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THE POWER OF MENTORING (Titus 2:1-6)

I have received training in the church for most of my life. I can't number the classes, small groups, and services I have attended through the years or the hours of lessons and messages I have heard. I'm grateful for all those years of direction and good, solid, biblical teaching.

I could name for you those pastors and teachers who poured themselves into me, even though I haven't spoken to many of them for years. But the lessons I really learned – the times I remember best that impacted me the most were the times I watched their lives or had a one-on-one conversation with them. I watched how they treated people and spoke of others. I saw them quietly serve others when nobody watched or cared.

Someone said that more is caught than taught. Even though teaching is crucial to our development, we are disciplined very effectively by watching the lives of wise, seasoned, older friends who have much experience to share. These happen in everyday settings, but are very powerful. Paul knew that when he wrote these words to Titus:

Titus 2:1-6 - But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

THE MENTORING OF YOUNG MEN

In chapter one, Paul had given Titus the task of setting the churches straight in first-century Crete. A large part of that job was to teach and establish strong biblical

qualities in the lives of people who could eventually lead the churches. He gave a list of important traits to build into their lives, but now we come across a new list with some of the same crucial things that need to characterize mentors throughout the church.

It's interesting, though, that before the list was given, Titus was reminded that the life lessons he was to impart to the churches had to be rooted in sound doctrine. Doctrine isn't a very popular topic today, but without it, the entire message of Scripture crumbles. Unless we accurately understand God's written revelation to us, we can follow false paths almost anywhere.

Doctrine matters. What you believe about God, the gospel, the nature of man, and every major truth addressed in Scripture filters down to every area of your life. You and I will never rise above our view of God and our understanding of His Word.

- John MacArthur -

While Paul's list for character qualities in older men is needed in all relationships with younger men, we often think of them in the context of parenting.

So what is an older man to teach younger men? How to be sober-minded (of a serious mind or not enslaved to passions), dignified (or respectable), self-controlled (or self-mastery), sound in faith (spiritually grounded in maturity), sound in love (understands appropriate affections and expressions), and steadfast (endurance, faithfulness over the long haul).

This list might remind you of the qualities we saw in chapter one that described what elders should exhibit. These are common exhortations in the Bible, to be changed from the way we are naturally to people who are displaying the character God makes possible.

This is the kind of growth we can expect when we follow God's path, being mentored by those who are more mature. Look at the similarities Peter wrote about in this progression of growth:

*2 Peter 1:5-8 - For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith **goodness**; and to goodness, **knowledge**; and to knowledge, **self-control**; and to self-control, **perseverance**; and to perseverance, **godliness**; and to godliness, brotherly **kindness**; and to brotherly kindness, **love**. For if you possess these qualities **in increasing measure**, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive.*

Notice, too, the emphasis for men to be self-controlled. This is clearly a warning in an area that has been the downfall of many men and Paul not only lists it early in the passage, but ends with it again. Men must learn to master and control their built-in urges that can destroy them if left unchecked.

In his book *Desiring God*, John Piper tells of a famous cigarette billboard that pictures a curly-headed, bronze-faced, muscular macho man with a cigarette hanging out the side of his mouth. The sign says, "Where a man belongs." Piper says, "That is a lie. Where a man belongs is at the bedside of his children, leading in devotion and prayer. Where a man belongs is leading his family to the house of God. Where a man belongs is up early and alone with God seeking vision and direction for the family."

This is how mentoring takes place in the home. Discipleship in the church and other relationships happens the same way – life on life in the daily, seemingly mundane actions when lessons can be taught most effectively.

THE MENTORING OF YOUNG WOMEN

The list of lessons older women are to teach younger women is different than the one for men and gives a glimpse into the things that could be blind spots to women. What are these qualities?

Younger women are to learn to be reverent (devout), not slanderers (discreet and avoiding malicious talk), not a drunk (having an unintoxicated mind), and good

(based on sound doctrine as we read in the list for men).

Older women are also to teach domestic attitudes and skills like loving their husbands and children as well as effectively making a home. Then he lists self-control (just as men should attain), purity (moral purity of heart, mind and character), and kindness (soft-heartedness and thoughtful consideration).

The final thing younger women should learn is submission in the home. No, this isn't a popular thought in today's world, but it is biblical and is not offensive if it's defined rightly.

Biblical submission in marriage does not mean agreeing with everything the husband says. It does not mean the wife leaves her brain and will at the wedding altar. It does not mean avoiding every effort to change the husband. It does not mean putting the will of the husband before the will of Christ. It does not mean the wife gets her personal, spiritual strength primarily through her husband. And it doesn't mean the wife is to act out of fear. (Piper in *This Momentary Marriage*)

New Testament passages that call women to submit to their husbands include an important phrase. Ephesians 5:22 says, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord." Colossians 3:18 similarly reads, "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." These parallel phrases serve as reminders to all wives that submission in marriage must be with the same loving wholeheartedness with which we submit to the Lord. When we submit to our spouses, we are once again agreeing with God that His beautiful ordered plan is worth obeying and the mystery worth preserving. By so doing we once again acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.

- Barbara Hughes -

BIBLE STUDY

Legislators and Staff (During Session)
Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.
Room 153, House Office Building