



Lesson 2

Reverent in Behavior

by Virginia Arnold

But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good. ~ Titus 2:1-3

Introduction and instruction from two parallel passages – Titus 2:1-10 and I Timothy 2:8-11

- A. **“Sound doctrine produces right living” is the theme of the book of Titus. Sound doctrine (wisdom thinking) is foundational to the process of becoming “reverent in behavior”.**
1. Church leaders must realize the vital importance of teaching sound doctrine because it edifies believers and protects them and their offspring from falling into error. (Titus 1)
 - a. The **overseer** must *hold fast the faithful word* which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (1:9)
 - b. . . . reprove them (**false teachers**) severely so that they may be sound in the faith. (1:13)
 2. Believers in every walk of life – male or female, old or young, masters or servants – can be individually and collectively impacted and transformed by the sound doctrine of the Word of God.

B. Questions to be considered regarding the command in Titus 2:3 that older women are to “be reverent in behavior.”

1. How does “reverent behavior” in older women impact other groups of believers – older men, younger women, and younger men?
2. What does it mean to be “reverent in behavior”?
3. Why is it important for older women to be “reverent in behavior”?
4. How can a woman become more “reverent in behavior”?

Sound Doctrine - its demands and results

A. Sound doctrine is necessary in the lives of older women.

1. Older women are to uphold the same moral standards as the men – serving as examples to all those that are younger. Titus 2:3 (“Likewise”) and Timothy 2:9 (“Likewise” or “In like manner”, KJV)
2. Older women should be displaying the Titus 2:4-5 qualities that they are teaching the younger women.
3. Older women are to be “teachers of good things,” KJV
4. Older women are to be in every way “reverent in their behavior.” (Titus 2:3)
5. The reverent behavior of an older woman will “adorn the doctrine of God”. (Titus 2:10)

B. Sound doctrine believed and obeyed results in God’s glory.

1. (v. 5) . . . *the Word of God will not be dishonored*
2. (v. 8) . . . *the opponents* (those false teachers, gain sayers, scoffers mentioned in chapter 1) *will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us*
3. (v. 10) “Reverent behavior” displayed in any life – old, young, male, female, bond or free – “adorns the doctrine of God our Savior”.

“Reverent behavior” – defined and described

A. Defined – “Reverent Behavior” of older women

1. One word with two parts: (1) “fitting” or “in keeping with.” (2) connected to piety – the piety someone would have if they were serving in a temple. An older woman is to live “with a fitting kind of reverence or devotion”.
2. Louw and Nida: “pertaining to being devoted to a proper expression of religious beliefs — ‘devout, pious’) The older woman is to be priestlike. She is to exhibit the evidence that she has been in God’s presence because she displays sacred character and a godly life.
3. (Expositor’s Bible Commentary) a noun denoting manner of life as expressive of inner character, “suitable to a sacred person.”
- 4 . Titus 2:3, KJV: “In behaviour as becometh holiness”

Holy women, sanctified by the Spirit of God and who are priestesses unto God, as the word may signify, being made so by Christ unto the Father, as men are made kings and priests by him; such ought to be in their clothing, and in their speech, and in the whole of their conduct and conversation, as become the character which they bear, and the profession they make. (John Gill)

B. Described – “Reverent Behavior” of older women

1. Reverence in behavior - Valued by God

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. (Proverbs 31:10, KJV)

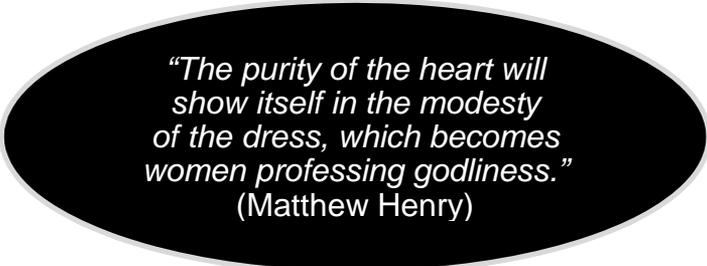
As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.” (1 Peter 1:14-16)

Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. (Psalm 33:8)

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. (Hebrews 12:28, KJV)

2. Reverence in behavior – A valuable model for younger women.
 - a. Their walk with God
 - b. Their relationships and responsibilities toward their husband and children.
 - c. Maintaining a home and meeting the physical needs of the family
 - d. The pressures of our culture and false teaching that denounces sound doctrine and its demands on their lives.
 - e. Younger women need a consistent model of reverent behavior.

3. Reverence in behavior – defiled by sin (Titus 2:3)
 - a. Malicious Gossip – lack of control of the tongue
 - b. Being “given to much wine” – lack of control of the fleshly appetites. In our day that could include a lack of control of: tranquilizers and antidepressants, media (TV, internet), desires for material things, desires for pleasure.
 - c. Immodesty – not pure, modest, and discreet in appearance. Evidences a lack of commitment to the edification of the brethren. (Proverbs 7:7-11; I Timothy 2:8-10)



“The purity of the heart will show itself in the modesty of the dress, which becomes women professing godliness.”
(Matthew Henry)

- d. Irreverent or apathetic spirit toward God – brings God’s judgment and a removal of His known presence. (II Chronicles 34:21; Judges 2:7-12)

*Examples of older women who were
“reverent in behavior”.*

Despite difficulty, disappointment, and distress,
they were devoted to God.

A. Reverent in behavior through difficulty and distress

1. Anna – (Luke 2) She became a widow after 7 years of marriage. At age 84 she was: *servicing night and day with fastings and prayers . . . giving thanks to God, . . . and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.* (Luke 2:36–40)
2. Elizabeth (Luke 1)
 - a. Barren until age 89. She and her husband, Zacharias, *were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elisabeth was barren, and they both were both advanced in years.* (vv. 6-7)
 - b. Zechariah does not respond in faith. (vv. 18-20)
Elizabeth’s response: *“This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men.”* (v. 25)
 - c. Elizabeth’s response to Mary when she came to visit, carrying in her body the promised Messiah: *And how has it happened to me, that the mother of **my Lord** would come to me?*
3. Timothy’s grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice - (II Timothy 1 & 3)
Sincere faith was displayed in these women’s dedication to living and teaching God’s Word to Timothy – even though Timothy’s father was an unbelieving Greek. (Acts 1:6)
For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. (1:5)

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.(3:14-15, KJV)

4. Older widows in the early church (I Timothy 5)
Those widows over 60 years of age who were “widows indeed” (without other means of support and care) were supported by the early church if they had maintained a long testimony of being “reverent in behavior.”

*... having been the wife of one man, **having a reputation** for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. (5:9-10)*

B. Reverent in behavior when disappointed – with self and others. Sarah, wife of an Old Testament patriarch, Abraham (Hebrews 11:11, I Peter 3:5-6)

1. Disappointment with SELF: Sarah is barren until age 90. She and her family live in tents as aliens in a foreign land. Most of her life she waits and hopes for the fulfillment of God’s promises. **UNBELIEF:** Sarah gives her maid, Hagar, to Abraham to have a son. Sarah laughs and then lies when she is told that she will bear a son in old age. **RESPONSE:** *By faith even **Sarah** herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since **she considered Him faithful who had promised.*** (Hebrews 11:11)
2. Disappointment with OTHERS: **UNBELIEF:** Abraham betrayed Sarah – twice – urging her to lie for his own self-preservation. **RESPONSE:** *For in this way in former times the **holy women** also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; **just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord,** and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.* (I Peter 3:5-6)



C. Reverent in Devotion

1. Hannah displayed “reverence of behavior” (I Samuel 1-2)
 - a. Part of a religious, but flawed family. Her husband’s second wife, Penial, provokes her because she is barren. (I Samuel 1:6-7)
 - b. “Greatly distressed” because she is barren. Not understood by her husband or the priest
 - c. She weeps bitterly, pours out her soul to God, and vows to return her son to God.
 - d. She identifies herself as “a maidservant” and both exalts and exults her God as the sovereign – “There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, nor is there any rock like our God.”
 - e. God is glorified in her “reverent behavior.”
2. Mary, the mother of Jesus, displayed “reverence of behavior.” (Luke 1)
 - a. Mary accepts the angel’s pronouncement with the acknowledgment of her lowly state and the exaltation of her God.
 1. (v. 38) And Mary said, “Behold, the **bondslave** of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.”
 2. (vv. 46-55) And Mary said: “My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of **His bondslave**; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the **Mighty One** has done great things for me; and holy is His name.
 - b. Mary treasures God’s words in her heart.
 1. Her outpourings reveal her knowledge of the Word because her words parallel the words of Hannah in I Samuel 2.
 2. Luke 2:18-19, And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary **treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.**
 3. Luke 2:51, And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and **His mother treasured all these things in her heart.**

Applications

1. Is the Spirit of God using the Word of God in our life to reflect His glory? Is that process making us more and more “reverent in behavior”?

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (II Corinthians 3:18)

2. Is our “reverent behavior” so distinct that it can be said that our lives are more and more “adorning the doctrine of God?” (Titus 2:10)
3. Is our devotion to God increasing ? Does fear and awe of God couple with an understanding of the love of God for us? Has that produced a growing desire and longing for God.?

Sources Consulted

- Bridges, Jerry. *The Practice of Godliness*. Navpress, Colorado Springs, 1983.
- Fee, Gordon. *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*. Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. Peabody, 1984.
- Henry, Matthew. Titus.
- Hiebert, D. Edmond. *Titus and Philemon – Everman’s Bible* . Moody Press., 1957.
- Hughes, R. Kent. *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. Crossway Books. Wheaton, 2000.
- Logos United Bible Societies. 1996.
- Nida, Eugene, and Johannes Louw. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

Produced and distributed by: Mount Calvary Baptist Church, © 2012
Unless otherwise noted, Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright, ©1960,1962,1963,1968,1971,1972,1973,1975,1977,1995 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.