

Jarret Stepman is a news commentator who wrote the following excerpts from an article that I read on Friday morning:

*The surge in violent crime that began a few years ago continues. The crime numbers we've seen already this year highlight the problem. A serious upswing in violent crime often follows significant anti-police protests and less aggressive policing.*

*Cities defunded police departments and pulled back from aggressive law enforcement. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, backed the "defund the police" movement in 2020, cutting \$80 million out of her city's police budget. On July Fourth, parts of Chicago appeared to be in total anarchy.*

*It didn't help that the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent aggressive lockdowns seriously eroded institutions of civil society.*

*To throw fuel on the fire, rogue progressive district attorneys refused to prosecute all kinds of crimes, including serious or violent ones. Put this all together and it's easy to see why crime is out of control. Anarchy has led to a cycle of violence and mayhem. Now we seem to be settling into a new normal of violent criminality.*

*Fox News reported in late June that at least six major cities were on pace to exceed last year's totals for violent crime. New York has been hit hardest by this spike, with a "25.8% jump in violent crime at this point in 2022 compared to the same time in 2021,"*

*"A total of 189 murders have been tallied in New York City as of last Sunday (one week ago). Rapes, robberies, and felony assaults are all up by as much as 40% in at least one major US city." Fourth of July weekend saw 21 people shot in 14 separate incidents in the Big Apple, according to NBC New York.*

*The mass shooting that left seven dead at an Independence Day parade in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park grabbed headlines. However, violence in Chicago itself over the Fourth of July weekend included 71 shot, eight fatally, ABC 7 Chicago reported.*

*Although it's clear that some cities are in far worse shape than others, this new normal of crime and violence hurts everyone. The picture looks bleak.*

Have you had enough yet...? Don't you wish there was something you could do...? ... Is it time for us to start our own revolution...? ... I'm going to answer "YES!" ... The purpose of my message today is "a *call to radicalize!*" The picture looks bleak and it calls for extreme action on yours (and my) part. The need could not be any more urgent. ... We must be revolutionary - (counter-cultural)! Our time is **NOW!**

When Paul wrote to Titus... the picture was bleak for him (too.) The situation was out of hand... and Paul sought to radicalize Titus... and the churches on the Island of Crete (where he ministered.) Paul said to Titus – the way to influence your culture and stop the momentum of evil (that seems to be winning) is to be counter-cultural. You must be different! (And Boy!) If we do the things that Paul said need to be done – we would be very different. We would be counter-cultural... because our culture today believes these things are (just plain) WRONG!

But the question is... Have you had enough...? Are you ready (NOT just) to do "something"... but to apply what God's Word says will influence culture for the better...? You will need to agree to be a "radical" – because applying today's verses will cut across the grain of society in general – AND the most accepted church culture of our day.

We live in a culture that is drowning in gender confusion. The lines have become blurred... and we are groping about trying to understand what it means for a man to be a man and a woman to be a woman (what it means for a man to be masculine and a woman to be feminine.) ... It is perfectly

clear that the cultural engineers that dominate the media... our educational system — from the preschools to the university — and other strategic places of influence want to neutralize (if not eliminate) the gender distinctions and differences God has hardwired into human beings.

Our passage recognizes gender differences. It is offensive to those who have been swept away by the tide (created by today's social elite.)

But let me try to give you a little hope. Paul's instructions to Titus **WILL WORK** for us. ... It already *has*. ... History has shown us that it works. ... How did Christianity overtake Roman society...? Christianity advanced — against all odds — because unbelievers saw the power of God at work in Christian's lives... making them different. They could actually love their enemies... return blessings when hurt or insulted. Christian martyrs were willing to suffer and die for their faith. An unbelieving world saw all of that and knew that it could *only* be the power of God... that made them so different.

OTHERS ARE WATCHING YOU — is a very big part of what Paul writes in our passage today. (LISTEN!) When we don't bother to do the things in these verses — the world does *not* see the power of God... but when we allow Him to do these things in and through us — please know that a watching world is influenced in the best possible manner. No! We won't have to shout... raise our fists... burn down buildings. But **our** radical behavior is more effective.

And if you don't believe this... then the rest of this sermon... will simply be a waste of your time. ... .. Titus 2:1-10 is our blue-print for revolution...

because it contains instruction for us to transform our culture – as the power of God (our very ability to obey) is displayed to a watching world.

One more important thing... before we get started. I said (a moment ago) that these instructions are not just counter-cultural to society in general... they are also opposed to the current church culture of our day. You will need to decide if you will allow this Scripture to radicalize you.

Here's what I mean. ... The modern church seems to have bought into the notion that **older people have had their day of usefulness and ought to make way for the young.** ... [ P A U S E ] ...

This was stressed at the last meeting I attended for our association of churches. The former regional director and the in-coming (new) regional director gave a unified message that this is what they saw was necessary. (They both talked about the “wisdom” of older ministers stepping aside and turning over their ministries to younger men.) ... (Then) about a month later... the regional office sent an email out to all the pastors... asking them to take a survey. ... I decided to oblige – until I read the first question: “What is your age?” ... “REALLY...?” I thought... as I backed out of the website without dignifying this new emphasis.

Their stress on age... with their recent discussion that older people have had their day of usefulness and now need to make way for the young... is the exact opposite of what Paul writes to Titus. He wanted instruction to filter down to the young... older men teaching younger men and older women teaching younger women. You cannot miss the fact that Paul gives us a chain of responsibility in the church that is designed to influence the

culture. Titus is told to have Christian living principles trickle down from older to the younger. (But this is very “counter-cultural” to the modern church.)

Most of the mega-churches seem to be led by young pastors. It is seen as proof that they are better able to reach younger people... because they can relate to them better. Well that’s fine! But what if your goal is NOT just to have a big church...? ... Do *YOU* see our culture getting better...? Has there been real transformation...? ... [ P A U S E ] ...

Paul tells Titus to focus on community – giving older believers a vital role.

With age and experience come wisdom... and many older men and women have discovered secrets of godly living in relation to their husbands... wives... children... neighbors... and co-workers in the workplace - that could save younger adults a lot of unnecessary grief. ... And when the unavoidable trials come to the young men and woman... who better to guide them through... than an older brother or sister who has been through it before?

### Titus 2:1

Paul introduces a contrast with the very first word of chapter 2. “*But as for you, in contradistinction to those I have been discussing in chapter one.*” This charge is aimed directly at Titus. Paul uses the emphatic personal pronoun “you” to get his attention. Titus was to be as active in teaching positive truth as the heretics were in teaching evil.” He is to teach “*things which are fitting*” or “*suitable*.”

Paul has established a tone of “YOU be distinctive.” He is going to carry that tone all the way through the passage. ... “*Let the world see that you are different! This is a primary weapon...*” We will never influence our culture if we look just like them!

### **Titus 2:2**

“Sober-minded”... “dignified”... and “self-controlled” tend to overlap in meaning. But the implication of all three is that older men must live lives of observable respectability (or dignity.)

My favorite word-smith (Chuck Swindoll) writes:

*While we typically think of older men as wiser, more mature, and stronger in faith, those who are up in years do not always justify our expectations. The passage of time and the experience of life invite each person to gain wisdom, but many refuse the offer and, instead, they become critical, cynical, cranky, negative, and even lazy.*

Older men in the church who want to impact our culture need to have observable respectability. So let me say just a little more about what this looks like. ... This man is wise in his decision-making and careful when making judgments. He is clear on what really matters and decisive in making godly choices. He has as his motto for life one simple dictum: “*All that matters in life is pleasing God.*”... He rightly uses his God-given talents and gifts, his time, his money, and his energy.

I REALLY enjoy 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks in LaPine! There is no place else where it is celebrated – like it is here. We watched the arial and ground fireworks in 360 degrees (starting at 7:30 and continuously going off for three hours.) The city has their “official display” (which starts at 10:00)... but all over LaPine... the same kind of rockets that the “official show”

shoots up... are going off in multiple locations. Some don't even make it to the sky before exploding. (Fortunately... I don't think anyone was hurt.) But for three straight hours we watch the sky (and ground) spectacularly light up.

But... as I watched this year... I kept thinking how every arial rocket cost at least 30-50 dollars for a thrill that would only last for about 5 seconds. Some of these people MUST have spent 5 THOUSAND dollars (or more)... because individuals all around us kept setting off one after another for 3 hours. With so many people doing that... I was hoping that every one of them will have enough money to pay their next months mortgage or rent. (The average LaPinian is not very well-off...)

So between all of my ouuuuus(!) and awwws(!)... I worried for the financcers of our entertainment. They spent so MUCH money on what was (literally) gone in a flash.

I enjoyed the 360 fireworks show... but my guess is that our pyro-technicians would not be the best example of "Sober-minded"... "dignified"... and "self-controlled". An older man in the church is to be a man with right and godly priorities.

What enables the behavior expected of the older men is "faith ... love ... endurance." ... "Faith" describes a personal relationship with God. ... "Love" describes relationships with others. ... "Endurance" describes steadfastness for the sake of these relationships.

Christian (of all people - because of the hope that is within us) should manifest enormous "endurance." ... (Because we know how it will all come out in the end) - we can endure testing... work through hardship... accept

disappointment... and not give up under pressure and adversity. The mature... godly man does not lose heart... throw in the towel... or drop out of the race.

### **Titus 2:3**

Several years ago Elisabeth Elliot wrote an article entitled “*Where Are the WOTTs?*” ... The question Elisabeth asked is simple and to the point: “*Where are the godly older women who are to teach young mothers how to manage their children and homes? Where are the WOTTs, the Women of Titus Two?*” ... I thought that might be a good name for a women’s ministry that focuses on Paul’s instruction to Titus. ... (Yes I am well aware that there should also be an article titled “*Where are the MOTTs? - Men of Titus Two.*”) It is true that we need to be doing a better job of being radicalize... so we can impact our culture (men and women.)

In the same way that older men are to have observable dignity... older women should have observable “reverence” (which comes from the Greek compound word *hier-op-repēs*... meaning “*fitting for the temple.*”) ... The implements and furniture in the temple had been specifically created for service to God and were consecrated for that purpose. The idea of reverence suggests that a person... by her conduct... demonstrates that she belongs to God and that her life has been reserved (specially consecrated) for worshiping Him.

Right after reverence... Paul mentions “*not a slave to wine.*” This struck me as a little odd... because I usually don’t think of it as a bigger problem among women – as it is among men. But one commentator thought it was because older women had more idle time on their hands once their children



were raised and out of the home. (Maybe.) ... Perhaps Paul is exhorting them to be more purposeful with time... creativity... and mindfulness (which they never used to have.)

Then Paul adds: *“They are to teach what is good.”* ... Younger women desperately need the role modeling, teaching, discipling, insight, and practical wisdom that these older ladies can provide. Being more experienced in life and in the Lord, they can pass on a godly legacy that will hopefully reproduce itself for generations.

Although younger women may seldom approach older women for advice... they watch. They learn by example... even when they aren't completely aware of the fact that they are being taught. ... Young girls often grow up rebelling and resisting the way their mothers do things. Then (years later) they instinctively nurture their families and care for their homes exactly as they observed their mothers do it.

OK... are you ready for the extremely radical stuff that our culture rejects...? ... (Verses 4-5 explain what Paul meant by *“what is good”*... but our culture sees it as BAD.)

### **Titus 2:4-5**

Is it just me(?)... or does anyone else find it interesting that Paul says these women needed to be taught how to love their husbands...? ... Does this indicate something about the husbands(?) or the wives(?) *“Oh hunny... you're going to need a lot of help loving **THAT** man!”* Or... *“Woman... you don't have a clue about how to care for a man... Unless you are taught... it's over before it even begins...”*

I think this is evidence that we do not so much “fall in love” as we “learn to love.” (We do not so much “fall in love” as we “learn to love.”) Boy! How radical it would be if we understood this. We simply assume no one really needs to be taught. (Let them figure it out on their own.)

Interestingly... Paul does not use the word *agapē*. The apostle uses the noun *philandrous*... a compound from *philos* (“affection, befriend, caring”)... and *anēr* (“man” or “husband”). ... It is used only here in the New Testament. Paul is saying that the young women are to be learning how to get along with and care for their husbands.

Perhaps learning how to get along and care for their husband... would be a valuable thing to teach... but what about this next one? (Train them to love their children.) ... Few things are more natural for a mother... than loving her children. Does she really need to be taught this...?

Yes. A young mother must move beyond her natural innate affection to a specific lifestyle and plan of action that will cultivate in her children godly character and affection. Proverbs 29:15 says, “*A rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a youth left to himself is a disgrace to his mother.*” The most important way a mother can love her children is to love them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. As she loves them physically, emotionally, educationally, morally, socially, and spiritually, she always has her eye on their need for Christ.

Now... let me say something to the older women of our church (our “would-be WOTTs – Women of Titus Two.) You may be sitting there thinking... this is all fine and dandy... I would love to teach young wives and young mothers... but I don’t have much contact with any in our church... and

certainly there are none who are coming up to me and asking to be disciplined by me.

Oh please listen to me... you "would-be WOTT!" I have an excellent solution. Make it your plan to be around young moms. We are giving you that opportunity in the Fall when we start AWANA back up. Moms will be bringing children to club and it will be a natural opportunity for you to talk to young mothers about their kids – and for them to watch YOU with kids. There is a lot for them to learn - by watching you. What a wonderful WOTT you could be!!!

As they watch you work with Children... there is a lot that they can learn about "self-control" ... and "purity." (Once again... this word "purity" means "reserved for God's purposes.")

A WOTT is someone who is radically different from the culture... so get ready for these next principles which must be taught.

"Be a homemaker." Her home needs to be her primary base of operation and the main focus of her attention. Proverbs 31:10–31 teaches us that a diligent homemaker may be involved in a wide range of activities and interests. She is not lazy or a busybody, nor is she distracted by outside pursuits and responsibilities that eat up her precious time and attention. This woman is not seduced by the sirens of modernity who tell her she is wasting her time and talent as a homemaker and that it is the career woman who has purpose and is truly satisfied.

Teaching that a woman is to expend her energy at home (maintaining a nest and a safe haven for both her husband and children) ... is NOT culturally correct in modern times. Nevertheless... most husbands (even

non-believers) want to see their home and children protected and taken care of by the loving nurturing that only their wife can give.

Paul did not write this to prohibit women from working outside the home. The duty of a Christian mother is first to her home... and these other interests must be secondary. ... [ P A U S E ] ...

Well... let's get even more radical. "*Train the young women to be submissive to their own husbands...*" The husband must not be a tyrant... faithless... unloving... or impatient... (as previously mentioned in verse 2.) He should be worthy of respect. Likewise... the woman should not be rebellious... undermining or contradicting the man. Submission means to accept the relationship that God has designed (voluntarily subjecting oneself to God's order and fulfilling the responsibilities that come with it.)

Contrary to popular misconceptions... there is no inferiority in submissiveness. We see this plainly in the Trinity... where Father... Son... and Holy Spirit are all equally God... and yet for the purpose of redemption... the Son submits in His assignment to the Father.

Note also that a wife submits to her own husband - not every man. This charge is specific. Indeed... unless a husband asks his wife to do something unbiblical... illegal... immoral... or unethical... she is to follow his leadership. By doing this she will honor God and His Word... and she will reach... in a more effective manner... the heart of her husband. (And) Their peaceful home will reach a watching world.

### **Titus 2:6**

The self-controlled man actively engages the battle for the mind... knowing that he must control and discipline his thought life if he is to win the battles of the Christian life.

### **Titus 2:7**

Paul is now addressing Titus (specifically). He tells Titus to “show yourself to be an example.” ... Titus was to confront them not only with spiritual words... but with a spiritual life that corresponded to those words. ... Even the most forceful and compelling counsel... will fall on deaf ears if the one who gives it fails to live by it. In verse 8 Paul tells Titus how he is to relate to people who are OUTSIDE the church. (This is how his normal conversations with the average person should be.)

### **Titus 2:8**

Paul charged Titus in this way: “*Your message is to be sound beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be ashamed, having nothing bad to say about us.*” The pure word from a pure vessel is not subject to legitimate condemnation or criticism. In fact, those who criticize such faithful and holy teachers will eventually shame themselves because their accusations are without merit or substance.

Notice that Paul does not say the evil speaking would be against Titus but against us. “The antagonism is directed not against Titus as an individual but against him as a disciple of Christ; hence... really against Christ himself and all his messengers.

The gospel in our own day has been subjected to a great deal of ridicule. Far too often the cause of offense has not been the message but the messenger. If persons refuse to come to Christ... let it be the message

they say no to - not the messenger who... because of a shameful life... clouds and even hides the purity of the Word of salvation. We are being watched! (This is how we will change our culture!)

### **Titus 2:9-10**

What appears at first glance to be a time- and culture-bound instruction to **slaves** ... (actually) applies to all who find themselves under the authority of someone else. ... This is excellent instruction for OUR winning the culture by being different (a radical).

For a number of reasons... the modern employer... supervisor... or teacher does not necessarily expect to be treated with respect by those under his or her charge. ... Respect for those in authority seems to be a thing of the past. ... But it is just at this point that a Christian can step into the confusion... and make a powerful impression. Where all around there is disrespect or indifference to those in authority... a Christian's respectful attitude and speech... backed up by good performance... will demonstrate that God's message of salvation produces positive... visible results. ... This is an opportunity for a watching world to witness God's power to change lives and make us different (in a good way.)

We are all being watched. Not only by angels (who move among us unseen) and by Satan's evil host (who lurk in the shadows waiting to multiply evil.) ... We are being watched by children and teenagers... who want to know how the world really works and whether we actually believe everything we say about good and bad, right and wrong. ... We are being watched by older believers... (who hope the coming generation will faithfully carry on what they have built)... and we are being watched by

younger believers (who need reassurance that the path they follow is a good one.)

And we are being watched by those who have not chosen to believe. Our behavior either confirms their suspicion that Christianity is a hoax... or it invites them to draw near for a closer look. ... There may even be a few who read God's Word and then observe our behavior to see if they match.

Will you answer the call here in Titus 2:1-10... and be radicalized? Let's change our culture! Have you had enough yet?