

Leader as Disciple Maker

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[0 : 00] Right, we're going to turn to the Bible, please. Titus, if you've got your Bible with you, please turn back to Titus, too. I've forgotten what my title was, something to do with leaders and discipling.

So I've gone vaguely along those lines. So we're going to just jump in and out of Titus chapter two this evening. Can I just encourage us just to bow our heads and pray and ask God to help us as we come one more time to His Word? Let's just pray together.

Gracious heavenly Father, we are so thankful for the truths that have been proclaimed in this building this evening so far in song, Lord, in prayer, in that testimony of your great grace and power, not just to transform one life, Lord, but to transform many lives.

And we're so thankful that you've not left us in the dark. Father, you've left us with this Word, this perfect Word, Lord. True in every part. And we pray, Lord, because we know we need your Holy Spirit to illumine your Word, to enlighten us, Lord, to help us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds as we listen to it as your Spirit helps us to engage with it and to put into practice that which we have heard for the glory of your name.

Father, we ask this thing. We ask your help now in Jesus' name. Amen. So, you know, 17 years ago I lived in a bus shelter and I never read a Bible in my life.

[1 : 40] I wouldn't even know what a Bible is. Like I said, if you'd have shown me a Bible, never mind, open a Bible and be preaching from a Bible. I wouldn't have gone to a church if you paid me.

And yet, God in His great mercy, I'm not going to go into my testimony right now, another time maybe, but God in His great mercy saved me. And so my Christian journey, if you like, from that bus shelter to standing here this evening over that decade and a half has been one of great grace and has been one that has been marked by five influential people in my life who've walked along the way with me.

I remember my first pastor, he was an older guy in his 70s, a real faithfully, sort of faithful godly guy. He used to go and sit in his library. One of these guys had about a million books.

I'd just be like Alice in Wonderland sat in his library and he was a man who taught me the importance very early on in my Christian faith. He says, whatever else you don't, if you don't understand anything, understand this. Always trust the Bible.

That's what he said. It doesn't matter if you don't understand me, if someone stands in the pulpit and contradicts the Bible, they're wrong, I'm wrong, but the Word of God is never wrong.

[3 : 09] That was his first great lesson that that man taught me. He was a great man. Alongside that, when I first came off the streets and started attending a church, not dissimilar to this church, I met with a guy every week and we used to meet for a couple of hours and do a Bible study.

It turned into a sort of interrogation actually because I used to come armed to the teeth with every question that I could think of. I used to hammer this guy thinking, I'm going to find the get out clause in this Christianity.

He was very patient with me and spent a long time helping me understand and growing the Gospel. Then there was the man who led me to Christ, was a fantastic example, visited me while I was in prison, gave me somewhere to live when I had nothing and taught me the meaning of what it means to be generous with what you have and to take risks with people because you heard with Tasha, we have a culture in Nidra maybe too risky for some, but we take great big risks and the reason we take great big risks is because in my experience of the men who had a great influence on me in my life took a massive risk with me and I am very grateful that they did.

Then there is a man who is a friend of mine with an older family now, grown up boys, and he taught me what it was to be a husband, he taught me what it was to be a man and a father.

I grew up without any parents, I was on the streets at two years old, literally lived on the streets and grew up in institutions all my life, without a mother, without a father. This is a man who was a great model, an example to me and I could come to him and I could say, how do I do this, what about this, what about that?

[4 : 59] Then my Bible college tutor, when I went to Bible college to become a proper Christian and get a degree, I had been a Christian for nine months and I was rough, where I come from we say rough as houses, basically there was no manners about me.

I had a battle literally at Bible college, I didn't understand debate, I thought if the guy wants to debate me I'm going to punch him in the face and then that happened a couple of times until I got the hang of this Christian debate, punching is not allowed apparently.

This is a Bible college tutor, the college wanted to get rid of me because they thought I was an absolute lunatic, but this guy took me under his wing and said, look let's just be calm, this guy does not come from our culture, this guy has no understanding of anything and he nurtured me through three years of Bible college.

My point is I suppose that my Christian development has been a community affair, there's not just been one person in my life that I can turn to and all Christians should be able at some point to stand up in a pulpit like this and say, ABCD had this influence in my life in these different ways because if we're not growing and if we're not learning and if we're not surrounding ourselves with godly people in community, then sooner or later we're going to get into trouble, we're going to either end up stuck in neutral or worse, we're going to end up hardening our heart against God and his people.

So at the outset here this evening as we come to this text, we need to know that we need one another, differences and all. There'll be lots of people with lots of well cool stories and different stories to tell in this building and we need one another.

[6 : 56] And helping one another, encouraging one another, discipling one another as we're going to see, is going to help us and protect us. It's going to protect us from every new craze that sweeps through evangelical churches, Bible teaching churches every few years, every false teaching that comes out there now, every sort of weird and wonderful blog that you happen to click across with someone teaching this, that or the other, community and local church community.

Functioning discipleship is the place that's going to help us. And discipleship is what Titus is all about. So here we have Paul warning a young pastor to protect his church from false teachers who were damaging his fellowship at the time.

If you look at chapter one and verse 11, we read that, don't we, that they, these are the false teachers, must be silenced. Why? Because they're ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach.

And that for the sake of dishonest gain. And verse 13, this testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them, these are the false teachers sharply so that they will be sound in the faith.

And he's saying you Titus need to live differently to these false teachers. And now as he jumps into chapter two, he's going to show Titus what that looks like.

[8 : 24] What does it look like to live differently from these false teachers? You know, recently, last year, Miriam and I were in Dubai because we're right jet set as we are.

And can you tell I'm such a well-travelled lad. And we went to this big mall thing. Is that what it's called Miriam, a mall? The Mall of the Emirates. Man, this place is bigger in a city.

This place was so massive, right, that they had red taxis driving by with people to get them through all the different levels. It was absolutely nuts. We must have gone back about four or five times.

And even then, I doubt we got through two or three levels. And that's a bit like Titus too, this evening, okay? There was a lot going on here. And I'm just going to drive by if you like and pick out a few bits and pieces.

You can go back and shop at your leisure, okay? But I'm just going to jump in and out of the text as we try and learn what God wants to teach us this evening. And it's important when we come to a letter like Titus that we don't just jump in and jump out straight away, but we need to understand the background as to why he was writing it and what he was writing and what he considered important information for his young disciple.

[9 : 40] And in verse one of chapter two, he gets straight down to business with him, doesn't he? He says, you must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

So he's saying, in contrast with these false teachers, Titus, your teaching, it must be healthy. That's what sound means here. If we want our bodies to grow properly, if we want our bodies to be nourished properly, then we have to eat well.

We have to eat a varied and balanced diet. And it's the same for our soul, isn't it? If we want to grow spiritually, if we want to develop and mature, then we have to guard and water and feed our soul on good, proper sound teaching.

You must feed it, he says, healthy doctrine. And a couple of points about this. Teaching here is better translated as speak. Speak, he says, what is in accord with sound doctrine.

And so we think of as teaching up the front, the pastor, as the sole responsibility of this or in a classroom. But actually the word here is indicating an everyday speaking, an everyday language.

[11 : 00] So it's not just for a pastor, even though he's speaking to this young pastor, this is to be spoken about wherever he goes and we'll see as he goes through what he means by that.

But secondly, many people today in Christian circles, surprisingly, even in churches you think should know better, are put off or scared or don't understand the word doctrine.

They think doctrine means reading some dusty old books written by dead dudes. But the word simply means teaching. Speak what is in accord with healthy teaching, he says.

And Christians fall into two errors when it comes to doctrine. There are those who think it's a waste of time and they think it kills the spirit. They think we should just preach the gospel and leave it at that.

There are those who say, oh, mares, which is just focus on reaching people. Doctrine divides people. And the problem is that even just to breathe the name of Jesus is a doctrinal statement, is it not?

[12 : 09] How you say his name tells me a lot about what you believe. And then the other danger with doctrine is we reduce it to reading like a load of articles on supra-lapsarianism.

You like that? I had to look that up. Derek will definitely know what it means. Ask him afterwards. Or loads of books by the Puritans. You know, I've got people who are proud. I've read every ruck of the Puritans. They're good for you.

Have you got any friends? And we forget people. And to some people, defending the truth of doctrine is far more important than establishing relationships.

You know, it's scary, but there are some people around in churches today who know more about the life of Jonathan Edwards or Murray McShane than they do about their next door neighbors.

That's a sad state of affairs, isn't it? But it's so true. And Titus is not to fall into that trap, but he's to speak into people's lives regularly, daily, if you like, healthy teaching.

[13 : 20] In other words, get to grips with studying doctrine. Not to collect books or to show off at church, but in order to teach people simply and well the great truths of the Bible.

Any model of discipleship has to start with a basic, healthy approach to doctrine. Otherwise, where can we go? We're not taking anybody on from that.

But I want you to notice the second thing, and it's in verse 7. He says, not only are you to teach what's in accord with healthy doctrine, but look, he says in verse 7. That's what we do together.

In everything, set them an example by doing what is good in your teaching, so integrity and seriousness. So not only is he to teach people, but he's to model for them what that teaching looks like.

Turn back a few pages in 1 Timothy 4 verse 12, and we read, don't we? Again, Paul's speaking and saying, look, Timothy, look, don't let anyone look down on you because you're young.

[14 : 28] But what? Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. This is a consistent teaching from Paul, if you like, to his young disciples, to these young people.

Be an example to them. You see, God is as interested in how we live as in what we, just as much as in what we believe.

Character has got to be the key in the life of every Christian, and particularly in the life of those who want to be leaders.

And both our life and our teaching should be filled with integrity. And you know, we don't live in a clean cut society anymore.

People live messy, chaotic lives, don't they? And it's easy to be fooled into thinking, they do just in schemes, you know, you see schemes, you see all this, you read stuff in the papers, it's all crime, it's this, that, and the other.

[15 : 34] Trust me, people in suits live messy, chaotic lives as well. People who live in marchmen and wherever posh places people live, is that his marchmen posh?

Is it? Do you live in marchmen, Derek? And you wear the suit, stand up. Just properly guess that, but anyway, people who live next door to Derek, and this is a serious point, have got messy, chaotic lives.

But we know, done that they can be transformed by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's where we come in, in how we are a model to people.

In how we stand against the culture, in how we, not only what we teach and believe, but in how we live and act towards one another and towards them. Now, I said some of the greatest influences in my life have been men who not only known a lot about the Bible, but have set me a godly example as well.

And who stood up to me and said, no, we don't live like that. We live like this, and this is why. And that's what we need. That's what we need in our culture, probably more than any other.

[16 : 48] But why is it so important that we have healthy teaching on the one hand, and we do these model, these good works on the other? Well, he goes on to explain, and he explains in verse two.

He says, look, teach your older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, sounding faith in love and endurance. But not only the older men, look at verse six.

Similarly, encourage the younger men to be self-controlled. So in these two things, in soundness of teaching and in modeling a good life, I want these two things to be taught to men.

In your community, both young and old. In our culture, now more than ever, young men need good role models. They need older, godly men who will speak healthy doctrine into their lives, and who will model a life worthy of the Gospel.

Don't they? There's a real lack of men in the church. You dudes had your assembly thing this week. I'll bet you up for discussion was how many young men are coming through.

[18 : 03] Because every, I know the Baptist associations, every evangelical association in the UK are currently saying there is a shortage of men. There is a shortage of men coming through.

Now more than ever, we need to be modeling and teaching young men. And what do I mean by real men? Well, let me tell you what I don't mean. There's lots of stuff being written in blog land and said in evangelical circles about real men who drink beer and watch cage fighting and, you know, pump buying at the gym.

You know, maybe not in these circles, but sort of, you know, Matt Driscoll and all that. Get tattoos and all this nonsense. And that's not what the Bible teaches us.

That's not what Paul teaches Titus here about what a real man is, is it? Because the words he's using here have got nothing to do with any of that. The words he uses here like temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, sound in faith, love, endurance, not given over to selfish indulgences and desires.

These things that sometimes control young men. A man is to be worthy of respect and our job as older leaders, as older men, is to hold forth that picture of biblical manhood, you know, and not some weird perverted, worldly, fight, spiritual, Christianity, fight club version.

[19 : 31] We can be cool and hard too. You can't. So stop it. And a real man is self-controlled and his life shines as an example to others.

He's to be steadfast, he's to be dependable. He's not to run at the first sign of trouble in his marriage or his relationship with others.

These are the truths we need to be teaching men in a society that's so disposable, isn't it? Isn't it? He's a type of man you want to be around. He's a type of man missing from so many of our churches.

These godly older men. And their job, as we said in verse 6, is to teach younger men. Create at the time when these words were written was a culture when young men outside of the Christian community, they were living the dream.

Sex was on tap. They could do what they wanted, out drinking, out partying. Anybody not getting down with them would have looked a bit old, looked a bit like a square, looked a bit like a freak, a bit odd.

[20 : 41] Anybody not going with the culture of that day would have stood out. And so what we young men needed was this calming, steady, godly, mature influence.

A diet of good teaching. A diet of godly, older, role models. So we need to be nurturing our young men as future leaders.

Young men don't need pals. They need us to set them an example of biblical manhood and to challenge their life and their faith.

That's the sort of men we need in the church today. They're the sort of discipling men that we need. And not just leaders, but every single man who's a Christian in this room this evening.

We need to show men that real men don't beat their wives or their girlfriends, don't ignore their children, don't hold their careers higher than family life.

[21 : 48] In my culture they don't go and spend all their money on cannabis or down the bookies. We need to know there's more to life than playing on the Xbox.

We need to meet real men in churches who are living attractive lives fueled by the glory of the Gospel and who stood for their faith in times of trial and testing.

So let me ask you some questions. This is not my congregation, but I'll leave them with you. If you're an older man or a mature Christian in this building this evening as a member of this church, who are you discipling?

To whom are you speaking the healthy words of sound teaching on a regular basis? Are you just assuming the past is it?

To whom are you modelling the Christian life and what it means to be a biblical man?

[22 : 59] Men, who are we influencing for the good of the Gospel? Because if the answer is nobody, then you need to take a long hard look in the mirror.

If the answer is nobody, you need to take a look at some of the priorities and we need to say maybe the problem of the lack of men in our culture is us. It's us.

I don't know what the structure of this church is. In our church we have a monthly men's group and it's about 20 of us who get together and we study the Bible together. Younger men and older men come together and we try and hook people into relationships and help them to mentor and sort of disciple one another.

I would encourage you to think about these things. If you're not a disciple, then I would encourage you to think about praying for some of the younger men in your congregation and maybe approaching one or two and saying, can I come alongside you?

If you're not being discipled, can I encourage you to say, man, is there somebody in this congregation who I can pray for and engage with who could maybe disciple me and help me in my Christian journey?

[24 : 15] Faith is like a flower, isn't it? It needs water. If it doesn't get regular water, it's not going to grow. If it doesn't get regular water for a long time, it's going to wither and die.

We need one another. We need one another men. We need to be thinking these things seriously through. But notice this healthy teaching and this being a good model. It's not just for men, is it?

The women aren't off the hook either, are they? In verse 3. Let's look at verse 3 together. Verse 3 says, likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.

They can train the younger women to love their husbands and children to be self-controlled, to be pure, busy at home, to be kind and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. So women need role models too, is what he's saying. Women need to be discipled too.

Reverent here is, you know, not gossiping, not too heavy on the old sauce. It seems like for some reason the women like to be at the old wine.

- [25 : 32] And again notice the words there to train, to teach. It is active here. They have to be bringing the truth of healthy doctrine. Doctrine is not a male pastime.
- That's just books that men read. That's not true. Doctrine is a Christian responsibility. And women have to bring it to bear in the everyday scenarios of life.
- How will women taught in the old days before microwaves and pot noodles? Do you know what I mean? They were taught to cook, weren't they? Maybe you don't microwave pot noodles. We don't either, do we Miriam?
- But you know what I'm saying? Mothers taught their daughters, fathers taught their sons. That was the culture. This isn't true in our culture anymore. It really isn't. Most of the teaching done in our culture today is the TV.
- Just plonk them in front of that and let them learn from that. We need women to teach women. And we as churches need to be encouraging this.
- [26 : 49] Not to be scared in our theologically conservative reform traditions to be releasing women into this kind of discipleship making ministry.
- It's interesting here. The language is not picked up in the NIV, but it is in other translations. They were to remind and teach women to be home makers.
- Loving their husbands. Being subject to their husbands, it says. And loving their children. What he's saying is teaching older women, teaching younger women to bring their homes under the Lordship of Jesus.
- And again, as we look back at 111, it seems that some of this false teaching was getting into the households. Maybe through the false teaching, maybe through some women. It's speculation.
- But women, interesting if you say the word homemaker today to most women, young women, whew, it might as well just set them on fire. It's like, homemaker, that's beneath me. You know, I'm going to go out and be whatever.
- [27 : 56] I'm not saying you shouldn't be those things. But Jesus is the ultimate home. I don't know what's so offensive because for me, Jesus is the ultimate homemaker, is he not? Jesus returned to heaven to do what?
- In my Bible, it says to prepare a place for us in our heavenly home. He put aside his own needs, his own desires. He submitted to the will of the Father and he died for his bride.
- And he went home to glory to prepare a place in the heavenly mansion for his people. If that is not the supreme model for women seeking to live for the glory and honour of Jesus Christ in our day, then I'm not sure what is.
- And these kinds of women, these women who love the truth of healthy teaching, who model what that means to live in the everyday scenarios of life, these types of women stand out naturally in our culture.
- You don't have to pretend all these Christians who ask me, what do I need to do to be relevant in that? Nothing. Don't do that. And they don't really, it's just me.
- [28 : 58] They need to be relevant, be irrelevant, live for the glory and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's all you call to do. And the home is a battleground. And it's not just a battleground in schemes, is it?
- It's a battleground I'm telling you in your homes, even in this building this evening. Young women need to be taught how to be mothers, how to lead their homes with their children, how to love their husbands as they are.
- They need to understand biblical doctrine and live a good life in front of the watching world. So my challenge is to all the women in this congregation is the same as to the men. Who are you discipling?

Who are you discipling in your community right now? Because you can have a good moan, can't you, and a bit of a goss, a bit of a whine about the church, or look at the way these young women dress today, and all that chat. I don't know what women talk about.

Or how they're raising their kids, they talk about that because they hear that one a lot. Oh, you see what, if it was my child, I would do this and that. Yeah, would you? Well, why don't you help teach them?

[30 : 12] Why don't you model that for them then? Why don't you get alongside and encourage that instead of whining about it? Where are our godly, mature women holding out healthy doctrine and modeling godly lives for our people?

Ask yourself, am I leading and discipling somebody right now, or am I just an unhappy consumer? Because complainers and gossip, they'll sow doubt and encouragement, and they'll kill faith instead of helping it to grow.

So men and women in this church, you need to find somebody to disciple, and you need to find somebody who'll disciple you. It's biblical. It's necessary. It's of supreme importance to their health and well-being of each local Christian community.

And so what do we say? What do we teach them? Well, look at verses 11 to 15. Teach them grace. Teach them grace.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us. It teaches us all of these things.

[31 : 38] We must teach the gospel of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be constantly pointing one another to grace. That's the healthy teaching. Isn't it not grace that's changed our life?

Isn't it? If you're a Christian, grace is changing my life. And grace will change the lives of those around us. Notice in verse 11 that this grace not only saves us, but if you jump into verse 12, this grace teaches us also.

So God doesn't just walk us through the door of salvation when we come to Christ, but His grace helps us to walk the life of faith until we step into glory one day.

And He's saying this grace has appeared to all people and is available to them through the gospel that He's entrusted to us. Grace has appeared here, in this place, in my place, in churches teaching the Bible this evening up and down the land.

And my question is again, what are we doing with it? Because Paul is saying we need to be speaking it. We need to be teaching it. We need to be urging people toward it.

[32 : 59] We need to be rebuking people in it. We need to be correcting them about it. We need to be encouraging them. We need to be modelling what a grace-filled life looks like in the weird, confused scenarios of life.

We too know something of struggle and we teach how we came through that. We too know something of mourning as communities and we can teach people through that.

We too know something of falling into sin and yet God raises us up again and forgives us. We too can teach people how not only what happens when they fall, but how they can be restored back into God's community.

We too have this experience. So whether we're young, whether we're old, men or women, this responsibility for discipleship rests with all of us who call ourselves Christians here this evening.

And discipling is messy work, isn't it? It's costly. I bet you half the people in this room at least thought, when I said the words, I just don't have the time for that though.

[34 : 19] That's our culture. It's costly. It demands time, it demands energy, it demands perseverance, but it must be done if we want to raise the next generation of gospel leaders.

May the Lord be merciful to us and may He give us more of this grace that we desperately need as we serve Him in these days. Let's pray.

Father, we love you and Lord, as we think of these verses, we're reminded of the great challenge you lay down to us, Lord.

That grace which you have given to us, that's enabled us to be saved. That great gospel of grace you've entrusted to us to pass on, Lord, whether we're young men or old men or young women or older women, that we should be a source of encouragement, that we should be speaking healthy doctrine, teaching to one another, that we should be modelling to one another in the various stages of our lives, Lord, what this looks like as a community. Lord, I pray for this community.

I pray for your grace. I pray, Lord, that you by your spirit would be challenging and stirring them up to great and wonderful works of service.

[35 : 42] Lord, if there are any of this evening who felt heavy-hearted by their message, I pray you would turn them to the wonderful glory of the cross of Jesus Christ. We thank you that there is great relief and forgiveness to be found in the one true gospel.

We pray, Father, for our country, needy, not just in poor places, but in rich places too. Father, we pray for a future generation of young men and women committed fully to the gospel to be raised up.

And once again, Father, we see revival in this great land. In Jesus' name, Father, we ask these things. Amen.