

“Manly Mentoring” (Titus 2:1-2, 6)

What is the measure of a man? As a man, how can you know that you’ve really succeeded in this life? The world tells us that real men are good looking, powerful, successful, and wealthy. But we must ask, “Is this really what it means to be a man? Is this all there is?”

The Bible tells us that *a manly man is a spiritual mentor*. In other words, a man that wants to make a difference in this world isn’t consumed with his face, his body, his job, or his finances. A manly man is consumed with God and people. A manly man is concerned with leaving a godly legacy. [Sorry ladies, this message is not for you. Your message was on Mother’s Day and it was entitled, “Motherly Mentoring.” Today’s message is for guys. But sit tight, ladies. Maybe you can learn more about how to encourage men to be all that God has called us to be.]

In the book of Titus, the apostle Paul writes to his protégé, Titus. In chapter 1, Paul set the primary goal for Titus’s ministry in Crete: to “set in order” (1:5) what God had allowed them to begin. Titus was to teach all the new converts to become “sound in the faith” (1:13). In doing so, he will inform his readers that *a manly man is a spiritual mentor*. In Titus 2, Paul is going to reveal two realities that will help every man become manly. First, manly men teach doctrine. Second, manly men do doctrine.

1. Manly men teach doctrine (2:1). In this opening verse, we are going to study the “d” word. Yes, that’s right, “doctrine.” For many men, doctrine equals boring. Yet, we will see that solid doctrine is the foundation men must build their lives upon. Paul writes, **“But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.”** The word “but” is a conjunction which introduces a sharp contrast with what was written in the previous chapter (1:10-16).¹ The conclusion of chapter 1 is a description of false teachers and heretics and the troubles they cause in a local church. Paul wrote that these men were rebellious, empty talkers, and deceivers, who were upsetting whole families for the sake of sordid gain (1:10-11). They were teaching Jewish myths and the commandments of men, rather than the truth of God’s Word (1:14). Such speculative, unbiblical teaching does not lead to godliness and good deeds (1:15-16).² Thus, Paul insists that manly men must be different than the men who have adversely affected the church.

It should be noted that Paul is addressing Titus directly. The “you” in 2:1 is singular. Titus was a church leader. Most men aren’t church leaders. So this verse addresses a pastor and talks about doctrine. Most men’s eyes are glazing over at this point. Nevertheless, those men who are seeking to be manly men will aspire for leadership. These men will want to make a difference in the local church and in the lives of others, because *a manly man is a spiritual mentor*.

Paul urges Titus to “speak [or teach³] the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.”⁴ The word “speak” is a command that carries the sense “keep on speaking.” The primary responsibility of any church leader is to teach sound doctrine. But what is “sound doctrine?” It is biblical teaching that combines correct knowledge and practice. How do we know if our Christian doctrine is sound? The following principles lead to sound doctrine.⁵

- It is found in the Bible.
- It keeps Jesus Christ central.
- It results in consistently good behavior and actions.
- It promotes spiritual health in ourselves and others.⁶

When we have run our teaching through these principles, we can effectively discern whether or not we have sound doctrine. However, before we can teach and apply doctrine we must first know the Bible. This is where many men struggle. We find it difficult to be consistent in any type of Bible reading.

My three children have enjoyed taking swimming lessons. When they first started learning to swim they used floating devices. This allowed them to begin to learn how to swim without sinking. Of course, the goal is always to move beyond the flotation devices and swim for yourself. I'm afraid many Christian men are just kicking back, using religious floaties. We're not really into the Bible. We don't really read it during the week. We're not really working hard at digging out life principles from the Bible. We're just floating. We're really going nowhere—nowhere but where the current of our culture takes us. No wonder we feel directionless. No wonder we're confused. No wonder we feel worthless. We're trying to put life together without the instructions. So we're lost and too proud to ask for directions.⁷

However, sooner or later we've got to learn to swim on our own. Checking into church on Sundays is very helpful but insufficient to become sound in the faith. We must lay aside the flotation devices and swim some laps. But you may say, "I'm too busy. It's too hard to understand. I'll do it later. I'm too tired. I can't concentrate. I don't like to read." I've heard all of these excuses many times. Yet, when it comes to golf, hunting, fishing, or working on your car, I never seem to hear these same excuses. We make time for our top priorities. So how can you and I become manly men of the Word?⁸

- ***Bring your Bible to church.*** This is an easy goal to accomplish. Every Sunday, you make sure you don't leave the house without your Bible. I call this, "BYOB: Bring Your Own Bible." This is what manly men do. It sets an example for your wife, your kids, and other men who observe you. It also instills in you a greater appetite for the Word.
- ***Read the Bible to your kids.*** Every night before I go to bed, I brush my teeth. Likewise, every night before I go to bed, I read the Bible to my kids. It's a habit, a discipline, a non-negotiable. By committing to your kids this time in God's Word, it will also ensure that you are in God's Word.
- ***Rely on the authority and guidance of the Bible.***⁹ In our relationships, finances, use of time, priorities, parenting, and everything else, we should more quickly ask, "What does the Bible say about this?" When you have a major decision before you, ask this question.
- ***Establish a Bible reading routine.*** Find what works best for you and your schedule. Read one chapter a day from one of the three Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus). There are 13 chapters total. You can just continually cycle through these books.¹⁰ Psalm 119 has 176 verses, which can be cycled through by reading 22 verses a day.
- ***Read less and meditate more.*** Don't be overly concerned with how many minutes or chapters you read. That's not the issue. It's far better to read less but remember more than vice versa. So if you have been reading ten minutes of Bible a day, maybe you should read five minutes and then spend another five minutes meditating on what you read.

When you fail to read the Word consistently, what should you do? What do manly men do? Pastor Kevin and Stephen Rennie decided a couple months ago that they needed to feel the sting of their lack of discipline in God's Word. They acknowledged that when they failed to make time for God's Word and prayer, they were hurting themselves spiritually. They decided, in order to help themselves understand how bad they were hurting themselves, they would set up a physical pain reminder. The punishment: For each day of the week that they do not give time to the Lord, they take two horse crop whips to the buttocks. This is a tremendous deterrent. And it is flat out manly. Would any man like to adopt this technique? It may shape you into a manly man quicker than you ever imagined.

[Not only do manly men *teach* doctrine, we will also learn that manly men *do* doctrine.]

2. Manly men do doctrine (2:2, 6). What are the two most important letters in the word “doctrine?” The first two letters—DO. If we do not “do” doctrine, it is all for naught. We must weave belief and behavior into a beautiful tapestry. In 2:2, Paul writes, “**Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.**” You might be tempted to skip this verse, thinking that you’re not an older man. Not so fast. What does Paul mean when he says “older men?” He’s talking about guys in midlife and beyond. In the Roman world, males 16 and under were considered boys; those 17-46 were considered younger men; and those 47 and over were considered older men.¹¹ The word “older” is a reference to older men—older not only in age, but also in Christian experience.

The Bible makes old age the crowning glory of a person’s lifetime. Old age can have promise, productivity, vitality, confidence, and a great deal of happiness—providing that spiritual preparation has taken place during the younger years. The older one becomes as a believer, the more his life should improve!¹²

Paul shares six characteristics that make a manly man.

(1) Temperate: The basic meaning of the word translated “temperate” is “being very moderate in the drinking of an alcoholic beverage.”¹³ The broader meaning is “self-controlled, level-headed.” In this context, “temperate” refers to being free from all forms of excess or life-dominating patterns, through the control of the Spirit (Eph 5:18). It’s about a disciplined life. This is seen in contrast to “lazy gluttons,” a term used to describe the false teachers. This is one of the qualities for the office of elder (1 Tim 3:2), as well as deacon (1 Tim 3:11).¹⁴ Because they were mature members of the church, these older men needed to be examples to the younger men. Their lives should show moderation and clear-headedness, with an absence of extravagance. Balance is the key here.

(2) Dignified: To be dignified basically means to have the special respect of others.¹⁵ It means to be serious in purpose or to have the personal dignity that invites honor and respect. What earns that special respect? Self-discipline plays a major role. Comedian, Rodney Dangerfield, used to say, “I tell ya’, I get no respect.” Yet, Dangerfield once said, “I don’t know why young people love me. Maybe it’s just because I never grew up.” Dangerfield was not dignified. What a tragedy for a senior citizen. This is not to suggest that you should be gloomy or lack a sense of humor. Rather, it refers to someone who lives in light of eternity, knowing that very soon he will stand before God.¹⁶

(3) Sensible: This is very close in meaning to being temperate. To be sensible means to be self-controlled, to curb one’s desires and impulses, to be prudent.¹⁷ It means “of sound mind, sane, sensible, thoughtful,” or “self-controlled, sober-minded.” Since “temperate,” as listed above, contains the idea of self-control, perhaps the focus here is on “soundness of mind in thought and judgment.” This word is a favorite of Paul in the Pastoral Epistles. It is used of elders (1:8; 1 Tim 3:2), of the younger women (2:5), and the verb form, *sophroneo*, is used of younger men (2:6). So here is a spiritual quality that should be a part of the life of all Christians, one that is easily recognizable. May we not forget however that biblically there are hidden resources that are to form the foundation and motivation for such a life.

You can tell if a man is living out the above characteristics by observing him closely.

- Watch him drive in heavy traffic
- Play tennis or golf with him
- Listen to him talk to his family when he doesn’t know you’re listening
- See how he treats waiters and cashiers
- Notice what he’s willing to spend money on
- Look at his friends

(4) Sound in¹⁸ faith: To be sound in faith means that you walk with God and humbly depend upon Him every day. This means living with a conscious awareness of Christ.

(5) Sound in love: More than any single word I can think of, “love” explains how you are to live out your faith. The kind of love Paul is talking about is not a chick-flick kind of love. We’re not talking syrupy stuff here. This is *agape* love. It’s the love that involves unselfish and unearned sacrifices for the sake of other people. It’s the love that serves others. It’s the love that Christ demonstrated for us by dying on the cross in our place and on our behalf. It’s the love that engages your world with acts of love that show off Jesus. As you grow older, rather than becoming more grouchy or hard to live with, you should become more loving. Rather than becoming more intolerant and hardened towards others, you should become more gracious and compassionate. Measure yourself by the list in 1 Cor 13:4-7.

(6) Sound in perseverance: This phrase speaks of finishing well. It has been well said, “When God measures a man, He puts the tape around His heart—not his head.” Older men are called to finish well (cf. 2 Tim 4:7). This means that you finish stronger than you started. You break the tape, you don’t spiritually crawl across the finish line.

Paul closes our passage in 2:6 with these parting words: **“Likewise urge the young men to be sensible.”** It’s interesting that Paul spells out six qualities for older men to emulate and then when he comes to younger men, he states just one. Now that could be because older men have more responsibilities and more qualities to work on, or it could mean that this one quality for younger men is so important that everything else will take care of itself if this one is embraced.

Paul exhorts older men to “urge younger men to be sensible.” The word “urge” is the Greek word for encourage (*parakaleo*), which means to “strongly appeal” or to “call alongside.” This word has the teeth “strongly appeal” and the grace “call alongside.”

Young men often lack sense in every area of life. For example, young men and their cars can be a disaster. Today, the cost of automobile insurance policies for young men is higher than for older people, because they are more likely to be involved in road accidents. Similarly, young men can be careless in how they live out their lives.

It has been said, “It’s easier to bend a boy than to mend a man.” How true this is. One of the best investments we can make in the church is to invest in boys and young men. Again, *a manly man is a spiritual mentor.*

Howard Hendricks says that there are only two groups of men in the church: pillars who support the ministry, and caterpillars who crawl in and out of the building each week.

Every man wants to be a pillar. No man fails on purpose. No man wakes up in the morning and asks himself, “Well, I wonder what I can do today to irritate my wife, neglect my kids, and blow it on my job?” I want to help you and encourage you to be a manly man who is a spiritual mentor. Would you consider the following?

- *Pray about your priorities.* Ask God to help you order your life according to His priorities. Corporations in this country and workaholics need to be reminded about what our priorities should be. Should manly employees abandon the search for excellence? Not at all. But we do need to get our priorities in order.
- *Think through your promotions.* Often promotions come with a corresponding increase in workload and hours. Is it worth it?

- *Consider changing jobs.* No job is worth sacrificing your spouse or children. No career is more important than your relationship with those you love.
- *Stop gift-wrapping the garbage.* Or anything else that drives you to perfection and sacrifices valuable time with your family. As I was mowing my grass the other day, I thought, “Do I want to be remembered for having a beautiful lawn or having a wonderful family?”
- *Monitor your level of involvement in organized activities.* Granted, sports, music, and educational programs are needed for our children to lead balanced lives, but there is a point of overkill and over involvement.
- *Commit to regular family times together.* Schedule regular family nights or family outings. Guard those times as you would any other appointment.
- *Slow down and live.* For many of us the pace of our lives is self-imposed. We do have a choice about what we do and the schedule we keep. A friend, whose family was so infatuated with time that he could rarely enjoy a quiet moment of reflection said, “My dad was an expert at hurrying. And he inflicted it on our family. We would hurry to go on vacation, hurry to enjoy it, and hurry to drive home, so we could hurry on to something else!”

When former Atlanta Braves’ star outfielder, Dale Murphy, was asked what contribution his dad made to his career he replied, “The great thing my dad provided me was himself.” Not a bad contribution, is it?¹⁹

I challenge you today to be a manly man—to devote yourself to your children, your grandchildren, and young men in our church and community. *A manly man is a spiritual mentor.*

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Scripture Reference

Titus 2:1-2, 6

Titus 1:5-9

Titus 1:10-16

Titus 2:11-15

Titus 3:1-11

1 Timothy 3:1-7

2 Timothy 1:1-7

Study Questions

1. Why must “sound doctrine” be the proper foundation for godly living? Give some examples of how this works. How well do I know God’s Word? Am I currently applying God’s Word to my life? How can I grow in my dedication to God’s Word?
2. Am I a temperate, dignified, and sensible man? Would people characterize me by this description? If so, what examples would they share?
3. Am I “sound in faith, in love, in perseverance?” Which of these is my strength? Which is my weakness? Am I a man that is seeking to finish well? If so, what does this look like for my life?
4. Define mentoring. Why is it so important to mentor our children or grandchildren? Did my father or another adult mentor me? If so, how has the experience left a lasting impact on my life?
5. Who have I mentored? What legacy did I impart to this person(s)? How have I learned to practically minister to other men?

Notes

¹ Paul used these contrasts frequently in the Pastoral Epistles (see 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:14; 4:5). Bruce B. Barton, David R. Veerman, and Neil Wilson, *Life Application Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1993), 265.

² By contrast to chapter 1, chapters 2 and 3 contain some very direct applications regarding good works. Sound doctrine and a holy lifestyle are the antidotes for the problems in these local churches.

³ The imperative *lalei* (“to speak”) serves as a virtual synonym with *didaske* (“to teach”), which is used in 1 Tim 6:2 in a construction similar to Titus 2:15. See George W. Knight, III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; and Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1992), 305.

⁴ Paul uses the word “sound” (*hugiaino*) nine times in the Pastoral Epistles, including five times in Titus (1:9, 13; 2:1, 2, 8; see also 1 Tim 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim 1:13; 4:3). Whereas Titus 1:9 focused on the teaching of sound doctrine and the refutation of error, the focus of 2:1 is more on the practical application of sound doctrine.

⁵ Barton, Veerman, and Wilson, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 266.

⁶ In Paul’s letters, the metaphor of sound doctrine or healthy teaching becomes a thoroughgoing polemic against the diseased false teachers. But the concern of the metaphor is not with the *content* of doctrine; rather, it is with *behavior*. Healthy teaching leads to proper Christian behavior, love and good works; the diseased teaching of the heretics leads to controversies, arrogance, abusiveness, and strife (cf. 1 Tim 6:4). Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, and Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1995), 46.

⁷ Idea taken from Bob Kerrey, “What a Godly Man Looks Like (Titus 2:1-2, 6-8):

http://www.moonvalleybible.org/sermons/2004-05-02_Titus_2_1-2_6-8_Transcript.doc.

⁸ Some of these ideas come from, Donald S. Whitney, *Simplify Your Spiritual Life: Spiritual Disciplines for the Overwhelmed* (Colorado Springs: CO, 2003), 48-73.

⁹ See Ps 19:7-9; John 6:63; 2 Tim 3:16-17; and Heb 4:12-13.

¹⁰ James writes, “But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does” (Jas 1:25).

¹¹ Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus: The Anchor Bible* (Des Moines, IA: Anchor Bible, 1990), 129. Collins suggests those men in their fifties are older men. Raymond F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2002), 339.

¹² See Warren Doud, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Titus*: downloadable at

<http://www.gracenotes.info/homepage.html>.

¹³ BDAG s.v. *nephalios* 1.

¹⁴ These are the only occurrences of the term.

¹⁵ BDAG s.v. *semnos* a.

¹⁶ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 247.

¹⁷ See BDAG s.v. *sophron*.

¹⁸ The phrase “sound in...” could well be translated “being sound in...” “Sound” is a present participle (*hugianinantas*) of the verb *hugiaino*, “to be in good health, be physically or spiritually sound, healthy.” By switching from the use of an adjective to the participle, the apostle could have in mind not only other needed qualities, but those that form the means or cause and motivation for the previous virtues. For a similar emphasis, compare 1 Thessalonians 1:3, “your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope” (NIV). See Hampton Keathley III, “Instruction Concerning Various Groups” (Titus 2:1-10):

http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=2592.

¹⁹ Ezell, “The Secret of a Healthy Dad.”