

TOUGH GRACE IN DIFFICULT PLACES A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF TITUS

STUDY FIVE

Older Men and Women: Listen Up!

Titus 2:1–4

When you are older and mature, you have credibility. You don't have to ask for it. You don't have to carry a resume. You have it, and it can't be ignored.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

As members of God's family, we're not just separate individuals reciting a common creed. We're brothers and sisters in Christ.

We rejoice together during times of blessing and suffer together in hard times. We laugh and cry with one another, lift up those who have fallen, and help them take the next step. We speak the truth in love when necessary, correcting but always reassuring, admonishing but constantly encouraging. Despite our differences, we get along with one another and accept one another. Why? Because we're family.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* study and the next, Paul gives fatherly advice on life in the family of God. He first addresses the older men and women—the spiritual dads and moms who fill a vital role in embodying Christian virtues and passing on God's family values to the next generation. Healthy families begin with the patriarchs and matriarchs modeling good character, and the same is true in the church.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you open the Word, invite the Spirit to knit in you the virtues from this passage, which will bind your relationships in love.



Older Men and Women: Listen Up!

Titus 2:1–4



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Paul told Titus in Titus 1:10–16 how to deal with false teachers, but it wasn't enough to spot error and protect the flock from prowling wolves, and it wasn't enough to teach sound doctrine.

Believers must live out the truth they profess.

So, in *Titus 2:1–10*, Paul gathered the churches for a family talk. First, he put his arm around his spiritual son, Titus, and passed along words of wisdom to him (Titus 2:1, 7–8). Then, as a patriarch, He spoke to older men and women (2:1–4). Then, he counseled younger men and women (2:5–6). And then, he advised Christian slaves, who were members of many households in Paul's day (2:9–10).

Let's study this passage in parts, beginning with the first four verses.



Observation: Foundational Character Qualities to Build Upon

When you *observe* a passage, don't rush through the verses but linger over the words.¹ Read Scripture versions that vary in translation style—from word-for-word (NASB) to thought-for-thought (NLT) to paraphrase (AMP). Websites like biblegateway.com offer an easy way to compare translations.

Strong Advice for Titus—Titus 2:1

Read Paul's advice for Titus in *Titus 2:1* in the New American Standard Bible, the New Living Translation, and the Amplified Bible. Paul transitioned from chapter 1 with a contrast: *but*. With whom was Paul contrasting Titus? How were they opposites?

What did Paul want Titus to do that was so essential and life-giving in the churches?

Older Men and Women: Listen Up!

Titus 2:1–4

False teachers were rebellious. They were teaching myths, confusing families, and hurting the cause of Christ. In contrast, Titus must speak the things that are fitting for sound doctrine. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Wise Words for Older Men—Titus 2:2

Sound doctrine “produces men and women of good character” (Titus 2:1 AMP). Paul listed three qualities of good character in older men first. We can put these under the heading of *respectability*. Read these words in the first half of [Titus 2:2](#) in three Bible versions and list them below as they are translated.

Paul’s next three qualities fall under the heading of spiritual *maturity*. Those who follow sound teaching about Christ should be sound in what three aspects, according to [2:2](#)? Why is it important for older men to have these qualities in particular?

Helpful Counsel for Older Women—Titus 2:3–4

Paul then began his address to older women with the transition word, *similarly*. It’s just as important for older women to be respectable and spiritually mature as older men. What counsel did Paul specifically give older women in [Titus 2:3–4](#)? List the words you observe in the different versions. What’s similar between the virtues for older men and women?

It is impossible for me to overstate the value of a godly older woman. Younger women watch you and learn from you. They long to hear how you were able to handle loss and carry burdens, how you became a winsome, contagious older person. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Older Men and Women: Listen Up!

Titus 2:1–4



Interpretation: Wholesome Teaching, Wise Living

Interpretation looks for the meaning that Paul intended his readers to grasp. To find that meaning, it's helpful to define Greek words. In our passage, two key words stand out: *hygiaino*, which is translated “wholesome” and “sound” (Titus 2:1–2), and *sophron*, which is translated “live wisely” (2:2), “self-controlled” (NASB), or “sensible” (AMP).

Use the online Greek dictionary at billmounce.org or your own Bible-study resources to look up *hygiaino* (from which we get our word, *hygiene*) and *sophron*. Write down the definitions below.

A form of the Greek root, *sophron*, appears six times in Titus. Paul applies it to men and women and to both older and younger in his lists of virtues in 2:2, 4–5. “‘Sensible’ is the defining quality that Paul sought for all Cretans,” observes Pastor Chuck Swindoll.²

Why do you think Paul emphasized *this* virtue for the Cretan believers? What meaning did he intend for them in particular to understand?

The false teachers embodied the opposite. They were “empty talkers and deceivers” (1:10 NASB), “corrupt and unbelieving” (1:15), and nothing pure came from them. They spoke like they knew God, but they denied him “by the way they [lived]” (1:16).

Titus, however, was to be *hygiaino*—wholesome, healthy, and sound in character and word (1:9; 2:1); which would prompt *sophron* in others—sensible, self-controlled, wise living (2:2). Paul drew a direct line between *hygiaino* and *sophron*. Why are both necessary and interdependent?

Older Men and Women: Listen Up!

Titus 2:1–4

May the good “hygiene” of your life spread to others. Whenever you teach, may it be a healthy word of help and encouragement. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Flourishing in Old Age

The psalmist paints a beautiful word picture of the vital role of mature older men and women in the family of God. Read [Psalm 92:12–14](#) and write down the features of godly maturity that we admire and to which we aspire.

What honor for older people was reflected in the Levitical code, according to [Leviticus 19:32](#)?

Summarize the value of older people in the church. What principles do you glean from your study about a healthy hierarchy of relationships in the family of God?

Godly, older, wiser saints are a treasure in the body of Christ. It’s been my pleasure to find stability and strength to go on from those who serve faithfully as the “grayheads” of the flock. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Older Men and Women: Listen Up!

Titus 2:1-4



Application: Three Responses God Honors

Sound doctrine should produce godly living. Review Paul's list of godly qualities that older men and women in the church must model:

- Temperance
- Dignity
- Self-control
- Soundness in faith, love, and perseverance
- Reverence
- Not gossiping or heavy drinking
- Teaching what is good to encourage others

In which of these qualities has the Holy Spirit most helped you grow over the years?

Which would you like the Spirit to help you with?

Has there been an older man or woman who has modeled these qualities for you? How can you show your appreciation? How can you pass along their gift of Christlike character to the next generation?

Don't let the rush of life keep you from slowing down enough to spend time with godly, older brothers and sisters in Christ. Their roots have grown deep in the Lord and His Word. You can draw strength from their stately example of faithfulness in the family of God.

Older Men and Women: Listen Up!

Titus 2:1–4



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for the example of godly men and women who have supported me in times of weakness and given me wisdom when I lacked understanding. I see in them a glimpse of who I long to be as I follow Your Word and grow in grace. In Christ's name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014), 322.

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2006, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

