



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Jump Start # 1905

Titus 2:3-5 "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored."

I wrote recently about the need for leaders among God's people. In too many places there are either no leaders, or those that have been appointed, do very little leading. They seem to get bogged down, or they allow themselves to get this way, in administration duties that others could do. Rather than shepherding sheep, they are ordering supplies. Rather than strengthening the church, they are balancing the church's checkbook. Visionary churches need leaders, today and tomorrow.

From those thoughts a friend asked me about the need to train women. I have written much about legacy and the need to train men to take these roles, but a silent and sometimes forgotten urgency is in training women who will support these men. The role of the elder's wife and the preacher's wife is valuable. They are the encouragers of these men who teach and lead God's people. I have seen congregations that had trouble, not with the preacher, but his wife. Sometimes, the trouble came from expecting things of the preacher's family or elder's family that they don't do themselves. However, leadership roles mean lead. It's hard to influence others to evangelize, have hospitality, encourage, when it's not seen in the leaders.

If many men are like me, I'm not the best at hospitality. Sure, I can have people over. I can certainly encourage, talk and help people. But what are we going to eat? A bucket of chicken and store bought potato salad is fine for me. This is where a good wife helps. She knows how to make a home inviting, warm and the food more than drive through. She knows how to create "atmosphere." She knows how to make a evening special and right. A good man can be ruined by a wife that doesn't like people, doesn't know how to entertain without complaining and doesn't know the value of not repeating what is said. All the good done in the pulpit can be ruined by a woman who has never learned. Just as we want to take a young man and train him how to preach, it is just as important that his wife learns how to use her role for good in the kingdom. Just as a man is appointed to serve as an elder, it is important that his wife understands her valuable role.

Our verse today is loaded with lessons.

First, this training of younger women, not so much to be preacher's wives or elder's wives, but simply how to conduct themselves in the kingdom, is done by women, not men. Women were to "teach" women. Women were to "encourage" or "train" women. Don't have a man who is clueless doing this.

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Let women classes be more than simply studying "women of the Bible." Lower the nets in thinking and wisdom. Learn how to do good, as the text says. Be trained to love husband and children. Learn to be pure, kind, sensible, subject to husbands. The lack of these things dishonors not only the word, but it disappoints God.

It may seem odd, especially in our times, for women to learn to love their husband and children. That's pretty natural. Why get married if you didn't love someone? Love here is not holding hands, moonlit walks, candle light dinners and romance. Love here is not an emotion, but a choice. It's the same love as "Husbands love your wives." It's the same love as "God so loved the world." Women need to be trained to love their husbands when he isn't very loveable. We guys can have our moments. Some of us excel in those moments. And the kids? There are days that you'd trade them in. How to love those children when they irritate you. Learn. Be taught. Train.

Second, the teacher in all of this is older women. Here in lies one of the problems. No one wants to admit that they are "older," or "old." In this society, youth and beauty dominate. But with youth often comes a lot of foolishness. Older women, like God's leaders that we call "elders," are experienced with life. They have been down the block. They have seen things. They know. It's from these godly women, who are not gossips, nor enslaved to wine, but rather are reverent in their behavior and concerned about the kingdom that the lessons come from. The very reason that they want to help train other women is that they want the kingdom to do well. They want things to continue on in the honor of God.

We hide our gray hair, cover up our wrinkles and talk and act like we are not "old." It's ok to be a "senior saint." These older ones are the teachers of the younger ones. Now there are two inherent thoughts built into this.

Older women must have something to say. This is how this passage begins. Your character shows. Why listen to someone who hasn't proven her self? There is no sense in a senseless old fool. Second, younger women need to seek and listen to older women. Facebook and contemporaries, those who are going through the same thing you are at the present time often is not the best place to get advice. I see this two sided problem. Some older women aren't in the position to speak. They have left a history that isn't anything to brag about. But, then, there are some younger ones who are not interested in hearing what older women have to say.

I do not know what format Paul was implying women to teach and train each other. We commonly do it in a "Ladies class." But it might work much better one on one over lunch. Older women must speak with kindness, a quality of their heart that they were to teach the younger ones. Young women need to be interested, respectful and see what the older ones have done. Look at how they raised their children. Look at the years of teaching that they have done. Look at the volume of people that they have had in their homes. Look at the good that they have done. There is something there. They did this while being busy. They did this on limited budgets. Have a heart that wants to learn.

It would be good for the men who are learning to preach to have their wives spend an afternoon with the preacher's wife. It would be good for men who are being considered to be future shepherds to have their wives spend an afternoon with the wife of one of the current elders. Learn. Ask. Be trained.

Our attitudes, our words, our spirits can do so much to help others or they can be the very things that causes some to stumble. All of us can learn. All of us can look to a godly person who is a little farther down the road than we are and ask and learn.

Dishonoring God's word, is how our verses end today. Dishonoring God's word-it can be done by denying that God is the source of the word. It can be done by teaching it inaccurately. And, it can be done by our homes not being as God would want them to be.

If you could spend an afternoon with a great older Christian, who would that be? Someone who is a real spiritual giant. Who is one of your spiritual heroes? Why not arrange that? Why not give them a call? Why not run some thoughts past them?

Teach and train each other. We are on the same team! Help each other. The bigger ones helping the little ones. That's what this passage is about. Can we do that? Can you do that?

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)