

The apostle Paul has left young Titus on the island of Crete, in order to establish churches (1:5)—having given qualifications for elders within those churches (1:6-9), described some of the potential problems in those churches (1:10-16), Paul then provides Titus specific instruction for older men and women, young women and men, Titus himself, and servants...

Having seen exhortations to older men (v2), older women (vv3-4), young women (vv4-5), we come now to young men (v6)—and before I go any further, let me point out two things about Paul's exhortation to young men—[1] there is only one—"sober mindedness"—but as we shall see, this single responsibility presupposes almost every other duty...

[2] He says nothing about their responsibilities towards their wives or children—now—this doesn't mean he assumed they would be unmarried—for, who are the young women married to except the young men—but instead, as I mentioned last week, because the primary focus of young women is the home, he directed them to their husbands and children, while directing young men to what is especially needed in them—sober mindedness...

Thus, while sober mindedness is especially necessary for young men, it's also necessary for all Christians—in fact, according to Lenski—"In 1:8 the adjective is used regarding an elder, in 2:2 regarding old men, in 2:4 the verb is used with reference to both old and young women"—thus, this word, in various forms is applied to every person in the church...

Furthermore, the same word is found in v12—"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..."

One of the many reasons for the redemption of Christ, was to enable us to live soberly, or to have sober minds, in this present evil age...

#### I. Sober Mindedness: Explained

#### II. Sober Mindedness: Promoted

#### I. Sober Mindedness: Explained

1. This word literally means "sound mind"—it fundamentally brings together three closely related ideas or concepts...
2. [1] Clear minded—that is, to be sober minded is to have a clarity of mind—to see or perceive things as they are...
3. The NAS renders this word "sensible" which means "level-headed, sane, rational, wise, shrewd, or prudent..."
4. Mk.5:15—"Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid..."
5. Here the word is used of someone recently delivered from demon-possession—he has been returned to his senses (to a right, sane, or clear mind)...
6. Man by nature is NOT sober or clear minded—his mind is clouded with error, deceit, and lies—he's insane...
7. Thus—the gospel returns a man to his right mind, to his senses—it morally and spiritually sobers a man up...
8. This of course can be illustrated by a man who is literally intoxicated—his mind is unclear, foggy, and blurred...
9. He doesn't think rightly—his mind his full of moral and spiritual darkness—he's unable to think clearly or soberly...

10. This of course doesn't mean that he's unable to think clearly about every issue—he may have a brilliant mind...
11. He may be able to think very clearly about math and medicine—but he lacks clarity about moral and spiritual truth...
12. Perhaps I can put it this way—every person is born "out of their mind"—they are morally and spiritually insane...
13. Now—brethren, surely we understand this—this is why a man can drive a truck into 85 people and kill them...
14. Not because he is physically drunk, but because he's morally and spiritually drunk—he lacks clarity of mind...
15. Rom.12:3—"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith..."
16. Christians are to think RIGHTLY about themselves—they are to have a clear and sensible opinion of themselves...
17. And this is a common temptation in young men, to think too highly of themselves and their native abilities...
18. Thus Paul would all men, including young men, to have a sober and accurate view of their GIFT and GRACE...
19. Many young men have a tendency to trust their youthful wisdom—they think they are superior to previous generations...
20. Many young men have a tendency to trust their youthful strength—they are confident in their own abilities...
21. Thus—young men are to have clear and sober minds about life—about God, this world, themselves, and others...
22. That is—they are to have accurate and Biblical thinking on these matters—they are not to be clouded by error...
23. Perhaps another way of saying this would be—young men are to have a clear and proper view of REALITY...
24. Not reality as the world would portray it—but reality as God's word describes it—reality as found in Scripture...
25. Thus—sobriety of mind entails clarity of mind—to think soberly and accurately—to see things as they truly are...
26. [2] Serious minded—this results from clarity of mind—to see things as they are, results in a serious mindset...
27. Now—this of course, does not deny the place for proper humour, but it describes a mind taken up with TRUTH...
28. A sober minded person is a serious person—they understand that life is not merely a game or a bunch of fun...
29. They understand that we live in a world controlled by Satan, and that we are presently behind enemy lines...
30. For example, let's say you were in the army and you've been sent to a place in Middle East that is dangerous...
31. You are not going to walk around indifferent and/or laughing at everything, but instead with a proper seriousness...
32. 1Pet.4:7—"But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious (or sober) and watchful in your prayers..."
33. In light of Christ's second coming—in light of the Day of Judgment—"be serious and watchful in your prayers..."
34. The word rendered "serious" is our word—it here refers to a mind shaped by spiritual and eternal TRUTH...
35. Peter specifically applies it to prayer—"be serious and watchful in your prayers (or, for the purpose of prayer)..."

36. But spiritual sobriety or seriousness is also necessary for every activity of the Christian life—for all of life...
37. Now again, the need for this with reference to young men is obvious—young men tend to lack a sober mind...
38. Many (most) young men are characterized by immaturity, that's reflected in a light-hearted, indifferent, easy-go-lucky attitude...
39. Again, this is true of native man as a whole—he does all that he can to divert his thinking from eternal things...
40. [3] Self-controlled—this is a result or application of being CLEAR and SERIOUS minded—self-controlled...
41. The ESV renders our text "self-controlled" but again, the word is literally "sober minded" which leads to "self-control"...
42. Those who are sober minded, that is "clear" and "serious minded,"—will of necessity also be self controlled...
43. Thus—it's very important to understand—this word means "sobriety" that results in careful and cautious living...
44. Now—self-control refers to a control of self, and by SELF is meant, that remaining principle of evil within...
45. It refers to a proper and moderate use of this world, and a refusal to engage in any lawless or sinful activity...
46. Thus, fundamentally, self-control refers to the ability to govern or control our self—our inner passions and desires...
47. Jerry Bridges—"Self-control is control of one's self. It is probably best defined as the governing of one's desires..."
48. This is what Paul tells Titus to exhort young men to be—clear and serious minded, which results in self control...

## II. Sober Mindedness: Promoted

Here I want to suggest three broad helps to promote sober mindedness—they all start with the letter "L" to help you remember—LOAD the mind with truth, LIVE before the eyes of God, and LOVE Christ more than all else...

But—before that—let me first make a loving appeal to every young man present (married or single)—there is a sense in which this church, your families, and this country are in your hands—it's time to sober up—it's time to get serious...

Some of you are married, some have children, others will soon be married—it's time get clear minded about truth, serious minded about religion, and self-controlled about certain practices and habits—pray that God would enable you to especially take to heart these simple helps...

### A. Load the mind with truth

1. This is where we must always begin—all sober mindedness and self control—begins with truth in the mind...
2. In fact—sober mindedness actually extends or expands to two broad areas—to our doctrine and our practice...
3. If you remember, we learned from v1—healthy living is the result of healthy doctrine—they necessarily relate...
4. Thus—the sobriety of mind that young men are to have, includes both WHAT they believe and HOW they live...
5. And these necessarily relate to each other in that order—HOW we think will inevitably determine HOW we live...

6. Prov.23:7—"As a man thinks in his heart, so he is"—that is, his thinking will necessarily impact his living...
7. Ps.119:11—"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You"—there's a relation between hiding the word and living...
8. Let me simply say—in many ways I fear for this young generation of Christians, who fail to take doctrine serious...
9. Now, don't get me wrong—there has been a revival of Reformed theology, embraced by many young people...
10. But along with this, there is a lack of sober mindedness among many young (and not so young) men, that's alarming...
11. Fewer things are more troubling to me, then young men who have such a weak understanding of basic theology...
12. How do you intend to lead your family if you have little understanding of what the Bible teaches about God, sin, salvation, and the church...
13. You can mark it down as a certainty—any young man who lacks sober mindedness, lacks doctrinal conviction...
14. Thus—the lack of sober mindedness usually shows itself, not only in ignorance but also indifference to truth...
15. J.C. Ryle—"Let us ask any faithful minister of the gospel, and note what he will tell us...Who are the most negligent about using the means of grace, the most irregular about Sunday services, the most difficult to draw to weekly studies and prayer-meetings, the most inattentive under preaching at all times? Which part of his congregation fills him with most anxiety? Who in his flock are the hardest to manage, who require the most frequent warnings and rebukes, who occasion in him the greatest fear for their souls, and seem most hopeless? Depend on it, his answer will always be, *the young men...*"
16. Thus—at this point, I want to briefly suggest three helps to assist you, in loading your minds with TURTH...
17. [1] Know the truth—that is, you must understand it—you must have a clear and deepening knowledge of truth...
18. And this is a problem for many young men—they spend allot of time learning all sorts of things that don't matter...
19. But—how much time do you spend studying the Bible—not just reading it, but learning its major doctrines...
20. Young men, you have a very grave responsibility as heads (or future heads) of homes—you must know the truth...
21. But I'll go further than this and suggest—a real man knows Scripture, and is able to lead his family in truth...
22. Heb.5:12—"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food..."
23. [2] Cherish the truth—that is, you must love doctrine—you must esteem sound doctrine as immensely important...
24. I fear there's a false dichotomy in the minds of many people, between loving God and loving sound theology...
25. To rightly love theology and God are NOT two separate things, but these two necessarily and beautifully relate...
26. Brethren, surely we know this, that THEOLOGY merely means "the study of God"—the knowledge of God...
27. Thus—the very same Psalm writer who said—"I love You" (Ps.116:1), also said—"I love Your law" (Ps.119:97)...
28. He loved God's law (or word) and God Himself—why—because God's word (law) tells us about God Himself...
29. Matt.22:37—"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind..."
30. [3] Tremble at the truth, Isa.66:2—"But on this one I will look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word..."

31. Thus—we are to load the mind with the whole truth—we are to know it, cherish it, and we are to tremble at it...
32. But—here I want to briefly suggest that we are to especially load the mind with truth about sin, cross, and eternity...
33. [a] The truth about SIN—that is, we are to constantly load our minds with the doctrine of man's fall and sin...
34. [b] The truth about the CROSS—that is, we are to constantly load our minds with the person and work of Christ...
35. [c] The truth about ETERNITY, 1Pet.4:7—"But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious (or sober)..."

## B. Live before the eyes of God

1. Absolutely essential to the promotion of sober mindedness—is the constant reminder, that God's eyes are ever upon us...
2. To live ever before the eyes of God—to be mindful of God's all-presence—to act, live, and think in His presence...
3. You know—I have always been amazed, how easy we do things in private, that we would never do in public...
4. For example—would you watch that on your computer, if a parent, spouse, or pastor, was standing over your shoulder...
5. Or, what about our thoughts—what if every thought we had was played before the church on a large screen...
6. What if the entire church, somehow followed us around all day, watching every act and hearing every word...
7. But brethren—why are we so concerned about what man thinks of us, and yet, have less concern about Christ...
8. All of us need to ask ourselves the question—would we do what we're doing, if Christ Himself were present...
9. And brethren, the reason we need to ask this is simple—He is present by His Spirit—His eyes see everything (even into our hearts)...
10. Prov.5:21—"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He ponders all his paths" Prov.15:3—"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good..."
11. The LORD sees everything—He knows what we watch, hear, say, do, and think—it's all open before Him...
12. J.C. Ryle—"The eye of God! Think of that. Everywhere, in every house, in every field, in every room, in every company, alone or in a crowd, the eye of God is always upon you....Do nothing you would not like God to hear. Write nothing you would not like God to read. Go to no place where you would not like God to find you. Read no book of which you would not like God to say, Show it to Me. Never spend your time in such a way that you would not like to have God say, What are you doing?..."
13. Now, here I want to pursue this principle further, by asking the question—why does Christ' presence matter...
14. Why should the fact that Christ sees and knows all things, help us in promoting all that is meant by sober mindedness...
15. [1] Because He is our Beloved—that is, must be mindful that the one who watches every move, deeply loves us...
16. I think sometimes Christians can think wrongly about this, as if, Christ is watching, ready to strike them dead...
17. But brethren, this is very far from the truth—the Scriptures portray Christ's all-presence as a positive reality...
18. Ps.34:15—"The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry" Ps.33:18—"Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy..."
19. Let me illustrate—think of someone you love greatly—father, mother, wife, or sibling—following you everywhere you went...

20. And for the sake of illustration—they were able to see everything you did, hear everything you said, and know everything you thought...
21. Now—I suggest their presence would influence what you did, said, and thought—why, because you love them (and you know they love you)...
22. I am absolutely convinced, there are fewer motives for holiness, than the heart-felt knowledge of Christ's presence...
23. [2] Because He is our Sovereign—this truth in no way conflicts with the previous—they are both equally true...
24. Every Christian will give an account of himself to Christ, in the Day of Judgement, as our Sovereign King...
25. Ecc.12:14—"For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil..."
26. Rom.14:10—"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...so then each of us shall give account of himself to God..."
27. 2Cor.5:10—"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad..."
28. Heb.4:12-13—"For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account..."
29. Now, surely brethren, we understand, whatever these texts mean, they do not deny we will stand before Christ fully justified...
30. Furthermore, these texts must also be understood in light of the many other texts that view Christ's second coming with joy and delight...
31. But, with these necessary clarifications, we must let texts like these have a proper weight upon our thinking...
32. Every word, thought, and deed, is known by my Sovereign, and I will give an account for it, in that final Day...

### C. Love Christ more than all else

1. This is obviously related to the previous two helps as their ultimate goal—to love Christ more than all else...
2. The reason we choose to do sinful things is because we love something, at that specific moment, more than Christ...
3. Perhaps I can put it this way—the more our hearts are filled with love for Christ, the more we will want to obey Him...
4. My friends, the reason we chose to do certain things, we because our hearts desire to do or have those things...
5. Put more theological—the will always acts from the heart—the heart, what we love, determines what we do...
6. This is true from the very beginning of our Christian life—the unsaved sinner always chooses what he loves...
7. This is why no sinner will every choose Christ—his will is a slave to his heart—he hates Christ, thus he refuses Christ...
8. But what does God do in regeneration, but take out that old heart, and replaces it with a heart that now sees...
9. Perhaps we can say, He replaces it with a sober heart, a heart that now sees Christ for who He is and what He's done...
10. Thus, the sinner freely chooses Christ—because he sees in Christ a moral beauty and sufficiency over this world...
11. And thus, the principle is this—the more the heart beholds the beauty and sufficiency of Christ, the more it will chose Him over all else...
12. This is how you—"deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age..."