

Teaching Plan  
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: May 18, 2019

Lesson Title: "Living With Integrity"

Lesson Passage: Titus 2:1-15

ABOUT THIS LESSON

Redeemed people are expected to live redeemed lives. Most of us would agree with the logic of that statement; but what does it mean? In this lesson, Paul talks about proper conduct for Christians--in the home, the church, and the larger community.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Name some of the traits that should characterize the conduct of Christian men and women. (2) Answer the question, "Why should Christians be concerned about the way they conduct themselves?"

BEGINNING THE LESSON

*Ask:* Are you familiar with the saying, "What you are speaks so loudly, I can't hear what you say"? Do you know who originated it? *Share this information:* Actually, this statement is a misquotation of something Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote. Emerson said: "What you are stands over you the while, and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary." *Then make this point:* Whichever version you prefer, this saying highlights a truth that we would do well to keep in mind. A lost world simply isn't going to pay any attention to what we say about our faith unless our lives back up what we say. That was Paul's concern when he wrote the words in today's lesson passage, Titus 2:1-15.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. Review the context of Paul's letter to Titus: Paul had previously sent Titus to the island of Crete to complete the organization of the churches there. Christianity was still new to the people of Crete. Though a number of Cretans had been converted, they had not been well-schooled in the faith. One of the pastoral duties of Titus was to instruct them in godly living.

2. "Teach what befits sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1) sets the stage for the instructions concerning Christian attitudes and conduct in 2:2-8: (1) The basic premise is that behavior should always correspond to belief. (2) *Identify the persons whose conduct is being discussed in Titus 2:2-6.* (Elderly men and women, young women and young men.) (3) *Call attention to the important principle stated in v. 1:* "You must teach what agrees with sound doctrine" (TEV). This

means that the young pastor's ethical instruction must be harmonious with the beliefs he teaches. *Recall that the "Great Commission" says: "teach them to observe (not just 'talk about') all I have commanded."*

3. Discuss the qualities of life referred to in Titus 2:2-6: (1) OLDER MEN: Should be moderate in attitudes and habits; dignified and serious about life; self-controlled, sensible, restrained; unwavering in reliance upon God; grounded in love; steadfast and dependable. (2) OLDER WOMEN: Should be reverent in demeanor; not malicious gossipers; not compulsive drinkers; teachers of good conduct. (3) YOUNGER WOMEN: Should be husband-lovers, children-lovers, sensible and discreet; chaste, faithful to marriage vows; homemakers; kind (not irritable and abusive to family members); respectful of husbands. (4) YOUNGER MEN: Should be disciplined, always exercising self-control.

4. Observe that, in verses 7-8, Paul is telling Titus that he must teach Christian behavior by what he does as well as by what he says: (1) In v. 2:7 he advises, "In all things you yourself must be an example of good behavior. Be sincere and serious in your teaching" (Today's English Version). (2) "Use sound words that cannot be criticized," in v. 8, means something like, "when you are speaking of your faith, know what you believe and why you believe it."

5. In Titus 2:9-10, Paul is telling Titus to teach Christian slaves that they can bring credit to Christ by pleasing their masters, not arguing or stealing, but by being completely honest; and the principle that one conveys the truth about Christ through who he is as well as by what he says applies to household servants just as it does to pastors. NOTE: Many first-century slaves were quite intelligent, held responsible positions, and were respected and loved by their masters. And, according to early Christian history, slaves were often responsible for leading their masters to Christ.

6. Invite someone to read 2:11-14, then ask: Why is it important for Christians to be careful about their behavior? Refer to v. 11-12, then explain Paul's answer: God's grace (i.e., His saving love, shown in Jesus Christ) "instructs us." Negatively, it teaches us to give up ungodly living and worldly passions. Positively, it trains us in self-control, fairness toward others, and devotion to God.

7. Point out that verses 13-15 give two powerful reasons for living in harmony with God's will: (1) The expectation of Christ's return should have a bearing on how we live every day (v. 13). (2) The cross of Christ is another reason for right living. In the presence of the cross, shoddy living is shown up for what it is.

CLOSING THE LESSON

*Ask class members to think of concrete situations in the workaday world that provide opportunities to demonstrate the difference Christian conduct can make. EXAMPLES:* (1) Treating work associates

courteously, no matter how irritating they might be. (2) Practicing scrupulous honesty in both actions and words.

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