

Unit Theme: Timothy, Titus, Philemon

July 14, 2024 (Lesson 7)

EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN MENTORING

1. **Men Mentoring Men** (1 Timothy 5:1; Titus 2:1-2, 6-8)
2. **Women Mentors and Widows** (1 Timothy 5:2-4; Titus 2:3-5)
3. **Encourage Good and Pure Behavior** (Titus 2:9-15)

Central Truth: God uses a variety of relationships in churches to produce change in His people.

Focus: Discuss mentoring strategies and implement them in the local church.

Evangelism Emphasis: Evangelism can begin through mentoring relationships.

Golden Text: “In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned” (Titus 2:7-8a).

The term *mentor* traces its origin to ancient Greek literature when Homer, in the *Odyssey*, wrote of the mythological King Odysseus of Ithaca leaving his wife, Penelope, and his son, Telemachus, to lead his army. He placed Telemachus under the care of a guardian named *Mentor*, whose job was to protect and guide the young prince while his father was away. Recently, in business and educational circles, the term *mentor*, meaning “wise and trusted counselor and guide,” has become prominent. Leaders recognize it as a good idea for mentors to give personal guidance to less-experienced individuals.

Mentor is not a Biblical term, but clearly this concept is present throughout the Bible: Jethro to Moses; Moses to Joshua; Elijah to Elisha; Eli to Samuel; Mordecai to Esther; Aquila and Priscilla to Apollos; and Paul to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon—to name some. The psalmist David wrote, “One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts” (Ps. 145:4 NKJV).

This lesson discusses mentoring strategies of the Apostle Paul and how to implement them in the local church. Today we study and learn from Paul's ministry and instructions to two of his mentees.

1. MEN MENTORING MEN

A. Fathers and Brothers (1 Timothy 5:1)

1 Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren.

In Western culture, boys are often taught to view other males as competitors. Early on, they vie for attention at home, in school, in sports, and in relationships with the opposite sex. In ancient human history, men were competitive as a means of survival. All too often, this instinct has isolated men from other men. Paul wrote about men mentoring men, with younger respecting and learning from the elder, and the elder nurturing and helping to develop the younger.

In this verse, Paul the mentor is giving pastoral instructions to his "son," Timothy, regarding his pastoral relationship with his people. Timothy had been given oversight of a congregation and needed to carry out his duties in a Biblical manner (4:16). To this point, much of the letter has focused on Timothy's pastoral relationship with God and His Word. Now Paul addresses Timothy's pastoral relationship to the various demographic groups in the church, beginning with the men. The *Enduring Word Commentary* calls this section "A Summary of How to Treat People in the Church."

Older men must be respected as fathers. And Timothy is told not to "rebuke" (Greek, *epiplateis*) them. This seems contradictory when we consider Paul instructed Titus to "rebuke with all authority" (Titus 2:15). In our text, Paul does not use the same Greek word used elsewhere in the New Testament (*epitimēson*) for *rebuke*. Here it means "Do not *strike* or *strike at* an elder." Matthew Henry commented, "Respect must be paid to the dignity of years and

place” of older men. In Paul’s second letter, Timothy is charged to “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (4:2), but he is not to lash out at, or verbally attack, an older man. Rather, he is to show him the respect he would show his own father, and to remember the Old Testament command, “You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord” (Lev. 19:32 NKJV).

It is not true that a pastor must always treat everybody alike. Younger men in the church are not provided the same deference as the elders, yet they are to be regarded as brothers. Greater freedom is afforded the pastor in reprimanding younger men, but only with brotherly compassion. “As brethren” (1 Tim. 5:1) shows younger men were somewhat equal to Timothy—at least in age. Therefore, he was to treat other young men the same way he would treat his biological brothers (Rom. 12:10).

Honor Older Adults

“You are to rise in the presence of the elderly and honor the old. Fear your God; I am the Lord.”—Leviticus 19:32 (CSB)

B. An Example for Older Men (Titus 2:1-2)

1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

To Timothy, Paul addressed how older men are to be treated by the pastor. Now he wrote to Titus about the duties of older men who would qualify for that gracious treatment.

Sober in verse 2 means to be “sober-minded,” or to be sensible and exercise sound judgment. Irresponsible choices and irrational behaviors are not characteristic of a godly elder. Rather, he is to be “grave,” which means dignified or worthy of respect. He is “temperate,” demonstrating “self-control” (Gal. 5:23 NKJV). He doesn’t “fly off the handle” or go to excesses.

Godly mentors are sound in faith and motivated by love. Like Paul, they know in whom they have “believed” (2 Tim. 1:12); and like Jude, they “earnestly contend for the faith” of the church (Jude 3). They cannot be godly mentors unless they are grounded in Scripture (see Eph. 3:16-19). Because they are established in the love of God, they minister to others with the compassion of Christ (4:32). As mentors, they sow seed and then, like the farmer, they wait patiently for its fruit (James 5:7).

§ *How do you know when doctrine is “sound” (v. 1)?*

C. An Example of Younger Men (Titus 2:6-8)

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. 7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Paul affords Titus more latitude in dealing with younger men, yet their lifestyle requirements differ little from those prescribed for the elders. Matthew Henry wrote that young men must be “exhorted to be considerate, not rash; advisable and submissive, not willful and head-strong; humble and mild, not haughty and proud; for there are more young people ruined by pride than by any other sin” (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on 1 Corinthians*).

Paul alludes to a couple things that might constitute a stronger temptation to the younger than to the elders. Being “sober minded,” or “self-controlled” (v. 6 NIV) could be construed as an admonition against the lust of the flesh. Although certainly not dormant in the lives of older men, the younger are more naturally tempted by such. Later in this chapter (vv. 11-12), Paul appeals for all believers to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts.”

To the young men, there is a call to “sound speech, that cannot be condemned” (v. 8). This may allude to the temptation of young men to use suggestive language or vulgar jokes (see Eph. 5:4). The *Berean Study Bible* says young men must use “wholesome speech beyond reproach so that he who opposes us may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say concerning us.”

§ *According to Titus 2:7, what should characterize the teaching of young men?*

2. WOMEN MENTORS AND WIDOWS

A. Mothers and Sisters (1 Timothy 5:2)

2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

Paul instructed Timothy, just as with older men, the not-so-young women of the church are to be treated with dignity and respect. As surely as the ideal family necessitates both a father and mother, even so the church. A pastor—especially a young pastor like Timothy—must prepare himself to be *mothered* by older women in the church; it’s their natural inclination. This has negative implications, which we will discuss later, but can also be a tremendous blessing. Timothy was not to resist this, but to respond with the same honor he would give to his grandmother Lois, and his mother, Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5).

Older women can be invaluable in helping perpetuate faith to future generations. Paul expressed great confidence in Timothy’s mother and grandmother, calling them women of “unfeigned faith” who had passed that faith on to Timothy (v. 5). Consider some of the mothers in the Bible who did likewise: Jochebed, mother of Moses; Hannah, mother of Samuel; Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist; and even Bathsheba, mother of Solomon. All older mothers were once young, and some made bad decisions in earlier life. It is their current life with God and their experiences, both good and bad, that make their price “far above rubies” (Prov. 31:10) to the church.

§ *How must church leaders treat younger women, and how can this be done?*

B. Ministry to Widows (1 Timothy 5:3-4)

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

In the days of Timothy’s leadership, social programs and government assistance were nonexistent. Most women were dependent on their husbands for a livelihood, and when the husband deceased, many became poor and destitute—as did the Shunammite widow whose sons were being sold into slavery to pay her debts before Elisha ministered to her (2 Kings 4:1-37).

Paul declared it an honorable duty of the church to care for destitute widows (1 Tim. 5:3). Yet, before the church uses ministry funds to care for them, the widow’s family is to make provision if they have the means. The word translated “nephews” (*ekgonos*) appears only here in the New Testament, and is better translated “descendants.” Indeed, most translations render this word as “grandchildren.” Adult children and other relatives have a familial duty to provide for their elderly mother or grandmother, especially those who love God and worship Him (v. 5).

Verse 6 teaches the church has no responsibility to aid widows (or anyone else) who are disposed to spend the church’s assistance on things other than sustenance. Wise pastors and churches never give cash to those claiming to have needs, choosing rather to purchase food, lodging, clothes, or fuel. A widow and others seeking assistance must be carefully vetted so as to avoid distributing God’s money to those who would “give [themselves] to wanton pleasure” (NASB).

§ *How is your congregation ministering to widows? How can this ministry improve?*

C. Older Women as Mentors (Titus 2:3-5)

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

There are eighty-eight Bible verses about older women teaching the younger, and the case is made here by Paul for mature women being godly mentors in the church. The shepherding of women is an awesome responsibility and quite challenging for a lead pastor especially if, like Timothy, the pastor is male. There is always the danger of emotional entanglements outside the marriage covenant, and mentor and mentee will need time together either in person or virtually. This does not mean there can never be effective cross-gender mentoring relationships, but a third party needs to be involved for accountability.

Just as with older men, Paul did not hesitate to talk about things that would disqualify a mature woman from being a mentor to a less-experienced woman. First, she must behave herself as a woman professing holiness. He elaborated in three specific statements (v. 3).

She must not be a *slanderer* (“false accuser”). The word translated here is *diabolous*, from which we get our English word *devil*. Women (or men) who slander, falsely accuse, or engage in gossip are disqualified as spiritual mentors. They are, even if unwittingly, doing the devil’s work.

A woman mentor must be *sober* (“not given to much wine”). In the culture of that day, this says she was not to use an intoxicant other than for medicinal purposes (1 Tim. 5:23). This is not an endorsement of social drinking so long as it is “not much.” (Please reference Lesson 4, where we show the phrase “much wine” was used as hyperbole—exaggeration to make a point, not to be taken literally.)

Female mentors must be *systematic teachers* by word and example (“teachers of good things”). Their conversation and lifestyle demonstrate to younger women how to live free from addictions, to love their husbands and children, to possess a right attitude and disposition, to properly keep the house, to be morally and ethically good, and to be faithful to their marriage relationship (vv. 4-5).

A Perishable Practice

“Violin playing is a perishable art. It must be passed on as a personal skill; otherwise, it is lost,” said Jascha Heifetz, world-renowned violinist. So what happens if Christian mentors fail to instruct and guide young believers in following Jesus Christ?

3. ENCOURAGE GOOD AND PURE BEHAVIOR

A. Servants and Masters (Titus 2:9-10)

9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; 10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Personal deportment matters! Christians from all walks of life are enjoined to conduct themselves in a worthy manner (Phil. 1:27; Col. 4:5-6; 1 Peter 2:12). Whether minister or laity, leader or follower, all believers are expected to exemplify Christian character.

We should not assume from these verses that Paul endorsed human slavery. Although the demeaning practices of buying and selling human beings as chattel property was prevalent in Roman culture that dominated Palestine in Paul’s day, much of the slavery then involved involuntary bondage derived from unpaid debts (see Lesson 2 from this quarter). Paul’s insistence here is that all who claim the name of Jesus, including the ruling class (masters) and the working class (servants), are bound by the same standards of Christian living.

The contemporary message is an employee owe their employer an honest day's work for an honest day's wage, particularly if both have trusted in Christ. In the New Testament world, it was culturally unique to see masters and servants come together as equals, as would happen in a worship gathering. Their relationship truly rose to a more charitable level than what existed elsewhere.

Employees are to do the work assigned to them without argument or complaint (Titus 2:9). The language here is like that of a soldier who unquestionably submits to the orders of his superior officers. Paul also uses terms and conditions similar to his prescription for wives and husbands. Wives are not to submit to *all* men, but to their "*own* husbands" (Eph. 5:22); and servants are not to be ordered around by everyone as though they are lower-class property, but they are to submit only to their "*own* masters" (Titus 2:9). Those of a lower social standing or a more menial employment are equally valuable to the church, and they are expected to live godly in Christ Jesus.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* says "*not purloining*" (v. 10) comes from an Old English term meaning "*not stealing*" or "*not a thief*." Paul addressed this subject to Philemon when asking him to receive Onesimus back as a brother. "If he hath wronged thee" (Philem. 18) suggests the runaway servant might have taken something by fraud. In a contemporary context, Christian employees do not claim expenses not incurred nor remove supplies from their place of employment. Rather, believers practice honesty in the workplace "so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive" (Titus 2:10 NIV).

Beyond the Beginning Point

Too long the church has understood "conversion" as having only to do with the beginning point. Biblically understood, conversion has to do with making disciples of former pagans like

ourselves (even if we were born into Christian homes, we need to be “converted” in this sense). Our Lord did not say, “Go make converts” but “Go and make disciples.” In the long run, only disciples are converts.—Gordon Fee

B. The Blessed Hope (Titus 2:11-15)

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. 15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

The last five verses of this chapter must be read in context with the previous ten. The culminating truth is “the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people” (v. 11 NIV). This message of Christ transcends nationality, race, culture, social status, and gender. The Gospel has torn down all barriers, and it breaks down every wall (Eph. 2:14). Because of the Cross, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28 NKJV). Through His substitutionary sacrifice, Christ “is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him” (Heb. 7:25 NKJV).

Holiness of heart and life is not an option, regardless of our economic or social standing. Some wrongly teach that for all who are saved, post-conversion sins are not counted against them because of grace. However, Paul said we must reject “ungodliness and worldly lusts” (Titus 2:12a). He asked the Romans, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may

abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (6:1-2). Rather than granting us a license to sin, grace teaches there are things believers no longer do and places we no longer go because of our spiritual standing. In addition to things we should avoid, there are things we must do: “We should live soberly [with discretion], righteously [pursuing what is right], and godly [seeking the likeness of Christ], in this present world” (Titus 2:12b).

What should motivate us to this godly lifestyle? Regardless of our station in life, as believers we are anticipating our Lord’s return, at which time He will raise the bodies of “the dead in Christ” and catch away living saints to “meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:16-17). The resurrected dead and the living saints will be caught up “together.” Though the bodies of the saints will rise first, they will not reach Heaven ahead of the others. Likewise, Jews will not have preference over Gentiles, masters will not supersede servants, and men will not go before women—all believers will be caught up *together*!

Paul refers to this event as our “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13). In this context he makes no mention of Heaven, angels, or departed loved ones. Every believer has the hope of seeing all of these on that day, but our hope is in “the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ . . . who gave himself for us” (vv. 13-14a NRSV).

As we live in anticipation of Christ’s return, we must remember we are God’s “own special [peculiar] people,” redeemed and purified from sin and “zealous for good works” (v. 14b NKJV). Paul urged Titus to teach these truths—both rebuking and encouraging—with God-given authority (v. 15).

§ *How can we stay focused on the promise of Christ’s return as we live in a fallen world?*

A NOBLER CALL

In the secular world, the objective of mentoring is to facilitate the personal and professional development of the mentee. The goal is to make them productive in the workplace, create a wholesome work environment, and increase profits for the company.

Church mentoring, likewise, engages the mentee, helping them to contribute to church health, productivity, and growth. Yet, the church mentor has a nobler call. Consider the difference between someone running in a physical marathon and the person running the Christian race. In the secular world, the goal is “a corruptible crown.” Those who mentor in the church do so because of “an incorruptible” reward that is reserved in Heaven for them (1 Cor. 9:25).

Daily Devotions

- M. Mentoring Through Tragic Seasons (Ruth 1:14-22)
- T. Godly Friends Mirror the Redeemer (Job 19:19-27)
- W. The Spirit Guides All Ages (Joel 2:21-29)
- T. Women Participate in Christ’s Work (Luke 7:44—8:3)
- F. Allow Christ to Transform Your Group (Acts 16:5-15)
- S. Be Encouraged by Biblical Examples (Hebrews 11:32—12:2)