

BIBLICAL COSMETICS
TITUS 2:6-10

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

In December of 1912 an archaeological team from Germany was digging along the Nile River in Egypt. They discovered in the dirt and sand this bust, this head of an Egyptian woman. (PROJECTOR ON--- NEFERTITI) This limestone sculpture weighed 44 pounds and was 18 ½ inches tall. It was missing the left eye, but it was otherwise fairly intact. It rests now in the Berlin Museum. Its colors have here been enhanced. It is recognized as being a representation of Nefertiti, who lived around 1320 BC. She was the wife of Pharaoh Akhenaton. For a brief time she became a pharaoh herself. A daughter belonging to her married King Tut.

The thing which I would like you to notice is the enhancements that were made to her already attractive face. It looks like she could have been made up by Maybelline or Cover Girl. The cosmetics have been analyzed. The blush came from crushed flowers. The eyeliner was made from antimony.

Cosmetics by this time already had a long history in Egypt. (EGYPTIAN BEAUTY BOX) This cosmetics box came from almost a century earlier. There is evidence of the use of cosmetics in Egypt for several millennia even before this. Women have been in the business of enhancing their beauty for a while. In our country there is not so much evidence of it until about 1910. The use of cosmetics by ballet and theater stars promoted some interest in them. But things really took off in 1920 with the beginning of the film industry. Since then cosmetics has become a big business. (PROJECTOR OFF)

The Apostle Paul was into the business of Biblical cosmetics. His concern was the use of methods to enhance the beauty of the Christian message. The word which he uses for "enhance" in v. 10 is *kosmeo*, from which we get the word "cosmetics." We are going to find out today about what he has to say about how Christians should enhance the gospel.

We have seen that the Apostle Paul wrote this short New Testament letter to his younger coworker Titus who was on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea. Paul had tasked him with the job of developing the new churches in the many cities and towns on the island. He told him to be sure to appoint elders in each one. We have seen the qualifications which Paul laid down for these church leaders. Paul gave brief instructions about how to confront false teachers, and then in #2 he told Titus about the virtues he should encourage in the basic demographic groups in the church. Last week we saw the instructions which he gave concerning older men and older women and younger women. Today we shall look at what he has to say about two other groups in the church.

I.

First, in vv. 6-8 of Titus #2, Paul describes HOW YOUNG MEN CAN ENHANCE THE GOSPEL. (PROJECTOR ON--- I. HOW YOUNG MEN CAN ENHANCE THE GOSPEL) He writes in v. 6, “**Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.**” Titus may well have fallen into the category of a younger man. It appears that he came to Christ under the influence of Paul in Antioch of Syria.

The basic need for young Christian men is to develop self-control. This was in contrast to the culture on the island of Crete which was noted for lack of self-control. Back in #1 v. 12 we saw that Paul quoted one of their own writers who said that Cretans were liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.

John MacArthur says that there are five dangers and temptations that young men face in our culture. Most of them are present in many cultures, including the one on ancient Crete. **First** among them, John MacArthur says, is laziness. The pandemic exacerbated that in our own culture. People were encouraged to stay at home. Many young men used the opportunity to develop their video game skills. That has continued to be an issue. There are too many young men today who don't have dads around to encourage them to work and be involved in productive things. The government statisticians tell us that our country is faced with a historically low labor force participation rate. In other words, the percentage of men of working age who are actually employed and working is unusually low.

The **second** area of temptation for young men has to do with freedom. Unmarried young men who finish school have greater freedom. Maybe they go off to college. Maybe they move away from home. Many get jobs and have money to spend. They get cars to drive, which opens up more doors for freedom.

Then **third** we live in a decadent culture. That was true of the situation on Crete. It is certainly true for us living near Las Vegas. Sin City provides all of the temptations which a young man could imagine. Gambling, drugs, women, alcohol, and entertainment are all available to us.

Fourth, young men have often come from a background that has provided a godless education. The public school system too often promotes values which run contrary to the Bible. In California schools teachers may encourage young people to try to change their gender identity while keeping that secret from their parents.

Then **fifth**, young men are almost always faced with immaturity. They lack wisdom and experiences in life. They often do dumb stuff. They go off to war, thinking that nothing can happen to them. They drive too fast, thinking that accidents will always happen to other people.

Henry Ruggs III (HENRY RUGGS) had a very promising future. He had some early church influence. His college coaches said that he was a good kid. He was a very good

running back at the University of Alabama. He was drafted by the Las Vegas Raiders and started out with a huge income. He used his money to buy a fast car and to support his girl friend. Then one night he was out too late, drank too much, drove 156 miles an hour, and crashed into a young woman and killed her. Now he is in prison, and his promising football career is seemingly over.

Young men are often interested in adventures. There are good things about that. But there are dangers. A book was written several years ago entitled *Over the Edge*. (OVER THE EDGE) It chronicles the fatalities which have taken place in the Grand Canyon. In recent years there have been an average of eleven fatalities every year from people who have explored this beautiful canyon. Three of us here trekked down into the canyon and back out several years ago. You might think that most fatalities come from old guys like us who have heart attacks or experience heat exhaustion. But the demographic group with the most fatalities is young men. They do dumb stuff. They take unnecessary risks. They aren't prepared, and they die. (PROJECTOR OFF)

“Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.” He continues in v. 7, **“Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity...”** This clause is directed toward Titus. The encouragement is for Titus to be a model, an example.

Right doctrine is foundational to the life of a Christian. But then people around us need to see that lived out. Don Moberger searched around and looked at different philosophies and religions as a young married man. He finally landed on true Christianity. His family had seen him explore these different religions and philosophies. So they were skeptical when he claimed that he found truth and freedom in evangelical Christianity. But after a while my wife and the rest of the family saw that transformed life lived out. They likewise bought into it.

People are pretty good smell detectors. They look and smell for stuff that is real. Jesus said of the religious leaders of His day (PROJECTOR ON--- MATTHEW 23:3), the Pharisees: **“... so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.”** The danger is hypocrisy. Too many church leaders these days seem to get caught up in infidelity. Roman Catholics have become disillusioned with all of the stories of priests who have messed around with boys.

The challenge for all of us Christians is to live consistent lives. (PROJECTOR OFF) The focus here is upon young men, who are encouraged to be models of good works. Young men often have time and energy to do good stuff. The opportunities are endless for Christians of all ages. The places of opportunity include families, and community, and church. We are always on the lookout for help with our youth and with our nursing home outreach on the first Saturday of the month and with prison ministry. We would love to have more people pray with us on Wednesday mornings.

It is important to be clear in our thinking that good works do not earn us acceptance with God. In Ephesians #2 vv. 8 & 9 (PROJECTOR ON--- EPHESIANS 2:8-9) the Bible

says, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”** The heart of the gospel is that Jesus was God who became a human being. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Our only responsibility is to believe. Eternal salvation is a gift. It cannot be earned. We can only receive it by faith. The result of this transformation should be good works.

Thus Paul continues in Ephesians 2 v. 10 (EPHESIANS 2:10): **“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”** God has opportunities for good works out there for all of us. Those opportunities vary according to our life situations, according to our time and talent and circumstances in life.

Back in our passage Paul tells Titus that he is to show integrity in his teaching. (PROJECTOR OFF) This would seem to include what is taught and how it is taught. Today Paul would probably warn us about many of the shysters who are on TV. Too many of them seem to be motivated by material gain. But these charlatans can come in other packages. I have a neighbor who was caring for his older brother who came to live with him and his wife and who was dying. This older brother had a pastor who occasionally came by to see him. My neighbor said that he felt like this woman seemed to be trying to convince his brother to give money to her church. It was a giant turnoff. It sounded to me like a failure of integrity.

Paul adds at the end of v. 8 in our passage that the teaching of Titus should also be characterized by “dignity.” Fun and humor can be a part of the Christian life. Young manhood can involve a lot of frivolity. But it also offers great opportunity for the gospel. I went to a public college and got involved in a Christian group. We had fun in our Christian group. But there was also a certain dignity. We saw a lot of young people become Christians through our outreach. For young adulthood is also a time when young people are searching for meaning and purpose in life. Such is the Christian opportunity.

In v. 8 Paul also speaks about “sound speech.” We saw that same adjective used to describe correct doctrine in v. 1. We saw that the root meaning of the word is “healthy.” Here it is speech which is to be healthy and sound. The word for speech is *logos*, with which some of you are familiar. It is the term which the Apostle John used in the first chapter of his gospel to describe Jesus. But here it seems to involve the idea of speech.

Paul used this word in Colossians #4 v. 6 (PROJECTOR ON--- COLOSSIANS 4:6) when he urged Christians, saying, **“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”** When I was in college and graduate school I worked for a number of summers in a couple of door and window manufacturing plants. One summer I was working with a new crew of guys for only a week when one of the young men took me aside and asked why I didn’t swear. It was an opportunity to share the gospel. Such is the opportunity for integrity in speech. (PROJECTOR OFF)

Verse 8 speaks about the opponent. We have seen in earlier lessons that there were false teachers on Crete. At least some of them had a Jewish background. The suspicion is that they were trying to convince the Gentile Christians to follow the Old Testament law in some fashion. Throughout church history there have been opponents within the church and outside of the church. They are on the lookout for opportunities to attack us for inconsistency, for gossip, for unnecessary criticism, for teaching that they may try to twist.

The challenge for young men and for all of us is to be consistent in our behavior and in our speech. Consistency in these areas enhances the gospel. We have a wonderful message which the world needs to hear. People can have eternal life by trusting in Jesus. We can go to heaven and have a wonderful eternity. We can have a meaningful life now. We Christians need to back that message up by our speech and our lives.

II.

In vv. 9 & 10 of Titus #2 we learn about HOW SLAVES/EMPLOYEES CAN ENHANCE THE GOSPEL. (PROJECTOR ON--- II. HOW SLAVES/EMPLOYEES...) The apostle writes in v. 9, **“Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative...”** The word for “bondservants” is the common Greek word for “slaves.” The scholars estimate that as many as a third of all people living in the Roman Empire in the first century were slaves. These slaves were of many different kinds, and their treatment varied considerably. When the Roman armies defeated their enemies, they typically took many of the defeated people as slaves. There were also slave markets where people were bought and sold. Some were born into slavery.

Roman slaves were used in a variety of ways. Some were put to work in mines. These slaves usually had short and cruel lives. Some were put to work in agriculture, which was also usually difficult. Many were put to work as household slaves. There the treatment varied considerably. I pointed out in an earlier lesson that there is considerable historical evidence that Paul’s parents were taken as slaves from Galilee, but were later freed by their owners and granted citizenship. Some talented slaves had what we would regard as professional careers. Some served as doctors.

A natural question which critics pose is: Why didn’t Paul condemn slavery? First, it is important to recognize that much of his teaching undermined the institution of slavery. In Galatians #3 v. 28 (GALATIANS 3:28) he wrote, **“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”** The apostle recognized that the image of God is present in every human being. So among Christians there is spiritual equality. We all have an equal standing before God. This recognition and the expansion of Christianity would eventually lead to a demise of slavery in the Roman Empire.

Slaves in the first century had very few rights. (PROJECTOR OFF) One scholar says that they were commonly regarded as “speaking tools.” Christianity at this time was a

very tiny movement in the Roman Empire. Slavery was an entrenched institution. Christians had little power. In many places they were an object of persecution. So they were in little position to try to overturn slavery. Meantime Paul's focus was upon spreading the gospel and enhancing the Christian message.

A central problem underlying the Roman institution of slavery was their view of work. Cicero was a Roman statesman, philosopher, and writer of the first century BC. He said that working daily for a livelihood was **“unbecoming to a gentleman”** and that **“vulgar are the means of livelihood of all hired workmen whom we pay for mere manual labor... and all mechanics are engaged in vulgar trades.”** (*De Officiis* 1.150) In his book *How Christianity Changed the World*, sociology professor Alvin Schmidt says, **“In ancient Athens at the time of the early church, one-third of the freemen sat daily in the court of the *Comitia* discussing the affairs of the state, while slaves performed all the manual labor that was loathed by the freemen.”**

There are elements of that thinking in our culture. Several decades ago Studs Terkel wrote a book entitled *Working*. In it he described work as **“violence--- to the spirit as well as the body. It is about ulcers as well as accidents, about shouting matches as well as fistfights, about nervous breakdowns as well as kicking the dog around. It is, above all (or beneath all) about daily humiliations.”** The goal of many Americans is retirement where we don't have to work any more.

The Bible takes a different perspective. Paul says that work, even slavery, is an opportunity to enhance the gospel. Any work therefore, even slavery, is an opportunity to serve God. Thus it is that Paul explains a little more clearly in Colossians #3 vv. 23 & 24 (PROJECTOR ON--- COLOSSIANS 3:23-24), **“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”** This admonition was addressed to slaves. However lowly the job might seem our responsibility is to glorify God. We are to regard our work as service to Jesus. If that is true of slaves, how much more it should be true for us in our work. We have a certain amount of freedom to choose our jobs. Here in the Sin City area, there are perhaps some jobs which we should not take. We have a certain freedom which slaves did not. (PROJECTOR OFF)

Our basic responsibility is described at the beginning of v. 9 in our passage: **“Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing...”** Slaves, and we employees, are not simply to be passively obedient. We are to be positive and winsome. Obviously we have rights and opportunities which slaves did not, and do not, have. It is OK to claim some of those rights when we are mistreated. Paul claimed his rights as a Roman citizen when he was unfairly imprisoned in Philippi.

But the idea is that Christian slaves and employees are to be working not just to survive, not just to gain personal benefit, but to enhance the gospel. We should be known as good workers who are on time and reliable.

The temptation for a slave, and for many workers, as the end of v. 9 notes, is to be argumentative. Literally the text says that slaves are not to talk back, or talk against, the boss. The temptation to talk back is especially strong when we are mistreated.

In v. 10 Paul adds that slaves are to be **“not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”** Most slaves had little or no opportunity for financial gain. Household slaves had access to household supplies. So there was a temptation to pilfer, perhaps in small quantities, so that losses would not be noticed.

Such is a temptation for many employees today. There is a temptation to take office supplies and tools. With many employees who work from home, there is a temptation to put in less than a full work day. There is a temptation to be less than honest with expense reports.

Dan and Eva used to work for the Salvation Army in northern California. Dan told me that he had oversight of the collection of money from bell ringers at Christmas time. They collected a lot of money in the Christmas season. The Salvation Army officials were suspicious that bell ringers were pilfering from the collection boxes. So they developed and began to use tamper resistant money boxes. The Salvation Army people found that some posts and some of the boxes suddenly recorded a 20 to 25% increase in the funds that were collected. It was evident that these employees had been pilfering.

Paul adds that slaves should demonstrate all good faith, or faithfulness. The best witness for Christian slaves, or Christian employees, is the quality of the work which we do. It is our reliability on our job which demonstrates our allegiance to God our Savior. The purpose of this is to adorn the doctrine of our Savior. This verb in v. 10 is *kosmeo*, which means “to adorn, to beautify, to arrange.” This is Biblical cosmetics. This is the adornment of the message.

It is a wonderful message. In Romans #5 v. 1 (PROJECTOR ON--- ROMANS 5:1) the Bible says, **“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”** This is great news. We are declared righteous by virtue of faith in Jesus. This puts us in a position of peace with the great Judge of all of the universe. In the next verse (ROMANS 5:2) the Apostle Paul adds, **“Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”**

Life is changed to joy and hope. Even in the face of death we have the promise of a great future. This is a great message which can be enhanced when our lives demonstrate that change. This can be especially evident in our involvement in the workplace.

Harry was a single guy who helped me out in working with the youth in my first church. He was a great guy who was especially helpful in hiking trips and backpacking

expeditions. He married a gal from Northern Ireland, and the two of them ended up as missionaries in northern Thailand for 25 years.

For various reasons they moved back to Massachusetts. Harry got a job as a school custodian. I do not remember, and I cannot picture, any janitor that was in the public schools that I attended as a child. But there are children who will remember Harry. In his first public school employment Harry was working for a janitorial company that was given a contract with the elementary school.

Harry set out to learn the names of the kids in the school. He went to the teachers and asked what work that they needed to have done. He took pride in improving the physical appearance of the school. He listened to the kids. He became so popular that the principal of the school felt threatened. She asked the janitorial company to transfer him to another school. Teachers wrote letters to the superintendent to have this transfer stopped. Parents sent letters to the principal asking that Harry be kept at the school. Kids went home crying when they found out that Harry was leaving.

Harry did have to leave the school, but then he got a custodial job working directly for another suburban Boston school. The physical facilities in this elementary school were pretty neglected. There was no competition for the job. Externally there were no incentives to do a good job. There was no accountability. Harry met his boss once for ten minutes. He never saw the maintenance supervisor at the school. On the first day on the job the senior janitor who worked the first part of the day, showed Harry where to hide out so that school officials could not find him.

But Harry did not work for the school officials; he worked for Jesus. One of the first things that Harry insisted on getting was an e-mail account that he could access through computers in the school library. The teachers were given his address, and Harry checked his e-mail several times a day to see if they needed any help. The physical facilities began to look better. He could have called the maintenance department for the school district to get some jobs done. But he tried to do many of them himself.

Harry set out to learn the names of the hundreds of kids in this new school. The students were very ethnically diverse. Many came from homes with no dads. Later in the day Harry began to take some of the students whom teachers identified as more difficult or restless from their classroom and had them help him around the school. The kids learned to do practical tasks, and they heard Harry share life lessons, and sometimes the gospel. Lots of kids wanted to help Harry.

What some saw as a dead end job, Harry saw as a ministry opportunity. When his wife's family in Northern Ireland began to have health problems, Harry willingly moved to the UK. But again there was great sadness in that school at his departure. For Harry truly believed that there on the job he was serving Jesus Christ.

Many of us are now in retirement. But we have the opportunity to be involved in jobs of our choosing. Those jobs may involve care taking or volunteering at church or serving in our community or participating in a prayer group. But as long as we have life and breath

we have the opportunity to adorn the wonderful message of the gospel by the life we choose to live.