

God calls pastors, elders, and other mature Christian leaders in the church to teach everyone in the household of faith (regardless of age, sex, or vocation) to live in such a way that beautifully harmonizes with biblically sound doctrine and glorifies Christ our Savior.

Introduction – What maxim will be used to describe us?

**I. If Sound Doctrine is God's Melody**

**A. True teachers adhere to God's melodic theme (Titus 1:9; 2:1)**

God's word teaches lots of true things that theologians and Bible readers have discovered through prayerful study illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Sound doctrine seeks to rightly order and emphasize the Bible's teachings according to God's organizing theme (the "melody" of the Bible). The melody is the gospel: the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit enables us to hear God's melody in the pages of Scripture.

**B. False teachers deviate from God's melodic theme (Titus 1:10-11)**

There are innumerable ways false teachers corrupt sound doctrine. Whatever form the deviation takes, sound doctrine is corrupted into a message that is no gospel at all. Any melody other than the gospel is unhealthy and leads to sinful living. One reason God is zealous for sound doctrine is that it leads to healthy Christian living.

**II. And if Christian Living is Our Harmony**

**A. For older men (v. 2)**

Here is an ideal picture of a mature Christian man: sound in faith, love, and hope. These require very practical characteristics. The virtues listed resemble those required of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:2, 8). The Christian virtue of self-control (classically known as temperance) has primacy. It is a virtue necessary for every kind of Christian. Self-control, which is an inner quality, will manifest outwardly in sober-mindedness and literal sobriety. Older men must also be dignified in morals and manner, not indulging in youthful debauchery which is especially shameful for the aged. They should express a certain gravitas appropriate to their seniority and should reflect a self-controlled mind.

**B. For older women (v. 3)**

God urges older women (like the deacon's wife; 1 Tim. 3:11) to be conformed to the gospel—to be reverent in behavior, not to slander, and not be devoted to much alcohol. The Greek word translated "reverent in behavior" means attending to everything with a holy awareness of your part as an older Christian woman. And older women must teach what is good. Mature ladies, God assigns you all to be the family counselors that train, encourage, disciple, and nurture younger women to hold together the Christian family. When an older woman is irreverent, when she slanders and tears down people inside and outside the church, when she demonstrates a lack of self-control with impulsive, selfish, addictive, and destructive behavior, she abdicates her role as teacher. And the church will soon suffer as families fall apart because she isn't there to help when marital and family problems first arise.

**C. For younger women (vv. 4-5)**

What does the Bible say young women must do? Love their own husbands and children. Here the word "love" is not referring so much to romance or emotion, and still less to eroticism, but to sacrifice and service (cf. 1 Corinthians 13). (1) Young women must be self-controlled, by which moral teachers always included sexual modesty. A Christian wife is true to her husband in head, heart, and hand as she is true to God. (2) Young women must be busy ("working") at home. This does not preclude the possibility of working outside the home, but it does charge young women to take responsibility for domestic affairs. These would include the daily care of their homes and children. Third, being busy at

home should not have any appearance of usurping family leadership from the husband. Each wife should be subject to her own husband. Note this should not foster oppression or harsh treatment of a wife by her husband. Husbands are called to sacrificially love their wives and give their lives for her as Christ gave his life for the church (Ephesians 5:25).

**D. For younger men, including Titus (vv. 6-8)**

God says young men must be sensible and self-controlled, and thus take life seriously. Not everyone is called to marriage and child rearing, but normally this is God's will for most people. His will for the church, his redeemed society, is for stable families bound by the covenant of marriage to build and participate in intergenerational churches. When this is the norm young men will have many examples in the church to look to and learn from. As a young church leader, men like Titus have additional instructions that all men should aspire to. Pastors and other leaders are called to be "player-coaches" rather than armchair theologians. People will not take the pastor's teaching seriously unless there is a seriousness in his manner and delivery. The men whom God has greatly used throughout history are those who were serious, sober, dignified, and full of the fear of the Lord.

**E. For slaves/servants (vv. 9-10)**

In the first century, slaves were members of the family household and Christian slaves were members of the household of faith. Paul is not approving of slavery (1 Corinthians 7:21), rather he is regulating it in light of the gospel—regulations that eventually toppled slavery as an institution (cf. Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25; 1 Tim. 6:1-2). What does it mean to be "well pleasing"? To do your work with excellence. To go the extra mile. Dedicated, voluntary service, even for slaves, is noble. What does it mean to not be "argumentative"? To refrain from talking back with disrespectful words and attitudes. To not gripe about one's master to others. What does it mean to "steal" or "pilfer"? To easily take little items or sell them, and then report them as lost or broken. In other words, petty larceny.

**III. Then Doctrine and Life Together Make God's Glorious Symphony**

**A. To shame the opponent and reviler (vv. 5b, 8b)**

Obedying these instructions ensures God's word (the Scriptures and the gospel they contain) cannot be plausibly reviled. Although people sometimes deny it, the world knows that virtuous living is honorable. So when unbelieving adversaries speak ill of God, the gospel, your elders, your church, or even you, they should feel ashamed in their heart and receive shame when they malign the uprightness of Christians who harmonize sound doctrine and wholesome living.

**B. To adorn the doctrine of God our Savior (v. 10b)**

Gospel living can provide a proof of the gospel, at least in the eyes of the watching world. Christians must be conscious of what our opponents think and say about the church. Households should have a good reputation in the surrounding community, and churches should cultivate this good reputation, living harmoniously with God's gospel melody.

Conclusion – Our spiritual fathers and mothers were called to live godly lives, and yet from time to time received mockery, scorn, and marginalization. We are blessed to share in their sufferings. For in doing so we share in the sufferings of Christ Jesus our Lord. May God use our harmonious Christian living, in accordance with the melody of sound doctrine, to play his glorious symphony before the whole creation.