

COUNTER-CULTURAL CHRISTIANITY

PART 1

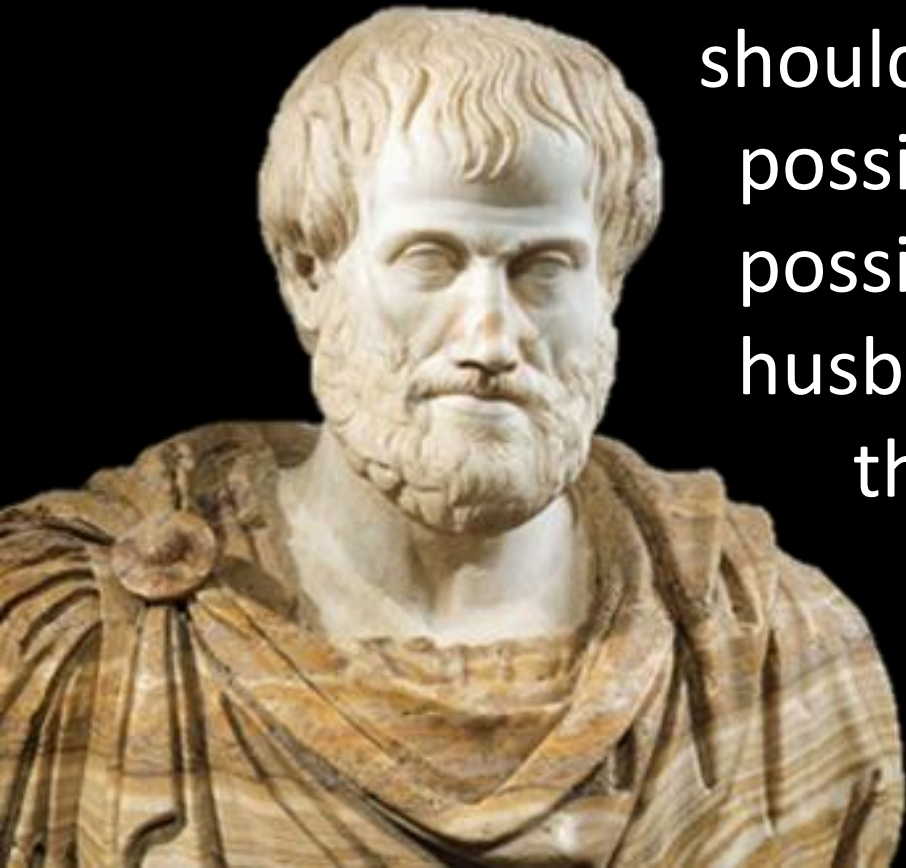
Titus 2:1–10

Overview

- With the emphatic “But as for you” in 2:1, Paul begins a new section in his letter to Titus.
- After describing the damaging effects of false teaching (1:10–16), Paul now focuses on the teaching of Titus.
- The first emphasis in Paul’s instruction to Titus encompasses 2:1–15 (note the “bookends” of vv. 1 and 15).
- Paul adapts the form of the common Greco-Roman “household code” to address the different categories of domestic life for the benefit of the new converts on Crete.

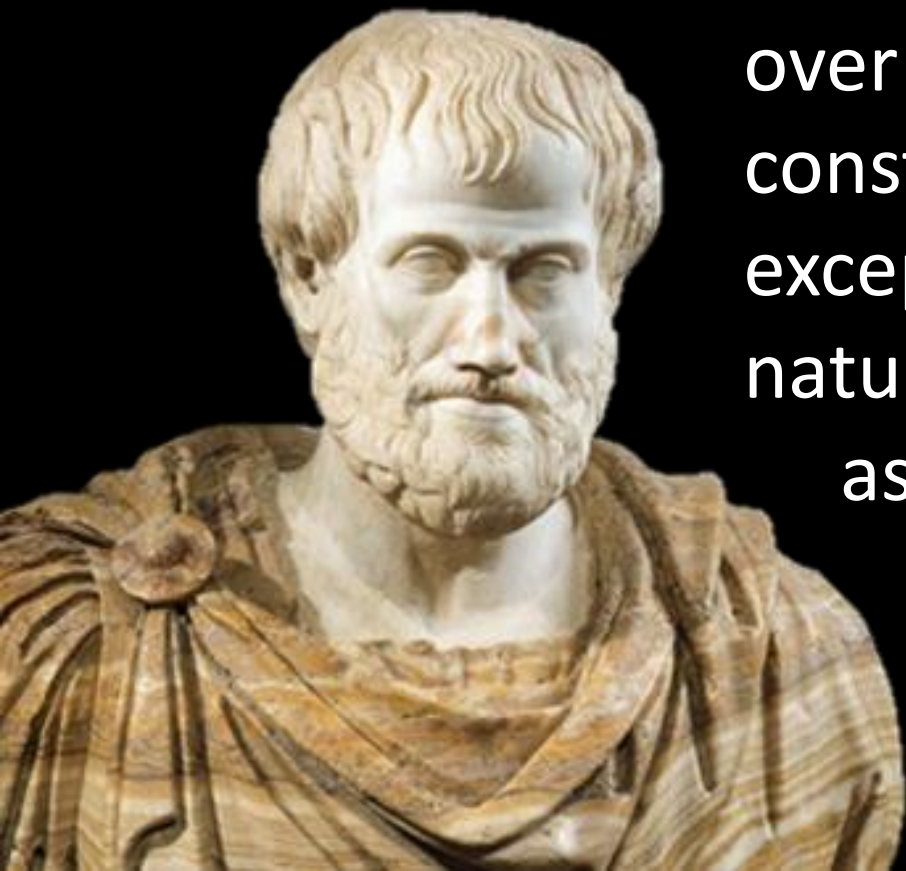
“Seeing then that the state is made up of households, before speaking of the state we must speak of the management of the household. The parts of household management correspond to the persons who compose the household, and a complete household consists of slaves and freemen. Now we should begin by examining everything in its fewest possible elements; and the first and fewest possible parts of a family are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children. We have therefore to consider what each of these three relations is and ought to be.”

—Aristotle, *Politics*, Pt III



“Of household management we have seen that there are three parts—one is the rule of a master over slaves, which has been discussed already, another of a father, and the third of a husband. A husband and father, we saw, rules over wife and children, both free, but the rule differs, the rule over his children being a royal, over his wife a constitutional rule. For although there may be exceptions to the order of nature, the male is by nature fitter for command than the female, just as the elder and full-grown is superior to the younger and more immature.”

—Aristotle, *Politics*, Pt XII



- Some claim that Paul sought to prevent the new Cretan believers from becoming *radicals* by departing from cultural norms and respectability.
- Consequently, they claim that although Paul's letter to Titus served as an instruction manual for the Cretan church, it is not so for the universal church.
- However, from the context of the letter itself, it is clear that Paul *wanted* the Cretan believers to live *counter-culturally*.
- **Titus 1:12–13a** – “One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’ This testimony is true.”

- Paul connects his “household code” directly to two transcendent realities:
 - 1) He designates it as “the things which are fitting for *sound doctrine*” (2:1; see 1:1–3).
 - 2) He derives it from “the grace of God,” which “instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (2:11–12; see 1:1–3).
- Paul *is* concerned about the Cretan believers’ testimony before the watching world (vv. 5, 8, 10), but he is not after cultural approval, but distinction.

“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, so 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, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

- In 2:1–10, Paul provides Titus with a counter-cultural household code for the new congregations on the island of Crete:

I. The Necessity for the Expectations (v. 1)

II. The Expectations for Elderly Men (v. 2)

III. The Expectations for Elderly Women (vv. 3)

IV. The Expectations for Young Women (vv. 4–5)

V. The Expectations for Young Men (vv. 6–8)

VI. The Expectations for Slaves (vv. 9–10)

I. The Necessity of the Expectations (2:1)

“But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (v. 1).

- **“But as for you”** – an emphatic distinction between the teaching of the false teachers (1:10–16) and what Paul is about to entrust to Titus (2:2ff).
- **“speak”** – “teach”; everyday Christian relationships will be formed not primarily by exemplary influence but by *teaching*.
- **“things fitting”** – that which is in accordance with (1:1).
- **“sound doctrine”** – healthy, free from error/defect (1:9, 13).

**The best antidote to frivolous and errant teaching
is *sound doctrine*.**

**Orthodoxy (sound doctrine) naturally leads to
orthopraxy (sound practice).**

II. The Expectations of Elderly Men (2:2)

“Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance” (v. 2).

- “Older men” – the term πρεσβύτης (*presbutēs*) is found only here and in Luke 1:18 and Philemon 9.
 - It refers to “an aged man” approx. 50–66 years of age.
 - It is not the same word as πρεσβύτερος (*presbuteros*, “elders”) used in 1:5 to refer to recognized leaders.
 - It refers instead to *rank and file* elderly men.



“Older men are to be **temperate**, **dignified**, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance” (v. 2).

- Paul expects of elderly men four fundamental qualities:
 - 1) “**temperate**” – originally referred to moderation in the consumption of alcohol but was expanded to describe a life not enslaved to fleshly gratification (cf. 1 Tim 3:2, 11).
 - 2) “**dignified**” – describes that which is worthy of honor and invites respect; it had a history of religious usage in describing that which was awe-inspiring and connected with deity (cf. 1 Tim 3:8, 11; Phil 4:8).

“Older men are to be temperate, dignified, **sensible**, **sound** in faith, in love, in perseverance” (v. 2).

- 3) “**sensible**” – in control of oneself—particularly one’s manner of thinking; it is the opposite of foolishness, fickleness, impulsiveness, rashness (Titus 1:8; 2:5, 6).
- 4) “**sound**” – healthy, free from error or defect (1:9; 2:1), particularly in three areas:

- a) belief in God
- b) service to others
- c) endurance in trials



“A gray head is a crown of glory;
it is found in the way of righteousness.”

—Proverbs 16:31

“The glory of young men is their strength,
and the honor of old men is their gray hair.”

—Proverbs 20:29



IMPLICATIONS

- Elderly men, are you growing in and known for:
 - Clear-headed balance and sobriety in the control of your bodily passions and appetites?
 - A lifestyle that evokes admiration and imitation?
 - Command over your thoughts and a consistent distancing of yourself from foolishness?
 - Robust trust in God (faith), service to others (love), and endurance in trials (hope)?



**The same qualities—even expressed in the same terms—
are generally required of the *elderly* as from the *elders*.**

**While the elderly and elders are different in status
regarding formal leadership, they share the same grand
purpose: to exemplify the fruit of gospel-wrought
sanctification.**

III. The Expectation for Elderly Women (2:3)

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good” (v. 3).

- **“Older women”** – the term is found only here in the NT but parallels “older men” in v. 2.
 - It refers to “an aged woman” approx. 50–66 years of age.
- **“likewise”** – Paul does not allow exceptions for elderly women; they—just like the elderly men—are expected to live according to the standards of godliness.

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good” (v. 3).

- Paul expects of elderly women four fundamental qualities:
 - 1) **“reverent”** – that which is consistent with something sacred or dedicated to God; the word has a strongly *religious* connotation.
 - 2) **“not malicious gossips”** – διάβολος (*diabolos*), “to speak maliciously, slander”; translated as “devil” except here and in 1 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 3:3.



“But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison. With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening *both* fresh and bitter *water*? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor *can* salt water produce fresh.”

—James 3:8–12

**“Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior,
not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine,
teaching what is good” (v. 3).**

3) “not enslaved to much wine” – speaks of being bound or enslaved; a stronger idea than in 1:7.

4) “teaching what is good” – Paul seems to invent a term by combining καλός (*kalos*, “good”) + διδάσκαλος (*didaskolos*, “teaching”).

- This kind of teaching (its audience, manner, and content) will be defined by Paul in vv. 4–5.

IMPLICATIONS

- Elderly women, are you growing in and known for:
 - A pattern of conduct that is befitting of one who fears God?
 - The mortification of speech sins (gossip, slander)?
 - A refusal to be enslaved by earthly substances like wine or drugs?
 - A commitment to promote that which is morally good through your personal influence?

