's an example of pure doctrine. I don't think that's it at all. What he is saying to him is this: “In the matter of the teaching, you be an example of” - literally in the Greek – “uncorruptness.”

Now let me tell you what he means. The word “uncorruptness” is from the word *phtheir*, and if you put a little "a" on the front – *aphthoria* - it makes it a negative. We have that in English even sometimes. For example, we say a person is pathetic. That means they're sympathetic, they're compassionate, they're caring, they're tender, they have pathos. If we say someone is apathetic we mean they’re indifferent, they're apathetic, they have “a - pathy.” So we use the same - what they call an alpha or an "a privative" - which negates a word. So here you have a word that means “corruptness, corruption” - depravity with an “a” in the front of it – “uncorrupt, non-depraved.” By the way, it is used,

this word is used in 2 Peter 1:4; 2 Peter 2:19 and translated “corruption” – *phtheir* – “corruption.” It has the idea of moral filth. It is also used, in another form, of a seducer or a rapist, and of an abortionist in extrabiblical literature.

So it refers to a corrupt, filthy, immoral, depraved seducer - an abortionist, the worst of behaviors. You add the alpha and you get *uncorruptness*. So what he is saying is it's a word that talks about behavior. It's a word that talks about conduct. And he is saying, “When it comes to the teaching, you live it without corruption.” That's what he's saying. The word “teaching,” *didaskalia*, is the word that's used fifteen times in the pastoral epistles; it's always translated “teaching” or “doctrine.” So, “in the matter of *the* teaching” - the Christian teaching, the doctrine – “you maintain uncorrupted obedience” - that's what he's saying. That's what young men must do. Young men must know the Word of God, and young men must live according to it. That's integrity. The point is not that Titus is to speak pure doctrine. That was already told him in verse 1. He was already told to speak sound doctrine. Now he is being told to live in perfect accord with it, without defect. This also is not the exhortation section. If he was exhorting him to teach a certain way, you may have found it in verse 6. Here he's talking about his example of living, and he is saying “maintain an example that shows uncorruptness as regards revealed truth.”

There's a psalm - Psalm 119, very familiar to us - that basically has a couple of verses that reinforce this same great truth. Listen to what it says in verse 9 of Psalm 119, "How can a young man keep his way pure?” - How? – “By keeping it according to Thy Word.” That's it. If you're going to be an example in every area, then you've got to line up with the Word and live in an uncorrupted way. That's why the psalmist then says in verse 10, "With all my heart I sought Thee; do not let me wander from Thy commandments. Thy word I have kept in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." What keeps you in line is the Word and the pure obedience to it. Put the teaching in the heart and then submit to it, obey it, and live out the teaching of Scripture. Thus Titus would be a model of integrity, consistent living, which would demonstrate to all the rest of the young men exactly how they were to live.

And that's how you're to live, young man. There's no premium, there's no premium on “sowing your wild oats” while you're young. God doesn't put any premium on adolescent iniquity, or on the iniquity of youth, or on the iniquity of adulthood. There is no provision in God's plan for you to have years and years of sinning. At some point in time you stop that profligate life and become sage and obedient in your old age. Sin at any time in life is an offense to God, even in youth. Youth is no excuse for it. The Holy Spirit can restrain it. And if one puts the Word of God in the heart, lives close to the Word of God, he can be uncorrupt in living according to the teaching.

Then he adds another word at the end of verse 7, "dignified," *semnots*. It's used in 1 Timothy 3:8 and 11 to speak of deacons. It means “seriousness,” “seriousness.” He's saying, “You need to be an example to young men of seriousness.” Youth tends to be somewhat frivolous, wouldn't you say? Oh particularly in our culture where we have taken entertainment to the level of a destructive disease, particularly in our culture where we live for entertainment, frivolity, trivia - dominates our culture. People can be frivolous and lack the ability to think seriously. Young men are to learn to think seriously. Does that mean you don't laugh? No, you do laugh. God has given us laughter as a gift from Him, and there are times of joy and there's a season to laugh. But what it does mean is that you understand that things are serious, and you need to be serious when you're dealing with serious things.

I suppose the error that Paul would have in mind of young men is not that they laugh when they should laugh, but that they laugh when they should cry. They should have a mature understanding of the issues of life, death, time and eternity.

And then in verse 8 he adds a final feature of this exemplary living. He says you are to be “sound in speech which is beyond reproach.” That's right back where he started when he wrote to Timothy to be an example. He started with Timothy on the subject of speech and then moved to others. Here he starts with others and moves to this one of speech with Titus. “Speech” is the word *logos*. Some have thought this meant “sound in the Word, having sound theology.” No, Titus already has sound theology. He's already been instructed to teach that “sound theology” in verse 1. He must already know sound theology very, very well because he's going to have to be able to locate and identify men who hold fast to the faithful Word, as indicated in chapter 1. He's not telling him here to teach sound theology. He's simply telling him to talk in a healthy way. The word *logos* doesn't always mean “the Word of God.” It can mean “talk, language, speech.” That's what it means in Ephesians 4:29. It's just the word for “speech.” That's what it means in Colossians 4:6, “Let your *speech* be always with grace.”

The issue is not teaching; it's not theology. And the word "sound" here, *hugis*, is from *hugiain*, which means “to be healthy” or “to be wholesome.” We get the word *hygiene* from it, “to induce health, life-giving, health-giving.” “Let your speech minister grace to the hearers. Let it be health-giving, spiritually healthy, spiritually life-giving, edifying, building up.” How healthy? “So that it is beyond reproach.” It is unable to be accused; it is unable to be condemned.

“Titus, look, you've got a tremendous job. I want young men to be sensible. I want their lives under control, and in order to get their lives under control, they have to be committed to good deeds. They have to be committed to living lives of uncorruptness alongside the truth. They have to be committed to being serious about serious matters. And they have to speak with their mouths the things that are wholesome and healthy and life-giving and spiritually edifying. Titus, you not only need to tell them that, you need to show them how.”

The young man, then, has a goal in his life. It's the goal for all of us who could still be considered young - to be engaged in noble, excellent works of righteousness that are not cosmetically good, but essentially good; to give our lives to good things, things that honor God, that are spiritually noble, kingdom building. We have an obligation, as well, to live purely according to the standard of Scripture, with integrity, obeying it. We have an obligation to maintain seriousness regarding holy issues and the issues of life. We have an obligation to speak in such a way that out of our mouth come words that minister spiritual health to everyone. And our speech is so impeccable that no one can ever criticize it. This is what young men are to be.

God doesn't want to evaluate a man like the world does. How does the world evaluate a man? They evaluate a man by what he does for a job, or who he knows, or what he owns. None of that means anything to God, who evaluates a man by what he is.

Look at Ecclesiastes for a moment, because there's a good concluding exhortation in chapter 11. Ecclesiastes chapter 11, verse 9, is a good summation of what we have just learned. "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood” - or your youth – “and let your heart be pleasant during the days of your young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes." Stop there for a moment.

He's saying, “You ought to enjoy your youth. There's nothing wrong with having fun and joy. There's nothing wrong with your heart being pleasant during the days of your young manhood. There's nothing wrong with the thrills of youth and the exhilaration of adventure and discovery and love - achievement. Nothing wrong with that. Nothing wrong with following the impulses of your heart, those desires, those longings, those adventures that you really would love to fulfill. Nothing wrong with somehow capturing the delights and desires of your eyes. But just know this, God's going to bring you to judgment for all those things. You're going to have to stand before God to account for the fact that some of those were wrong desires. And some of those were wrong impulses. And some of that rejoicing was irresponsible.”

God doesn't want to rain on your parade. God doesn't want to stop your joy and your fun in youth. He just wants you to know you've got to give account for it. So, verse 10, “remove vexation.” What's that? “Sadness, remorse, what makes you sorry.” Take anything out of your life that's going to leave you with guilt and sorrow. Remove it from your heart. "And then put away” - not pain - but “put away,” - you'll see in the margin – “evil from your body" - anything that's going to produce an evil consequence, that's going to inflict you with evil, because childhood in the prime of life are fleeting. And why would you want to fill it up with stuff that makes you sad and hurts you? Put away the stuff that's going to make you pain. Put away the stuff that's going to make you weep, the things that are going to bring you into judgment before God. Enjoy your youth but get it under control.

How do you do that? Verse 1 of chapter 12, you do it by “remembering your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you'll say, ‘I have no delight in them’” - the day is going to come when you can't enjoy your old age. “The day is going to come when you're going to be old, and I'll promise you won't enjoy it,” he says. “You won't enjoy it, but you know what you will enjoy in your old age? You will enjoy the wonderful memories of a well-spent youth. But if when you get old and you can't enjoy your old age and you can't enjoy the memories of your youth, then you've got no delight. So live your life in youth so that you can enjoy it all over again in old age.”

And then finally, the effect - to the exhortation and the example we add the effect. Why all of this? Why are young men to live this way? Why are young women to live this way? Older women, older men? Here it is, verse 8 - the purpose clause, the purpose result clause - "In order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.” So that you can silence the critics of the faith, so that you will cause people to be shamed when they criticize Christianity. Boy, we're a long way from that in this world, aren't we? Wow, people criticize Christianity mercilessly, and they don't feel ashamed to do it. They would feel ashamed if their criticisms were obvious lies because of the virtue of God's people, wouldn't they?

The “opponent,” that's a singular word - any opponent, any opposer - it's used in Acts 26:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:15 to describe someone who is hostile. In Acts 28:17, it's used for something contrary. It's used in the gospels, in another form, of winds that are contrary to the ship, keeping it from going the way it should go. “Anybody who opposes” - he could be referring to the Cretan errorists and false teachers described back in chapter 1, starting in verse 10, called “rebellious men, empty talkers, deceivers,” and so forth. But anybody who comes against the Christian faith you need to “put to shame.” What does that mean? “To embarrass them. To humiliate them. To make them look stupid. To disgrace them.” Not for that as an end in itself, but “to shame them into repentance, to

shame them into repentance." You need to so live that the opposers of Christianity are embarrassed, humiliated, disgraced because there's nothing bad they can legitimately say about us. And so they look like fools for saying those lies that they say.

Notice the word "us." You might have missed that. "Us" - Paul is throwing himself in there. You say, "Paul, you're not even in Crete. How in the world is the opponent going to say anything bad about you?" Here's his point - one Christian stands for all. Is that not true? "Titus, what you do will affect me. If you destroy the credibility of Christian faith, I go down with you." We have solidarity at that point. One Christian's failure affects the rest. One's reproach falls on his brother and his sister. One's iniquity casts a shadow over the church.

The word "bad" is *phaulos*. It means "worthless." "Don't let them say that we're worthless. Don't let them say that our Christianity has no value. Don't let them speak evil against us. Silence them, and not only silence them but put them to outright shame for the falseness of their accusations, which is so evident because of the known testimony that you maintain. And if you don't, if anyone of you don't, we all feel the pain."

Our testimony in this community right here in Southern California is at stake, and your life may be the issue, because if you give people just cause to criticize Christianity and to say, "Well if God is a saving God, I sure can't tell it from your life," or, "If the Word of God is so wonderful and you say you believe it, I don't see that it's made any change in your life." If you as an individual are providing that kind of ground for criticism, the shadow falls on all of us, and the worst of it is it falls on the Lord Himself. Young men, we have much to uphold.

In his book *Healing the Masculine Soul*, Gordon Dalby says, "Men do not know who they are as men." They don't know who they are. He goes on to say, "They only know what they do; they don't know who they are." We need to know who we are, and we need to be who God wants us to be. *USA Today* reports that men in our world are confused, frustrated, unsure of themselves as compared to men just thirty years ago. It goes on to say that we've been blasted by women to the point where we are now the weaker sex.

If we're going to evangelize the world, something is going to have to change. According to 1 Corinthians 16:13, we're going to have to act like men and be the leaders in the church. A church must have godly leaders. Leonard LaSore wrote, "Men have a mandate from God that we cannot and must not abdicate, to be healers of the world's misery, bearers of God's standard, and heralds of His Word."

Father, we thank You this morning for this instruction to the young men. And we pray that we might be faithful as a very important part of Your church, who provide the church's leadership in the present and the future, as those who live life out in the world, outside the home, and who have the greatest opportunity to demonstrate godliness in the face of a watching world and make our Savior desirable. We pray, O God, that You'll give us the strength to be what we need to be. And help us to realize that the way in which we win the world is not by finding out what they want, but by demonstrating to them how utterly unlike them we are, how transcendent we are, how totally delivered we are from the things that tie them down and devastate them – namely, to show them that we have what they don't have, a saving God who transformed our life. Don't let us be like the world. Let the world want to be like us. Give us, Lord, the strength of the Spirit - as young men - to live the way You want us to live, in order that Your Word would be honored, Your name exalted, and even our opponents shamed into repentance for the Savior's sake. And in His name we do ask. Amen.

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