

“Extraordinary Ordinary”

Titus 2:1–10, *Everyday Theology* #2

Jason’s Announcement

College students... One of the most important parts of your college experience is figuring out your role in God’s kingdom. Give **1 summer**; and then, **first 2 years** to serve on mission.

This is an awesome thing... Seminary-level **classes myself and others teach; a couple of mission trips** plus you lead out in ministry here in our city.

If you are a college student, I want to challenge you to **give this summer to missions**... The deadline for applications for all Go Now opportunities, including the City Project, is Feb 1. (WHY JUST TELLING US ABOUT IT NOW? YOU WOULDN’T HAVE DONE ANYTHING BEFORE WITH IT ANYWAY) To learn more, get an application and have all your questions answered stop by the Next Steps area on your way out today or visit summitrdu.com. OTHER STUDENTS?

Introduction

TITUS 2. Last season, I coached a 4- and 5-year-old soccer team. **Why?** Because God, in his sovereignty, wanted to teach me more patience. No... I wanted to do it to spend **more time with my son**, and to interact more with non-believers. (The staff at the Summit office gets **tired of me sharing** the gospel with them all the time.)

Anyway, if you’ve ever seen 5-year olds in a “soccer game,” **it’s a mess**. An absolute mess. Essentially, you have a **dozen kids swarming** around the ball, kicking frantically. There’s always the **odd kid** zoning out, counting the clouds or tracking the movement on an ant. But on

the whole, they’re a bunch of **Labrador Retrievers**, happily running around in a pack, barking, excited about nothing.

*When you coach 4 year olds, you **don’t come up with plays**; you’ve got basically **3 things** you are trying to help them learn (**other than ‘don’t bite each other.’** Which, I’m not sure why that’s one not obvious... but, it has to be said. Here they are:*

1. **Go the right direction:** At the start of each game, and at halftime—I ask them, “Now, which goal are we trying to score in?” I have them point. Every one of them. And every time some kid points the wrong way. It was usually my kid. When they score in the wrong goal.... They look to you for encouragement... and you just cheer.
2. **Don’t walk off the field while the game is going on.** (I’ve seen more than one kid... get to the end of the field, see something interesting... and keeps going. Or my kid, who seems to think the greatest thing in his life is that, unlike his sister, he can pee anywhere... One time: Where’s Adon? This bare little bottom standing on the side...
3. **There is such a thing as “positions.”** They don’t get it... they just want to swarm... but I’m trying to explain to these little guys that the game is actually more fun if they play their positions. Plus, there is a beauty to the game when they do... and they just might actually win.

That’s what Paul is up to here... Paul is the coach... In Titus 2 he gives a list of **specialized instructions** to various groups in the church, ranging from **retired people** to young men; from **homemakers** to business leaders.

- He is trying to get them to do those same 3 things: a) all **go the same direction** (the direction set out by the gospel); and b) to **not leave the field** early; c) and, to **play their positions**. And to **not bite** each other, either.

Before we go through these instructions, however, I want you to notice how he frames them. The instructions are in vv 2-10...

- In vs. 1 he says, ¹You (Titus), however, must teach what is appropriate (or, what is a fitting response to) to sound doctrine. (Specifically, **what is sound doctrine?** The gospel). Which, remember, had you look:
 - Upward—to the **beauty and glory** of the God who saved you;
 - Backward—to the **price he paid** for your sin
 - Forward—to where he is **taking you** and what he is **making you**.
- He tells Titus to teach his congregation the things that are an appropriate response to sound doctrine.
- At the end of the list he says in vs **11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.** *For.* Or you could read that “because.” “Do these things *because* of the grace of God has appeared; in response to the grace of God...”

He makes the same point on both sides of his list. *Everything in our lives is to be reshaped by our experience in the gospel.*

This point cannot be emphasized enough! **Christianity is not a to-do list** of things to work harder on; it’s not a set of morals to master; it is not a set of rituals to adopt; from start to finish it’s a response to God’s grace.

- You’ve seen the scenes from **V-Day when total strangers** are dancing in the streets—even from different nationalities, some who were social adversaries—hugging and kissing one another. It was a whole new reality. That’s what the church should be like: people who have nothing in common united in celebration of a great victory on their behalf. **All of life is different...**

OK, so... Here’s how that translates into everyday living

(Instructions for Everyday Living (2:2–10))

²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

- **(Now, caveat:** Please understand in giving these specific instructions, I am not trying to stereotype, or say that *all* ‘older men’ are this way... just that each age group brings particular temptations.)
- (You say, “**Who counts as an ‘old man’ in Paul’s book?**” In the Rabbinic literature “young man” was classified as anyone between the ages of 18–42. Yes, I just made that up. And yes, I am 41 years old.)
- **What does he say to the “older men?”** (A lot of what he says to them he repeats to the other groups, but) one instruction he gives uniquely to them is, “**endure.**” See it there in vs. 2?
- **A temptation for older men** is to get to the last third of their lives and start to coast. Many feel like they have *done enough*; they are *tired*. They’ve either made all the money they need to make or they have given up.
 - And so they **start to think only about themselves**, pursuing their **hobbies** and interests; they **weary of giving** themselves to service.
- And then they start to get **grumpy and cynical**—which always happens when you focus on yourself.
- Paul tells them to *endure*. To stay in the game.
 - “**Be self-controlled.**” Don’t **think about your needs**; second your desires to the needs of the church and the next generation. **Your life’s accomplishment should not be a pile of money left in a bank account** but seeing the kingdom of God thriving in the next generation. **Don’t give the last years of your life** to fish or play golf or collect toys. Give it to the kingdom of God.
 - “**Be sound in faith.**” Don’t get cynical. “*Well, I don’t understand young people; destroying our country... the world is all going to hell.*” God’s promises have not ceased to be true! God resurrected Jesus from the dead... he has plan he is pursuing in the world and he won’t give up on it

He didn't give up on it when Jesus' body was cold in the grave; he won't give up on it in this generation or the next.

- **"Be temperate."** Don't give yourself excessively to numbing things like alcohol. Abusing alcohol is for people who feel no purpose. You've got something to keep living for.
 - ***If you were lying in a rest home you are still part of the greatest mission on earth and if nothing else you could lay in your hospital bed and be a prayer warrior for it.***
- Don't ever stop! A great example: **Caleb**
 - The promise hasn't expired!
- We have **even more of a reason to persevere** than Caleb.
 - **The resurrection of Jesus** ensures that nothing we do for his kingdom is **wasted**; we are building the kingdom that is destined to win and lasts forever. **Every cup of cold water** given in his name, he said, has its effect.
- *We need more older men in this church playing this role.*
 - **Spence Shelton**, who is planting out of our church this year in CLT, told me about a man who has joined his team who is 83: I have done 3 church plants; feel like I have a couple more in me. Modern day Caleb.
 - **Sam James**: "Young man, I will be preaching all 5 services." Yes sir.
- Men: **Judges 5:23**, *"Cursed be the family of Meroz, because they did not come out to help the people of God in battle."* This was a family clan that said, "Ahh... let them do it. We don't have any immediate needs for our clan. We'll sit on the sidelines." They were cursed. Don't be that one.
 - Lead in **servng!** Mentor **younger men**. Go on **mission trips!**
- ***"It is not the going out of port, but the coming in, that determines the success of a voyage."*** (Henry Ward Beecher). Finish strong, older man.

³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent (or respectful) in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.

- **Dr. Eitel**, one of my seminary professors and interim pastor here before I came, **said something about this passage** that my wife and I have never forgotten.
 - **He was talking about the word "reverent"** (respectful) and he said, "Older women can sometimes quit caring what people think, so they lose their filters on speaking their mind or talking badly about people..."
 - He said, **"When you are young, you have two things you lose over age: a natural physical beauty, and filters. And when those things are gone, if you have an ugly spirit, there's nothing that masks it anymore."**
 - In truth, it was **always there**, just masked by physical beauty and filters...
 - *By contrast, there are older women who are **so sweet that they seem more beautiful in their older age than they did when they were young, because their beautiful character shines through. Because character is more beautiful than physical charms.***
 - **What would it look like, he said, if all we could see was your spirit, unmasked by your physical beauty, charm, or filters?**
- **My wife and I really want to be sweet, beautiful, gracious, old people.** (I think V is in *pretty good shape* but I am in trouble—no one ever describes me as sweet). That doesn't just happen. It comes by cultivating character in the gospel. Not gossiping.
 - **You can't really take credit when you're beautiful at 20 (everyone is);** but you have no one but yourself to blame if you are ugly at 80.

⁴Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be

kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

- Hmm... Can anyone pick out a couple of **controversial phrases** in there?
 - Seriously, whenever someone is on a talk show and wants to dis the Bible, this is one of the verses they bring up...
“Doesn’t the Bible actually say...” The **assumption is that** the Bible in places like this teaches male dominance.
- But is that what Paul means?
- **“Tell them to be busy at home”** does *not* mean that young women are not to work outside the home because there are multiple places in Scripture where we see examples of women working outside the home and they are condoned.
- **It just means that there is a tendency for young women—like young men—to be lured away from God-given responsibilities by the promise of fulfillment elsewhere.**
 - **There is no denying that God has given the mother a particular responsibility in the home,** and this often requires that she sacrifice other things she could do to fulfill that... often she can’t give as much time to her career; maybe she has to give it up altogether.
 - And when you do that there will **always be a sense of loss.**
 - **But God in the gospel says, “Your primary goal should not be to fulfill yourself, but to faithfully serve me.**
 - And where that entails sacrifice, embrace it joyfully.
 - Find your fulfillment not in self-actualization, but in serving me.”
- **This is one of those areas where the values of the world and the values of the kingdom of God stand in stark contrast.**
 - A couple years ago, **Linda Hirschman** was on “Good Morning America” where she said that homemakers are **“living lesser lives.”** Somebody responded, “But many of them find their work valuable,” she said: “Well, I would like to see a description of their daily lives that

substantiates that... It doesn’t sound particularly interesting for a complicated, educated person.”¹

- She thinks she’s empowering women. But let’s get behind her statement for a minute. Her statement indicates that she believes happiness and fulfillment only comes from self-actualization. *But consider this: **Do you know where that mentality leads?** If life and fulfillment are about self-actualization, then people who stand in the way of you becoming all you think you can be become annoyances that need to be minimized or managed. **You start to think about kids as accessories** to your life rather than people you lay your life down for. If you get pregnant and it’s **not convenient,** abort the baby. If they get in the way of your career, ship them off to someone else. **If your parents in their older age become a hindrance** to your career, shove them in a home and forget about them. You’re **not a very good friend** because you are constantly sizing up how much this or that person helps you toward your goal. Hirschman’s mentality leads not to empowering women; it leads to using people rather than loving them.*
- **Christians, however, find their fulfillment in serving God** and others in the place he has placed them, not in self-actualization. And that often—if not always—involves sacrifice!
- **Want a model in this? Jesus found fulfillment in washing feet because that is what the Father had told him to do.** *That is not a very important task! He did not find his fulfillment in the importance of the task; he found it in the approval of the Father. If for a time in your life God has assigned you to care for children and establish a home, find your fulfillment in knowing you have been a faithful servant, not in the praise of the world.*
 - Or you could say it this way: **If Jesus found fulfillment in washing feet, you can find fulfillment in wiping butts for a season, too.**

¹ ABC News, “How to Raise Kids: Stay Home or Go to Work?” 2/23/06
<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/AmericanFamily/story?id=1653069>.

- Your fulfillment is hearing “well done, good and faithful servants.”
- **While he says this to the young women, it applies to dads, too...**
There are a lot of things I can’t do because of some roles God has assigned me.
 - **Peter Kreeft** was asked, “What’s your favorite book you’ve ever written?” “The one I *didn’t* write when my kids were young.”
 - I am able to write a good bit, but Veronica and I are clear that that **only gets fitted in at the margins** of my calling as a father and pastor.
 - **I don’t go on a lot of guys’ trips.** I don’t go golfing every Saturday. Why? Because I get one season with my children. (**You say, “Well, I’m a dad** and I do all those things.” Well... you might be a bad dad. You should at least ask your wife that.)
 - **The other day I found myself comparing the plot qualities** between *Frozen* and *Tangled* arguing the superiority of the plot line of *Tangled* and realized that my entertainment diet is not everything it used to be.
- **But it’s ok, because one day I want to hear... “Well done, good and faithful servant.”**
 - It’s ok if, for a season, I am not fulfilled by my movie choices... faithfulness is my goal
 - Illus. One day when I get to heaven everything I built and accomplished will be turned off (size of church; number of books)... The only light left on is **faithfulness**. That’s what I live for.
 - **In heaven, we are rewarded not for our accomplishments but for our faithfulness.**
 - **1 Cor 4:2**

OK, as if that phrase was not controversial enough... Paul says: “...and (urge younger women) **to be subject to their husbands**”

- What does that mean? **Marriage is a dance in which both partners re-enact a part of the gospel.** (Remember the discussion about positions?)
 - **The husband does it by loving** his wife like Christ loves the church—which means putting her wants and needs ahead of his own to the point that he would lay down his life for her. If you would lay down your life, that would certainly include deferring to her on things like places to eat; where to go on vacation; or what color the drapes could be.
 - The wife does it by submitting her will to her husband’s.
- **It has nothing to do with superiority, it has to do with *positions we play* that re-enact the Trinity and the gospel.**
- **When they do that, it’s beautiful...** because it shows the character of Jesus and he is beautiful.
 - **Matt Chandler:** “A husband sacrificially loving his wife, and a wife submitted to her godly husband creates a relationship that the world would **never** look at and say, ‘How disgusting and archaic.’”
 - A lot of people who say they are turned off by the Christian teaching on headship within marriage are attracted by the Christian marriages they see.²
- My spiritual headship in our home is **not about me dominating my wife**. In fact, if I love my wife like Christ loves the church,
 - I will **voluntarily lose** 9 out of 10 arguments about preference... because I am always putting her needs and wants above mine.
- What she does, in response to the gospel, is yield to me a decision-making responsibility... which God has given more for the family.
 - I love how **Kathy Keller** explains it. She says, “It means that in matters of disagreement I yield to Tim the deciding vote. I get a vote; he gets a vote; he gets the deciding vote.” NYC example. *He felt yes; she no. They had to make a decision; to not make one would be, functionally, to*

² Adapted from Tim Chester, *Titus for Everyone*. See below.

make one. He conceded: "OK, if you don't want to go, we won't go." Kathy: "Oh no you don't... you're not putting this on me. You have to make it and bear the responsibility." That's how she re-enacts the gospel.

- The man laying down his life; the woman submitting her will to her husbands... these are ways we adorn the gospel.

⁶ Likewise, (likewise means that the general spirit of what he said to the young women also applies to the men), but then he adds this special instruction: **urge the younger men to be self-controlled.**

- Interestingly, this is the **only word of exhortation** given specifically to young men: *be self-controlled*.
- **Why?** If you had to boil down the Achilles' heel of most young men, it is that: they are ruled by their desires... **Pleasure; Recognition**
 - **Guys: If you got this...** if you can learn to control your passions and desires and lusts, you could become **somebody God would work** so mightily through. **DL Moody:** the world has yet to see what God can do with one man totally sold out to him.
- By contrast, Proverbs says **"A man without self-control is a like a city whose walls have been broken through."** **Prov 25:28**
 - Think of the imagery... wild animals and robbers. Don't matter how smart the citizens or how valiant the soldiers if there are no walls! Young men, your enemy knows he can destroy you at any time; he just comes knocking.
 - **J.C. Ryle:** "Being ruled by the desires of your body will murder your soul."³
 - **Stanford marshmallow test**
- How do you do that? *Look to the grace of God.*
 - Guys: you start fantasizing about a girl's body, think about the body of Jesus beaten and sliced open for you. **Replace one image with another.** 2 inch thorns, every time he leans his head back... Fight the image of her body with the

image of Jesus' body; every scream and spasm was to kill your lust.⁴

- **Saying yes to the grace of God will teach you to say no to ungodliness and worldly lusts,** and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age

⁹ Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Our work should put our hope in and love for God on display.

Told you before... people seem so confused about what it means to be Christian in the workplace... You start talking to them about worshipping God at your work and they think you mean...

- **Opening up a coffee shop** called Jehovah Java; **He brews;** my fav: St. Arbucks

But Paul points to a set of attitudes a believer should have, because of the upward, backward, and forward look of the gospel.

- This, he says, creates 4 attitudes in our work (I'll use different words, but the thought is the same)

A. **Integrity:**

- When they can get away with pilfering, you don't because God sees.

B. **Excellence:**

- They are not just doing the minimum required to get by; they are trying to bless their employers or the people they work for.
- **Illus.** Lewis and the flowers.

³ J.C. Ryle, *Thoughts for Young Men*, 22.

⁴ See John Piper, "A Passion for Purity vs. Passive Prayer," in *Pierced by the Word*, p. 71.

- **Good question:** Are you doing the minimum required to get by, or am I trying to bless my employers and those I work for?

C. Servanthood

- They see their work as an **act of service** toward other people.
 - All throughout this letter Paul talks about **seeking the common good**...
- One of the **distinctive things about the Christian approach to work** is that believers see it as act of service toward the world. God created the world in an imperfect state and put men and women here as his co-Creators, to **develop the raw materials** of the world for his glory and the benefit of fellow humans.
 - ~~Mike Ullman, former CEO of JCPenney~~... he is a believer. When he was first offered the JCPenney position, he had just retired from a long and successful career in retail management a few years before... had **all the money he'd ever need**, but (like I said) he was a believer, but saw that what JCPenney was lacking, and the retail industry in general was lacking, was an emphasis on serving and blessing the customer. So he took the role not because he needed the money but because he saw it as an opportunity to bless part of the world through changing the business practices of a major retail store.⁵

- D. **Hope:** For a believer, their work doesn't define them, which leads them not to take it too seriously or cheat to get ahead. It's not your identity.
- Apart from God, it becomes your identity.
 - It is the second question we ask people! If you don't have a good answer, you come up with a title that makes you sound important! A believer is defined by his position with God, not his position on a flow chart
 - ~~Fascinating depiction of this in Gen 4~~, after mankind falls. Adam had two living sons, Cain and Seth, represent the **ungodly line and the godly line.**

- ~~Cain~~: Rejected God; absent the love of God, he wandered; then, his sons are all **identified by their jobs**—they became defined by their work (~~God created~~ work for us to use to serve him and bless others, but now they are defined by it); this leads to the **tower of Babel** where man is so proud of his work he uses it to rebel against God; ~~Jewish legend~~ says that Cain died when the house he built for himself fell on him and crushed him. Don't know if that is true, but it provides a good picture. ~~Rather than using work to serve God, it became man's identity and fulfillment rather than God.~~
- ~~The descendants of Seth~~, by contrast, **are** identified as **“those who began to call upon the name of the Lord.”** (Gen 4:25)
 - It's not ~~that they didn't~~ work, or worked less.... The point is that they were not defined by their work, but **by the name of the God** whom they worshipped.

When you do those 4 things, you will, vs. 10: **“¹⁰...so that in everything we may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”**

Do you want to know how to be a good witness in the workplace?
That is it.

- **Or, I saw a list the other day** of “ways to share your faith in the workplace.” **Some of them were ok**, but some were things like:
 - #61: “Put up a sign that says, “Ask us about our exchange policy.” When customers ask, let them know about your actual policy, then ask if they would like to hear about the greatest exchange policy on the planet—Jesus righteousness for our sin and faith.
 - #60 “When a customer has paid his bill in full, send an invoice that says, “Paid in full. These were the same words the bloody Jesus spoke from the cross about your sin.”
 - #74: On your business cards, after your name, list your credentials as AfC, “Ambassador for Christ.”

⁵ From Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, chp. 4.

If you can do that, fine. But the way you adorn the doctrine of God our Savior is by working with integrity, excellence, servanthood and hope.

If you work this way, you won't have any probably having opportunities to tell people about Jesus. They'll come and ask you...

Which leads me to 3 concluding observations about this passage:

1. These behaviors are our best witness.

These values are so completely counter-cultural... people will notice.

- Tim Chester: *"People may not like it when we talk about self-control and submission. But they find it attractive when we live it. Unbelievers who are repelled by the Christian teaching on headship within marriage are attracted by the Christian marriages they see. Unbelievers who find Christian morality restrictive are attracted by the good lives of the Christians they know."*⁶

- **Here's how Peter** would say it: *"In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you."* **1 Peter 3:15**

- When is the last time that how you conducted your marriage; how you went about your business; how generous you were, made someone ask you to tell you about the hope?
- **Learn to see your marriage and your work as a theatre** for bringing glory to God and demonstrating the grace and hope of the gospel!

2. The best testimony to the gospel happens in the "mundane."

- Did you notice how **"normal"** these relationships are? How **"everyday"**, how **"mundane?"** We think of great Christianity as

revealing itself in big, **dramatic missionary sacrifices...** and it does sometimes. But most often it reveals itself in the home.

- *Your Christianity is best measured by your relationships at home, at work, in your private life.*
 - **Illus. There are a handful of places on the body from which you can get an accurate temperature...**
 - If we judged your faith only by your relationships at home, how would you measure up?
 - **"It is the mark of a hypocrite to be a Christian everywhere but home."** Robert Murray M'Cheyne
- **But don't just hear this as a negative rebuke.** See these ordinary things as theatres for God's extraordinary power.
 - God took David to the pasture to teach him the skills to fight the lion and the bear.
 - The home is your pasture.
- *For the believer, miraculous power comes through mundane faithfulness*⁷
 - **Heroic Christianity is not born on the mission field**, but in the home; in the dorm room

3. These behaviors flow directly out of the gospel.

- Don't look at these things like a new "to do" list. They are the natural fruits of the gospel.
 - Like **roses on a rose bush!** Two ways to get roses on a bush. Tape them on? Looks like a rose bush to people passing by, but you'll have to get a new set of roses each week. And that gets wearisome. There is another way.
- **Plant yourself more thoroughly** in the story of 2:11–14, how the grace of God appeared... learn constantly to **look upwards to the glory of God who saved you**, backwards to the price he paid, and forward to what he's making you... and these things will grow so naturally in your heart.

⁶ Tim Chester, *Titus for Everyone*. Commentary on chap 2.

⁷ Other e.g.'s include Daniel, who got to see God display amazing power through his faithfulness in dietary habits & daily prayer