DEVELOPING A BEAUTIFUL BODY
(Part 1)

Titus 2:1-5

By

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We live in a culture that has gone crazy after beauty. You can’t stand in line at the grocery store without being bombarded with beautiful male and female faces and bodies on the covers of different magazines. If your body isn’t so beautiful, magazines and ads promise sure-fire ways to lose weight or get into shape or camouflage with cosmetics the things you can’t change.

While there is nothing wrong with taking reasonable measures to make yourself attractive, we need to keep in mind that physical beauty quickly fades. Many years ago, I worked as a bellman at the swanky Drake Hotel in Chicago. There was a wealthy elderly woman who lived in the hotel. Every day she would cake on about 10 pounds of makeup, come downstairs and strut through the lobby. She thought that she was showing off her great beauty, but all of the hotel staff would snicker at her delusion. She was well past her prime and she needed to face reality!

But while our bodies inevitably lose their youthful beauty as we grow older, there is another kind of beauty that grows better with age. The good news is that this kind of beauty is available to every person, not just to those who have been endowed with the genes for good looks. I’m talking about the beauty of a person who develops godliness in his or her life. God intends for each of us to develop Christlike character and conduct that displays His beauty to this lost and misdirected world.

The church is called both the body and the bride of Christ. The church should be developing as the beautiful body, corporately displaying the splendor of our Savior. As His bride, He is committed to presenting us (Eph. 5:27), “having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.” Instead of growing more wrinkled over time, the church grows less wrinkled! In Titus 2:1-10, Paul tells Titus that...

The church should develop into a beautiful body so as to attract others to our Savior.
The theme of the church’s witness to the world is mentioned in 2:5, “so that the word of God will not be dishonored.” It is mentioned again in 2:8, where Paul tells Titus that his speech must be beyond reproach, “so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.” He mentions it again in 2:10, where he is concerned that slaves “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.” In other words, their lives should beautify the gospel and point people to their Savior.

How does the church develop into this kind of beautiful body that points people to Christ? In a nutshell, through sound doctrine, which Paul mentions in 2:1, 7, and 10. All godly living must be built on the sound doctrine of God’s Word, which reproves, corrects, and trains us in righteousness, equipping us for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Then Paul focuses on five groups in the church: older men (2:2); older women (2:3); younger women (2:4-5); younger men, with special application to Titus (2:6-8); and, slaves (2:9-10). For sake of time, we will consider 2:1-5 this week and 2:6-10 next week. Before we look at the various groups, I want to make some general observations about these verses.

*There are legitimate age and gender distinctions in the church. Paul has different counsel for different ages of men and women, and he does not lump everyone into the same category. Radical feminism, which has infiltrated the church, argues that there are no gender distinctions in the body of Christ. While it is true that there are no distinctions regarding salvation (Gal. 3:28 in context), many Scriptures show that there are distinct roles for men and women in the church and in the home. Men are to be the loving leaders in both spheres. Women are to be subject to their own husbands (2:5; also, Eph. 5:22-23; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

It should not need to be said, but if God created you as a male, you should not seek a sex-change operation to become a female (or vice versa). Men should be masculine and women should be feminine. God designed the sexes to complement one another. There should not be any competition between the sexes. Men should affirm the value of women and women should affirm the God-given role and strengths of men.
Also, we are to relate to different ages and genders in appropriate ways. In 1 Timothy 5:1-2, Paul says, “Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father; to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.”

*TThere is to be interaction, not complete separation, between the various ages in the church and family.* The church is the family of God, and in the family there are all ages for the benefit of the entire family. The older have wisdom and experience to impart to the younger. The younger have idealism, energy, and enthusiasm that can encourage the older. Yes, having the older and younger together, whether in the church or at home, can create tension. But God’s design is that we learn to live harmoniously and learn from one another.

This is one reason why I refuse to have a “traditional” service for those who want to sing hymns to organ accompaniment and another contemporary service for those who want to sing modern songs with guitars and drums. The younger people need to learn some of the hymns and the older people need to learn some of the newer songs. While it is fine to have a class for young couples or a separate social event for the seniors, we need to work at getting to know one another across age distinctions.

About three years into the pastorate, I had several families in the church that were new in the faith. Many had gone through divorces before they were saved, so they needed to know how to live as Christian families. I began a Sunday morning series on the Christian home. But a few weeks into the series, all of the older people in the church stopped coming. They complained that the series did not relate to their needs.

The elders pressured me to cut the series short so that the older people would come back. But I refused to cater to what I viewed as selfishness. I said, “They should be having the younger families over after church, developing relationships and reinforcing the things that I am teaching. If they can’t get their focus off of themselves and onto the needs of these young families, let them go.” Most of them never came back. Our text clearly shows that the older believers should be imparting principles of practical
Christian living to younger believers. There should be interaction, not separation, between the various ages.

*There are different opportunities and different weaknesses and temptations at different stages in life.* Younger people often have more energy and enthusiasm to devote to ministry, but if they have young families and busy careers, they don’t have much time. After your kids are out of the nest, you have more time, but less energy. You have to gear your life to the particular phase that you are in.

I do not regret at all that when my kids were younger, I was often unavailable for church ministry in the evenings because I was at home playing with and reading to my children. I can’t recover those few precious years. Some pastors neglect their families for the sake of the ministry, and they lose their families. Some couples neglect their marriage during the child-rearing years and when the nest empties, their marriage is in trouble. These temptations are geared to these different phases of life.

The retirement years present other temptations. It encourages me to see retired people resisting the temptation to live for themselves by going on mission trips and serving in ways that they could not when they had to work full time. Each stage in life has unique opportunities and temptations.

With those general observations, let’s zero in on our text under the overall theme of God developing the beauty of godliness in us so as to attract others to the Savior.

1. **Sound doctrine is the foundation for godly living (2:1).**

“But as for you” contrasts Titus with the false teachers that Paul has just described (1:10-16). Paul said 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 (see 1:15-16).

By contrast, Titus was to speak the things that are fitting (or proper) for sound doctrine. “Speak” refers not only to formal teaching, but also to everyday conversation. “Sound” doctrine means teaching that produces spiritual health and growth. Paul uses
this word 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.

Paul always wed sound doctrine with the practical Christian living that flows out of it. To have doctrine without practice is dead orthodoxy. To have practice without the foundation of sound doctrine is just human moralism. Knowing who God is and who we are, and knowing God’s way of salvation as taught in the Bible, provide the proper basis for holy living. For example, if the truth of God’s omnipresence and omniscience grips your life, it will affect how you relate to your family in private, because you know that God sees everything. Sound doctrine is very practical.

2. Older men are to be godly so as to attract others to the Savior (2:2).

Paul’s lists here are not comprehensive, in that every Christian virtue (e.g. the fruit of the Spirit) should apply to each of these age categories. He is just hitting a few salient qualities that pertain to each group. The term, “older men,” is obviously relative. Paul used it of himself when he was in his sixties (Philemon 9; see also, Luke 1:18). The fact that Paul lists these qualities shows that they are not automatically developed with age. If you are older and these qualities do not describe you, then you need to focus on them rather than go on as you are.

(1) Older men are to be temperate. The word literally means not to be intoxicated by wine or strong drink. But it also has the meaning of being sober-minded and clear-headed. It is a qualification for elders and for deaconesses or deacons’ wives (1 Tim. 3:2, 11).

(2) Older men are to be dignified. The word means to be serious in purpose or to have the personal dignity that invites honor and respect. It does not imply being gloomy or lacking a sense of humor. Rather, it refers to someone who lives in light of eternity, knowing that very soon he will stand before God (William Barclay, The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon [Westminster Press], rev. ed., p. 247). It is also used of deacons and deaconesses (or their wives; 1 Tim. 3:8, 11).
(3) Older men are to be sensible. This is a requirement for elders, but also for all believers (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; 2:12). Paul uses it here for each of the age groups (the verb translated “encourage” in 2:4 is related). It means to be balanced and under control. The sensible person is not impulsive or given over to various passions.

(4) Older men are to be sound in faith. “Sound” means “healthy.” Older men should have the healthy faith in God that comes from trusting God in the practical matters of life over the years.

(5) Older men are to be sound in love. 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 Corinthians 13:4-7.

(6) Older men are to be sound in perseverance. Older men should know how to bear up under life’s trials with a buoyant hope in the promises of God. Rather than dropping out of the race, older men should be running with endurance by fixing their eyes on the Lord Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2). Older men who have these qualities will stand out in the world and point people to the beauty of Christ.

3. Older women are to be examples of godliness, training the younger women (2:3).

Godly older women have an important role to play in God’s beautiful body, the church.

(1) Older women are to be reverent in their behavior. “Behavior” points to their demeanor or inner character. “Reverent” literally means “suitable to a sacred person,” or a priestess in a temple. The reverent woman fears God and lives in His presence.

(2) Older women are not to be malicious gossips. “Malicious gossips” is a single word in Greek that is used 34 times of the devil! It literally means to throw things at people. A godly woman will not repeat damaging stories about others. She will not spread rumors or half-truths that damage someone’s reputation.

(3) Older women are not to be enslaved to much wine. There is a connection between a loose tongue and intoxicating drink. A woman who drinks too much will probably talk too much. As you grow older, it is easy to begin having a drink to block aches and pains or
to drown loneliness or depression. Before long, you are addicted to alcohol. That is sin, because you are not relying on the Lord and experiencing the joy of His salvation.

(4) Older women are to teach what is good. The word “good” is often translated “beautiful” or “attractive.” Note that it was the older women, not Titus, that were to teach the younger women how to be truly beautiful, namely, to be godly. The word “encourage” means to make sensible. Younger women sometimes feel overwhelmed by the difficulties of rearing children and keeping house. Hopefully not, but perhaps they sit around watching “Desperate Housewives” and begin to think they would be happier if they abandoned their responsibilities. The older women should help them think sensibly about the importance of those duties.

This is especially important as the church sees younger women coming to Christ from pagan backgrounds. Perhaps they have not had godly role models to teach them how to make their homes attractive places for their families. They don’t know how to love their husbands and children. Worldly feminism tells them to forget their families and find fulfillment in a career or in a new romance. Godly older women are to talk sense to them by teaching what is beautiful and attractive about a godly home. If you’ve never read it, get Edith Schaeffer’s, The Hidden Art of Homemaking: Creating Beauty in Everyday Life. Also, her book, What is a Family? is excellent.

4. Younger women must be godly homemakers so that the word of God will not be dishonored (2:4-5).

Many younger women have no understanding of how important the job of homemaking is. Also, they lack practical training in how to do it. Frankly, sometimes they are undisciplined, sitting around watching TV soap operas or game shows when they should be cleaning or organizing the house or shopping for family needs. I am so glad that Marla has made our home a refuge for me. It is a pleasant place to be because she is pleasant and because of her work and creativity. Paul says that the older women are to make the younger women sensible in seven areas:

(1) The younger women are to love their husbands. This implies that love is not automatic. It takes deliberate effort. The word that Paul uses implies the love of friendship. A husband and wife should
cultivate a close companionship. Love for your husband begins in how you think about him each day. If you grumble about his bad habits and run him down all day in your thoughts, you are not loving him. You must begin by thanking God for him and by thinking about his needs and how you can meet them. The love of friendship requires time together, sharing your thoughts and feelings.

(2) The younger women are to love their children. Again, it doesn’t come naturally, especially when they try your patience by their disobedience. You are sinning against God and your children if you slap them around or angrily call them derogatory names. Write down the qualities of biblical love (1 Cor. 13:4-7) and read them over daily so that they begin to describe how you relate to your children. The Greek word here also implies the love of friendship. While you are always your children’s mother, as they grow older you should also cultivate a friendship with them.

(3) The younger women are to be sensible. There is that word again! It means to be in rational control of one’s impulses and passions.

(4) The younger women are to be pure. This refers to sexual purity. You should not watch TV shows or read magazines or novels that feed your imagination with the supposed pleasures of illicit romance. Usually women are tempted to sexual immorality when their emotional needs are not being met. If that is true of you, talk to your husband about those needs. An adulterous affair will not meet your needs in the long run.

(5) The younger women are to be workers at home. Yes, this sounds outdated and sexist, but it is God’s design and wisdom. No woman gets to the end of life and says, “Ah, I’ve had a satisfying life as a corporate executive!” Seeing your family walking with God and loving one another brings true joy. You have to work to make your home a beautiful and pleasant place for your family.

(6) The younger women are to be kind. The Greek word literally is, “good,” but in the context it includes kindness. It means to be a nice person to be around. The kind or good woman thinks of the needs of others and goes out of her way to meet those needs. When a family member is upset or discouraged, she responds with sympathy and kind words.
(7) The younger women are to be subject to their own husbands. This is about as out of sync with American culture as it could be, but it is still God’s word of truth. You have a choice: God’s way or the world’s way. The world’s way asserts self; it stands up for one’s rights. It makes demands on others in order to get one’s own way.

God’s way submits first of all to Jesus as Lord. It judges selfishness. It seeks the good of others ahead of self. God’s way is (Phil. 2:3), “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.” God’s way of submission grates against our fallen, selfish human nature. Submission does not imply inferiority or becoming a doormat. “To be subject” is a military term, to put oneself in rank under another. Although Jesus is equal with the Father, He voluntarily put Himself under the Father to carry out the divine plan of salvation. Christian marriage is to reflect the image of God. Husbands and wives are to be an earthly picture of Christ and the church, with husbands loving their wives sacrificially and wives respecting and submitting to their husbands (Eph. 5:22-33).

The reason that Paul gives is, “so the word of God will not be dishonored” (2:5). This probably applies to all of the qualities that he has just listed, including submission. A wife who claims to be a Christian but who does not demonstrate love for her husband and children, moral purity, and being a godly homemaker, is not a good advertisement for the gospel. But a wife who practices these things stands out from the world’s ways. Like the woman in Proverbs 31, she will be praised, and when she is praised, she will deflect the praise to the Lord, giving Him the glory.

Conclusion

God wants all of us to focus on becoming His beautiful people—not the outward, fading beauty of the world, but the inner, lasting beauty of a heart that is obedient to Him. We refer to a beautiful person as attractive, because beauty attracts. A beautiful place, like the Grand Canyon, attracts people to it. The body of Christ should be so beautiful that those who do not know the Savior are attracted to Him through us. So, get to work on helping this church develop into a beautiful body for His glory!
Application Questions

1. Why must sound doctrine be the proper foundation for godly living? Give some examples of how this works.

2. Why is it important for the church to include young and old together? What are some practical ramifications of this?

3. Some argue that for women to be homemakers and subject to their husbands was cultural and not applicable to today. Why is this erroneous?

4. Does verse 5 prohibit a wife from working outside the home? What if a woman feels more suited to a career than to being a homemaker?

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