

How to Live in This Present Age

Titus 2:1–15

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Series: Christian Living and Worldview

Delivered at Grace Baptist Church, Cape Coral, Florida

October 1, 2006

Call to Worship: 1 John 2:1–17

Open your Bibles this morning to the book of Titus, Chapter 2. In this chapter Paul instructs Titus on how we should live and walk and serve together as a church. There are many ideas floating around in our day as to what a church should look like: what its people should be doing and not doing—what activities and priorities should and should not fill the schedule—how we should and should not relate to the world around us.

As we ask the question — What should we look like as Christ’s church? — we don’t have to wonder or speculate. In Chapter 2 of Titus Paul gives us a clear picture of life in a church where the truth of God’s Word is treasured. Let’s begin by reading the chapter together.

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| Titus 2:1–5 | But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. |
| Titus 2:6–8 | Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. |
| Titus 2:9–10 | Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. |
| Titus 2:11–14 | For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. |
| Titus 2:15 | Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. |

May God bless the reading of His Word.

Paul tells us in verse 12 that we are to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age. We will examine Paul's exhortation this morning by asking 3 questions:

- 1) What is "the present age"?
- 2) How *ought* we to walk together in "the present age"?
- 3) How *can* we walk together as we ought in "the present age"?

Let's begin with the question:

I. What is "the present age"?

1) "The present age" is contrasted in Scripture with the "age to come."

Human existence is divided into these two ages—the present age and the age to come. Jesus made this distinction as He taught and explained His parables.

Matthew 12:32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either **in this age or in the age to come.**

Luke 18:29–30 So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more **in this present time, and in the age to come** eternal life."

In Matthew 13 Jesus taught the parable of the wheat and tares.

Matthew 13:24–30 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

Jesus explains the parable in verses 36–43.

Matthew 13:36–43 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is **the end of the age**, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at **the end of this age**. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the

righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

This present age is the age of sowing. Christ has come and has scattered the good seed throughout the world. Yet as we look out into the field—the world—we see wheat and tares growing together. At the end of this age there will be a promised harvest—the final judgment. Then the good wheat will be safely gathered in and the tares will be bundled and burned. Jesus concludes by saying that in the age to come the righteous will shine forth as the sun. This present age is in contrast to the age to come.

2) This present age is fallen, corrupt, and tainted with sin.

Paul speaks of it as an “evil” age.

Galatians 1:3–5 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from **this present evil age**, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

He describes in detail the course of this world—or age—in the opening verses of Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:1–3 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Paul warns us in Romans 12:1–2 to not be conformed to this age.

Romans 12:1–2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world [or age], but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

It is an age marked by spiritual darkness and blindness. Paul compares the glorious wisdom of God to the empty wisdom of this age.

1 Corinthians 2:6–8 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

The wisdom of God—manifest in His glorious plan of redemption, ordained before the ages for our glory—is now made known in the proclamation of gospel of Christ. His Kingdom is eternal. But the wisdom of this age and the rulers of this age will come to nothing. Paul goes on to explain that natural man rejects the wisdom of God. He “does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (2:14).

3) This present age is passing away.

The darkness and blindness won't last forever. Already it is passing away.

1 John 2:8 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because **the darkness is passing away**, and the true light is already shining.

John continues in this chapter (as Paul does in Titus 2) to address the church and encourage them to press on in faith.

1 John 2:9–11 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

12 I write to you, little children,
Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

13 I write to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
Because you have overcome the wicked one.

14 I write to you, little children,
Because you have known the Father.
I have written to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men,
Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,
And you have overcome the wicked one.

He then exhorts them in verses 15–17 —

1 John 2:15–17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And **the world is passing away**, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Not only is this present age passing away or perishing, those who are of this age are also perishing. We read in 2 Corinthians 4:3–4 —

2 Corinthians 4:3–4 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to **those who are perishing**, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

This is the age in which we live—an age that began with the fall of man into sin and an age that continues to this day in darkness and blindness for all who are outside of Christ.

So, what are we to do? How can the church prevail in such an evil age?

This brings us to our second question—

II. How *ought* we to walk together in “this present age”?

Paul’s answer is **doctrine** and **devotion**. We must *believe* what is right and then *do* what is right. The truth we know with our minds and cherish in our hearts must be lived out in our hands and feet. The truth we hold must be made evident as we love God and love one another. In Titus 2 Paul encourages Titus to teach sound doctrine to his congregation. He begins in verse 1—

Titus 2:1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.

Here we see how practical doctrine can be! Sound doctrine must be practiced and made evident by faithful devotion. Doctrine has applications for personal devotion—as we worship God, walk by faith, and work for the good of Christ’s Kingdom. It also has applications for corporate devotion as we worship, walk, and work together in the church. In the first 10 verses of Titus 2, Paul addresses various groups that make up the body of Christ.

He begins with **Older Men in the church**.

Titus 2:2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

Older men are to be—

Sober— having self-restraint over thoughts and actions, not given to excess or extremes

Reverent— respectful and dignified, worthy respect and esteem

Temperate (sophronas)— acting with wisdom, sensible,
being sober in thought and clear-headed

Sound—Healthy and robust in faith, love and patience

This is a life marked by spiritual maturity and spiritual fruit.

Galatians 5:22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

This, by the way, is in sharp contrast to the way of the flesh or the world that marks this present age.

Galatians 5:17–21 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul then addresses **Older Women in the church**.

Titus 2:3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—

Older women are to have a demeanor of holiness, reverent in the way they live and conduct themselves. Paul echoes this in 1 Timothy 2:9–10.

1 Timothy 2:9–10 ...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

They are not to be slanderers, but to control the tongue and speak what is fitting and edifying. They are not to be enslaved to wine. And they are to teach what is good, instructing the young women of the church.

We read in the following verses what they are to teach to **Younger Women in the church.**

Titus 2:4–5 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

The word for *admonish* in Titus 2:4 means to train in wisdom or to “instruct someone to think and live wisely.” It is the verb form (*sophronizo*) of the adjective (*sophronas*) that Paul used in verse 2 translated *temperate*—acting wisely and sensibly. Paul uses the same adjective again in verse 5 to describe younger women—they are to be *discreet* (*sophronas*)—acting wisely and sensibly. They are admonished (taught wisdom) so they will be discreet (act with wisdom).

Along with being discreet, younger women are to love their husbands and their children. They are to be chaste or pure, workers at home, doing good, in submission to their own husbands—so that God’s Word is not blasphemed.

Paul then speaks to the **Younger Men in the church.**

Titus 2:6–8 Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

Young men must be sober-minded (*sophronas*)—learning to think prudently and seriously (again, the same adjective that Paul used verses 2 and 5). Their lifestyle is to be marked by a pattern of good works. Their doctrine should reflect what is true, holy, and incorruptible—established in the enduring Word of God that can never wither or fade away. Their speech should be sound, healthy, and irreproachable—so that even an opponent finds nothing to criticize or rebuke.

In verses 9–10 Paul also addresses **slaves.**

Titus 2:9–10 Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Paul's exhortation does not endorse slavery, but rather offers instruction to those who are in the bond of slavery who come to faith in Christ. Paul's words are fitting not only for slaves, but for any who are in the service or employment of another. Slaves are to be subject to their own masters. Employees are to be subject to their employers. They are to be well-pleasing in all things—their work, their attitude, and their relationships. They are not to be contradictory or self-absorbed, but have a good and trustworthy spirit, so that their lives will be a fitting adornment to the sound doctrine they profess and love.

Paul then summarizes how we are to live together in verses 11 and 12.

Titus 2:11–12 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

Because “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,” we must live and walk in ways that commend and adorn that gospel. Our identity must be in Christ and we must live for Him. Paul tells us that in this present age we should live soberly, righteously and godly.

He says we are to live **soberly** (*sophronas*) — This is the word that Paul has used throughout this chapter to describe the conduct of older men (verse 2), younger women (verse 5), and younger men (verse 6); and the teaching (*sophronizo*) of older women (verse 4). We must act wisely according to the light God has given us in His Word illumined by the work of His Spirit.

We are to walk **justly**— Walk in a right way with integrity in our relationships and dealings with one another.

We are to walk in a **godly** way— Walk with our minds fixed and our passions focused on the things of God, desiring to see God magnified and His glory displayed in our lives.

Paul instructed Titus to “speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine” (2:1). Sound doctrine is a faithful companion and a fitting counterpoint to “things which are proper.” Things that are foolish—things that are trivial—things that are superficial—these things will be uncomfortable where there is sound doctrine. But those things that are **wise** and **just** and **godly**—these are to accompany sound doctrine.

But this raises another question. How can we possibly live this way?

There must be a connection between the doctrine we profess and the conduct we display. Both must glorify and exalt God.

But how?

III. How *can* we walk together as we ought in “this present age”?

We must confess: None of this is possible in our own strength. None of these descriptions is consistent with our sin-prone and sin-filled lives. Nothing in this present age can help us. Our natural bent is toward sin. This present age is fallen, corrupt and tainted with sin.

But still there is hope. There is a fourth truth about this present age that we must consider. In sharp contrast to the age to come, this present age is evil, corrupt, dark, tainted with sin and passing away. BUT—

4) This Present Age has been invaded by the Age to Come

We read this a moment ago in 1 John 2:8.

1 John 2:8 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and **the true light is already shining**.

John spoke of this light at the beginning of his gospel.

John 1:1–9 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

Jesus is the Light. He is the King of Glory, and His rule has already begun as He is at work establishing in the hearts of His people an ever-growing Kingdom. God has—

Ephesians 1:20–23 ... raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Because of Christ and the power of the gospel, we who are in Christ are new creatures.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

God's power is displayed in His work of salvation and the proclamation of the gospel. Paul affirms this in verse 11 of Titus 2:

Titus 2:11–14 For the grace of God that brings salvation **has appeared to all men**, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

The gospel of grace has appeared to all men—to all kinds of people—older, younger, slave and free—it has appeared to conquer the hearts of men and women and children in every tribe and tongue and nation.

It is this gospel that teaches us to deny what is ungodly and flee from the sinful lusts of this present age that we might live, in contrast to the present evil age, a life that is marked by wisdom, righteousness and godliness.

Only the power of the gospel seen in the manifold grace of God can produce in a life this kind of behavior. *Only* by looking to Christ and trusting in His perfect work can we find the strength and peace and power we need to live the Christian life.

Christ gave Himself for us. He redeemed us and paid the price of death due our sin. He purified us and clothed us in His own righteousness. He called us His own special people—that we might be a people zealous for good works. And He is coming again and we look to that blessed hope and glorious appearing of Christ—who is our great God and our Savior. One day we will see Him face to face and we will be like Him. One day that good work He began in us will be complete and we will be holy in thought and deed.

So even now, in this present age, we are exhorted to live wisely and soberly and godly.

Paul did not say we should live this way, so that God will look down and see something in us that is pleasing to Him so He will welcome us or accept us or deal favorably with us.

He did not say to live this way so that we can look at our life, feel good about ourselves, and say, at least for the most part, things are going well.

Nor did he say we should live this way because we have just not been living up to our real potential as Christians and we just need to do better.

No, he says live this way, because the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared!

The power of the gospel has invaded this age. The Kingdom of God has come with the coming of Christ. He has bound Satan, the strongman, and now His gospel is going forth to every tribe and tongue and nation, conquering hearts and subduing rebels to bow willingly and joyfully to His will.

Two brief Applications as we close:

1) We must never divorce sound doctrine from a life of practical obedience.

A life of practical obedience is a fitting and proper accompaniment to sound doctrine.

A zeal to live a life of practical obedience is a fruit of ingesting sound doctrine.

And so Paul closes Chapter 2 as he began the chapter, exhorting Titus to “speak these things, exhort and rebuke with authority. Let no one despise you.”

2) We must keep ourselves under the preaching of sound doctrine as we seek to live a life of practical obedience.

Young people, I can't emphasize enough the value and necessity of being under the sound preaching of God's Word. As you make career decisions and plans for where to move and live and settle—high on your list of priorities should be finding a church that will nourish you and your family with sound preaching and teaching of Scripture—that will ground you in a life and walk of practical obedience to God's Word.

There are many churches today where you can find a place to go on Sunday morning, churches that can fill up your week with events and activities, and make you feel religiously satisfied and busy. But what you need is a church who will keep you in God's Word, who will faithfully keep the gospel ringing in your ears, who will encourage you in each step of your walk by reminding you to rest and trust and cling only to Christ and the promises of the gospel.

The church is a community of faith where we are to live out and gloriously display the power of the gospel.

My prayer is that Grace Baptist Church will be such a place until the day the Lord returns and we are glorified and called into His presence to worship and enjoy Him forever in that glorious Age to Come.

Let us pray.

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