

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, June 30, 2024

**Sober, Sober, Sober – Titus 2**  
**Part 2**

**Titus 3:14** *“And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.”*

Today we will resume our examination of Paul’s instruction to “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine”, ministering continual and specific provocation to practical godliness within the church, according to each member’s need and circumstance.

**Titus 2: 1-10** *“1 ¶ But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. 6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. 7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. 9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; 10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”*

Our goal is to examine and apply the practical instruction that the Holy Spirit provided for each of the demographics in the passage. As a reminder of what we have covered so far:

- Aged men – Sermon 5/12/2024
- Aged women
- Young women
- Young men – Sermon 6/30/24 (today) + next sermon
- Preachers
- Servants

In my last sermon, we considered the instruction for aged men to be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, charity, and patience. We now move on to the mindset and behavior that those elder men should be explicitly teaching to younger men. I am taking the demographic of younger men out of order from the passage, so that we can connect

them directly with the older men who should be actively teaching them, but also because the instruction to young men is singular, and the same instruction will be relevant to the other demographics as well.

### Exhort young men to be **sober minded**

- Let's begin by making sure everyone is listening; I don't want  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the group to think this doesn't apply to them. This instruction applies to every demographic, all day, every day. It's why the sermon series is titled the way it is. The need to be sober is threaded throughout the entire passage. The fact that Paul is so pointed in his instruction to young men just speaks to the particular focus that young men must have. Young women, please hear this as though it applies just as directly to you. All young people need to make this their daily labor.
- "Sober":
  - Dictionary:
    - Not intoxicated
    - marked by sedate or gravely or earnestly thoughtful character or demeanor
    - marked by temperance, moderation, or seriousness
  - Greek: The word from the passage is Sophroneo (4993). That word comes from Sophron (4998), which we encountered in verse 2 where aged men are instructed to be "temperate".
    - Sophron (4998) – Strongs: "of a sound mind, sane, in one's senses; curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate"
      - Made up of two words which mean "to keep safe" "the mind".
      - This word is an adjective; it indicates a state of being.
    - Sophroneo [so-fron-eh'-o] (4993)
      - to exercise self control; to put a moderate estimate upon one's self, think of one's self soberly; to curb one's passions
      - This word is a verb; it indicates work that must be done.
  - The word that is listed for older men is speaking to the need to **be** sober, as a constant. The word listed for younger men focuses on the difficult and active **work** required to bring the mind to that place of sobriety which will in turn drive sober behavior. It is a work that young men should see as central to their daily walk. They must continually work to reign in the impulses of the proud and lustful heart. Aged men are supposed to be watchful, and build them up in that work.
- Working definition:
  - Self-aware is central to sober-mindedness, and it is the opposite of self-absorbed. It is the insatiable pursuit of our natural flesh to feed our lust and pride. Our fleshly hearts cry out: "I want!", "I deserve!". Our flesh is

intoxicated by the target of our desires; our focus is earthly and sensual; we desire escapism; it is shortsighted and selfish. Self-awareness starts with shifting our view – on every topic - to God and eternity, and where we stand in relation. So much of the flesh instantly falls away when we remember what manner of creature we are, and where our hope of salvation lies. Sobering up from our worldly intoxication, and forcing our minds to self-awareness, means that we will then guide our decisions and behaviors from a spirit that is based on pleasing God, and serving others, rather than a spirit that wants to always and only serve ourselves. In short: sober self-awareness seeks to please God, and serve our fellow man; intoxicated, proud, lustful hearts seek to please ourselves.

- **1Corinthians 13:11,13** *“11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ... 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”*
  - This statement about childishness takes on specific meaning when we view it in the context of the “Charity” chapter (1Corinthians 13). Childish = self-absorbed; every action is driven by the immediate desire of the eyes. We are commanded to put away that childish mindset, and put on the mindset of sobriety before God, which enables us to dwell in faith, hope, and charity. You cannot behave from a heart of charity if you will not put on sobriety.
- Why only one instruction for young men?
  - First, let’s be clear that “young men” is not primarily referring to children. We’re talking about grown men, including those who have taken on the yoke to be a husband and father.
  - Today’s young men will be tomorrow’s aged men – this is the training ground to learn to be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, charity, and patience. This is the time to learn temperance, such that in every circumstance you can keep a loose grip on your own desires, and pivot to the needs of the moment. By the decree of the Creator, men are supposed to lead – they are supposed to carry authority and use it well, in obedience to God, and for the good of others. Authority is not a license to lord over others, or to feed the desires of the flesh – it is a grave responsibility that God has given. The circumstances of any given person obviously vary, but let’s focus for the moment on husbands and fathers. It is your duty – and yours alone – to rule your house well. You will have to contend with not only your own fleshly desires, but also the desires of your wife, and your children. Children will not regulate themselves – it is your job! With every vicissitude of life, you will first need to put on a sober mindset, in order to do your job well.

- Again, sobriety means that you are aware of your surroundings, and how your words and actions impact those around you; beginning with those who are under your direct authority. From that clarity, you can – and must - be intentional with your actions. Will your actions provoke others to lust, pride, malice, envy, etc.? Or will they provoke to love and to good works? Look clearly, and make decisions intentionally and selflessly. This is foundational to the practical structure of your house.
  - **1Corinthians 16:15** *“I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)”*
  - This sobriety as you take on to rule your house well, includes deciding what measure of your strength should pour into your wife and children directly, and what measure should pour into the needs of others. Your job is to rule your house well. Your wife’s job is to guide the house according to that rule. The current satanic zeitgeist would have young men to believe that if you don’t exactly, evenly divide the domestic duties with your wife, then you are failing as a husband. To be clear – you should help in any useful and practical way that you are able; you have no business lazily feeding your own desires while your wife labors. On the other hand, if you obsess over a false “equality” of duties being the goal, then you will withhold your strength from the ministry and the body.
- While every man will not directly bear the responsibility of a husband or a father, every man should model the same godly behaviors to the younger generations, and every man should seek to teach younger people, beginning with their example. Similarly, while every man will not be a pastor in the church, every man should watch, model, and teach, as trustworthy helpers to the body.
- Aged men are to teach younger men, which means that younger men must desire to be taught! It means that younger men must put down the defenses of their pride which shield them from seeking and heeding counsel.
  - I keep referring to the duty of older men to teach the younger men, but let me be clear: while this duty falls directly to older men, older women are not excluded from giving good counsel. Young men must particularly war against their prideful instinct to look down upon the wise counsels of older women, and even more specifically, those of their mother.

I began to write about some specific dangers for young men, and some more specific exhortation, when I remembered a book that I read nearly 10 years ago. The book is

called "Thoughts for Young Men" by JC Ryle. When I began to read the book again, I realized that he hits squarely upon some of the main points that I want to make, and he does it quite effectively. So, rather than re-inventing the wheel, I will read you his comments, which I have condensed from 38 pages down to about 14 or so. We will work through half of that today, and the other half when I next preach, Lord willing.

### **"Thoughts For Young Men" - Introduction:**

I am going to follow the Apostle's advice to "exhort the young men to be sober minded." There are four things which I propose to do:

1. I will mention some general REASONS why young men need exhorting.
2. I will note some special DANGERS which young men need to be warned about.
3. I will give some general COUNSEL which I beg young men to receive.
4. I will set down some special RULES OF CONDUCT which I strongly advise young men to follow.

### **Some General Reasons why young men need exhorting:**

- **Death and judgment are waiting for young men, even as it waits for others, and they nearly all seem to forget it.** Young men, it is appointed for you to die; and no matter how strong and healthy you may be now, the day of your death is perhaps very near. Are you thinking you will pay attention to these things tomorrow? Remember the words of Solomon, "*Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*" (**Proverbs 27:1**). Tomorrow is the devil's day, but today is God's. Satan does not care how spiritual your intentions are, or how holy your resolutions, if only they are determined to be done tomorrow. Oh, give no place to the devil in this matter! All men don't live to be elderly fathers, like Isaac and Jacob. Job lost all of his ten children in one day. Your lot may be like one of theirs, and when death comes, it will be vain to talk of tomorrow, you must go at once. Young men, your time is short. Your days are but a brief shadow, a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes, a story that is soon told. Your bodies are not made of brass. "*Even the young men shall utterly fall*" (**Isaiah 40:30**). Your health may be taken from you in a moment: it only needs an accident, a fever, an inflammation, a broken blood-vessel, and the worm would soon feed upon you in the grave. There is but a step between any one of you and death. This night your soul might be required of you. You are fast going the way of all the earth, you will soon be gone. Your life is all uncertainty, your death and judgment are perfectly sure. "*Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*" (**Ecclesiastes 11:9**)

- **What young men will be, in all probability depends on what they are now, and they seem to forget this.** Youth is the planting time of full age, the molding season in the little space of human life. By the shoot that springs up we can judge the type of tree that is growing, by the blossoms we judge the kind of fruit, by the spring we judge the type of harvest coming, by the morning we judge the coming day, and by the character of the young man, we may generally judge what he will be when he grows up. Young men, do not be deceived. Don't think you can, at will, serve lusts and pleasures in your beginning, and then go and serve God with ease at your latter end. Don't think that you can live with Esau, and then die with Jacob. It is a mockery to deal with God and your souls in such a fashion. It is an awful mockery to suppose you can give the flower of your strength to the world and the devil, and then put off the King of kings with the scraps and remains of your hearts, the wreck and remnant of your powers. It is an awful mockery, and you may find to your loss that the thing cannot be done. Why do I say all this? I say it because of the force of habit. Habits have deep roots. Once sin is allowed to settle in your heart, it will not be turned out at your bidding. Custom becomes second nature, and its chains are not easily broken. The prophet has well said, "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil*" (**Jeremiah 13:23**). Habits are like stones rolling down hill--the further they roll, the faster and more ungovernable is their course. Habits, like trees, are strengthened by age. A boy may bend an oak when it is a sapling--a hundred men cannot root it up, when it is a full grown tree. So it is with habits: the older the stronger--the longer they have held possession, the harder they will be to cast out. They grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength. Custom is the nurse of sin. Every fresh act of sin lessens fear and remorse, hardens our hearts, blunts the edge of our conscience, and increases our evil inclination.
- **The devil uses special diligence to destroy the souls of young men, and they don't seem to know it.** Young men, beware of being taken by his snares. He will try to throw dust in your eyes, and prevent you seeing anything in its true colors. He would eagerly make you think that evil is good, and good is evil. He will paint, cover with gold, and dress up sin, in order to make you fall in love with it. He will deform, and misrepresent, and fabricate true Christianity, in order to make you take a dislike to it. He will exalt the pleasures of wickedness--but he will hide from you the sting. He will lift up before your eyes the cross and its painfulness-- but he will keep out of sight the eternal crown. He will promise you everything, as he did to Christ, if you will only serve him. He will even help you to wear a form of Christianity, if you will only neglect the power. He will tell you at the beginning of your lives, it is too soon to serve God--he will tell you at the end, it is too late. Oh, do not be deceived! You don't know the danger you are in from this enemy. Your enemy is mighty. He is called "*The Prince of this world*" (**John 14:30**). He opposed

our Lord Jesus Christ all through His ministry. He tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and so brought sin and death into the world. He even tempted David, the man after God's own heart, and caused his latter days to be full of sorrow. He even tempted Peter, the chosen Apostle, and made him deny his Lord. Surely his hostility towards man and God is to be despised. Your enemy is restless. He never sleeps. He is always going around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. You may be careless about your souls: but he is not. He wants your soul to make you miserable, like himself, and will have your soul if he can. You are the prize for which he is specially contending. He foresees you must either be the blessings or the curses of your day, and he is trying hard to effect a place in your hearts early in your life, in order that you may help advance his kingdom each day. Well does he understand that to spoil the bud is the surest way to mar the flower.

- **Young men need exhorting because of the sorrow it will save them, to begin serving God now.** Sin is the mother of all sorrow, and no sort of sin appears to give a man so much misery and pain as the sins of his youth. The foolish acts he did--the time he wasted--the mistakes he made--the bad company he kept--the harm he did himself, both body and soul--the chances of happiness he threw away--the openings of usefulness he neglected; all these things that often embitter the conscience of an old man, throw a gloom on the evening of his days, and fill later hours of his life with self-reproach and shame. Some men could tell you of the untimely loss of health, brought on by youthful sins. Disease racks their limbs with pain, and life is almost a weariness. Their muscular strength is so wasted, that the slightest weight seems a burden. Their eye has become prematurely dim, and their natural energy abated. The sun of their health has gone down while it is yet day, and they mourn to see their flesh and body consumed. Believe me, this is a bitter cup to drink. Others could give you sad accounts of the consequences of idleness. They threw away the golden opportunity for learning. They would not get wisdom at the time when their minds were most able to receive it, and their memory most ready to retain it. And now it is too late. They don't have the time to sit down and learn. They no longer have the same power, even if they had the time. Lost time can never be redeemed. This too is a bitter cup to drink. Others could tell you of grievous mistakes in judgment, from which they suffer all their lives. They had to have it their own way. They would not take advice. They formed some connection which has been altogether ruinous to their happiness. They chose a profession for which they were entirely unsuited. And they see it all now. But their eyes are only open when the mistake cannot be retrieved. Oh, this is also a bitter cup to drink! Young men, young men, I wish you did but know the comfort of a conscience not burdened with a long list of youthful sins. Be merciful to yourselves. Seek the Lord early, and so you will be spared many a bitter tear. This is the truth that David

seems to have felt. He says to the Lord, "*Remember not the sins of my youth*" (**Psalm 25:7**).

## There are some special dangers that young men need to be warned against.

- **One danger to young men is PRIDE.** Pride is the oldest sin in the world. Indeed, it was before the world. Satan and his angels fell by pride. They were not satisfied with their first situation and status. Pride threw Adam out of paradise. He was not content with the place God assigned him. He tried to raise himself, and fell. Thus sin, sorrow, and death entered in by pride. Pride sits in all our hearts by nature. We are born proud. Pride makes us rest content with ourselves--think we are good enough as we are --keep us from taking advice --turn every one to his own way. But pride never reigns anywhere so powerfully as in the heart of a young man. How common is it to see young men with big heads, high-minded, and impatient of any counsel! How often they are rude and uncourteous to all around them, thinking they are not valued and honored as they deserve! How often will they not stop to listen to a hint from an older person! They think that they know everything. They are full of conceit of their own wisdom. They think elderly people, and especially their relatives, are stupid, and dull, and slow. They want no teaching or instruction themselves: they understand all things. It almost makes them angry to be spoken to. Like young horses, they cannot bear the least control. They must be independent and have their own way. They seem to think, like those whom Job mentioned, "*No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.*" (**Job 12:2**). And all this is pride. Rehoboam was such a person, who despised the counsel of the old experienced men who stood before his father, and listened to the advice of the young men of his own generation. He lived to reap the consequences of his folly. There are many like him. The prodigal son in the parable was also such a person, who needed to have his share of the inheritance so he could set himself up in the lifestyle that he desired. He could not submit to live quietly under his father's roof, but would go into a far country, and be his own master. Like the little child that will leave its mother's hand and walk alone, he soon feels the sting for his folly. Young men, I beseech you earnestly, beware of pride. Do not be proud of your own abilities, your own strength, your own knowledge, your own appearance, your own cleverness. Do not be proud of yourself, and your endowments of any kind. It all comes from not knowing yourself and the world. The older you grow, and the more you see, the less reason you will find for being proud. Ignorance and inexperience are the pedestal of pride; once the pedestal is removed-- pride will soon come down. Remember how often Scripture sets before us the excellence of a humble spirit. How strongly we are warned "*not to think of [yourself] more highly than [you] ought to think;*" (**Romans 12:3**). How plainly we are told, "*If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*" (**1 Corinthians 8:2**). How strict is the command: "*Be clothed with humility*" (**1 Peter 5:5**). This is the garment of which



many seem not to have so much as a rag. Think of the wisest man that ever lived--I mean Solomon. See how he speaks of himself as a *"little child: [who knows] not how to go out or come in"* (**1 Kings 3:7**). That was a very different spirit from his brother Absalom's, who thought himself equal to anything: *"Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!"* (**2 Samuel 15:4**). That was a very different spirit from his brother Adonijah's, who *"exalted himself, saying, I will be king"* (**1 Kings 1:5**). Humility was the beginning of Solomon's wisdom. He writes it down as his own experience, *"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."* (**Proverbs 26:12**). Young men, take to heart the Scriptures just quoted. Do not be too confident in your own judgment. Stop being so sure that you are always right, and others wrong. Don't trust your own opinion, when you find it contrary to that of older men, and especially to that of your own parents. Age gives experience, and therefore deserves respect. It is a mark of Elihu's wisdom, in the book of Job, that *"Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he."* (**Job 32:4**). And afterwards he said, *"I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom."* (**Job 32:6-7**).

- **Another danger to young men is the LOVE OF PLEASURE.** Youth is the time when our passions are strongest--and like unruly children, cry most loudly for indulgence. Youth is the time when we have generally our most health and strength: death seems far away, and to enjoy ourselves in this life seems to be everything. Youth is the time when most people have few earthly cares or anxieties to take up their attention. And all these things help to make young men think of nothing except pleasure. All things that give a feeling of excitement for the time--all things that drown thought, and keep the mind in a constant whirl--all things that please the senses and delight the flesh--these are the sort of things that have mighty power at your time of life, and they owe their power to the love of pleasure. Be on your guard. Do not be like those of whom Paul speaks, *"Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God"* (**2 Timothy 3:4**). Remember what I say: if you would cling to earthly pleasures--these are the things which murder souls. There is no surer way to get a seared conscience and a hard heart towards the things of God, than to give way to the desires of the flesh and mind. Consider what Peter says: *"Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul"* (**1 Peter 2:11**). They destroy the soul's peace, break down its strength, lead it into captivity, and make it a slave. Once the body was a perfect home for a soul--now it is all corrupt and disordered, and needs constant watching. It is a burden to the soul--not a helper; a hindrance--not an assistance. It may become a useful servant, but it is always a bad master. Consider, again, the words of Paul: *"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."* (**Romans 13:14**). All that glitters is not gold. All that tastes sweet is not good. All that pleases for a while is not real pleasure. Go and take your fill of earthly pleasures if you will--you will never find your heart satisfied with them. There will always be a voice within, crying, like the

leech in Proverbs 30:15, "Give! Give!" There is an empty place there, which nothing but God can fill. You will find, as Solomon did by experience, that earthly pleasures are but a meaningless show--promising contentment but bringing a dissatisfaction of spirit. Be wise in your youth. Write the word "poison" on all earthly pleasures. The most lawful of them must be used in moderation. All of them are soul-destroying if you give them your heart. Pleasure, must first have the guarantee that it is not sinful--then it is to be enjoyed in moderation.

- **Another danger to young men is THOUGHTLESSNESS.** You know little of the perils around you, and so you are careless how you walk. You hate the trouble of serious, quiet thinking, and so you make wrong decisions and bring upon yourselves much sorrow. Young Esau had to have his brother's stew and sold his birthright: he never thought how much he would want it in the future. Young Simeon and Levi had to avenge the rape of their sister Dinah, and kill the Shechemites: they never considered how much trouble and anxiety they might bring on their father Jacob and his house. *"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways." (Haggai 1:7)* Stop and think--consider and be wise. Just as a bad servant does wrong, and then says, "I never gave it a thought," so young men run into sin, and then say, "I did not think about it--it did not look like sin." Not look like sin! What would you expect? Sin will not come to you, saying, "I am sin;" it would do little harm if it did. Sin always seems "good, and pleasant, and desirable," at the time of commission. Oh, get wisdom, get discretion! Foolish talking and kidding, and joking, and excessive amusement, are only too common. I don't argue the fact that there is a time for all things; but to be always flippant and joking is anything but wise. What does the wisest of men say -- *"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity."* (**Ecclesiastes 7:2-6**) Oh, young men, learn to be thoughtful! Learn to consider what you are doing, and where you are going. Make time for calm reflection. Commune with your own heart, and be still.

I love you all. Amen.