

# The Books of Titus, Philemon, and Jude, Teacher's Guide

## Lesson 3: Sound Doctrine for Every Age and Station

### Titus 2:1–10

#### Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

What is doctrinally at stake here is the inseparable union of belief and behavior. Paul defines “sound doctrine” not as a set of abstractions but as teaching that produces healthy, ordered, godly lives across every age and station. The teacher should help students see that Christianity is not a private creed bolted onto an unchanged life; the truth of the gospel reshapes how we age, how we relate across generations, how we order our homes, and how we work. This passage also presents, plainly and honorably, God’s design for distinct roles within the home and church, which should be taught with confidence, warmth, and care.

The passage carries a strong evangelistic and formational motive that recurs twice: so that “the word of God may not be reviled” (v. 5) and so that believers may “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” (v. 10). Ordinary faithfulness is missionary. The way a Christian ages, parents, works, and submits to authority either commends or discredits the gospel before a watching world. The teacher should keep this missionary edge in view, lifting students above mere rule-following into a vision of lives that display Christ’s beauty.

The formational aim is to move every student, whatever their age or station, toward the specific shape of maturity Paul describes, and toward the intergenerational discipleship he assumes. Older believers are to invest in younger ones by example and instruction; younger believers are to receive and grow. Send students home not merely informed about roles but stirred to live their ordinary lives as a setting that displays the gospel, and connected to others across the generations of the church.

#### Question 1

##### Student Question:

*Paul tells Titus, “teach what accords with sound doctrine” (v. 1), and then describes ordinary, godly living rather than abstract ideas. What does this reveal about the nature of “sound doctrine,” and why does Paul refuse to separate right belief from a rightly ordered life?*

#### Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with the deliberate contrast in verse 1. After describing the empty talkers of chapter one, Paul turns to Titus: “But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.” The phrase “accords with” is key. Sound doctrine is teaching that fits with, and produces, a certain kind of life. Doctrine and life are not two separate departments; they are designed to match.

Notice what immediately follows. Paul does not define sound doctrine with a list of theological propositions; he describes godly older men, godly women, self-controlled younger people, and honest workers. This is striking. For Paul, the proof and purpose of sound doctrine is a transformed, well-ordered life. Doctrine that leaves the life untouched is, by definition, unsound in its effect.

Help students resist two errors. One says doctrine does not matter as long as you are sincere; the other treats doctrine as mere information to be debated. Paul holds them together: right belief is essential, and its God-intended fruit is right living. The teacher can set the tone for the whole chapter by making this union clear.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Sound doctrine as truth that produces godly living, not abstraction (1 Timothy 1:5)
- The unity of belief and behavior in the Christian life
- The error of divorcing orthodoxy from ordinary obedience
- Teaching aimed at formation, not just information

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Why does Paul define sound doctrine by the life it produces?
- What goes wrong when we treat doctrine as merely information?
- How can our teaching aim at changed lives, not just full notebooks?

### **Question 2**

#### **Student Question:**

*Paul calls older men to be “sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness” (v. 2). Whatever your age, which of these qualities do you most want to be true of you as you grow older, and what choices today are quietly shaping the kind of older person you will become?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Walk through the qualities Paul lists for older men: sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, love, and steadfastness. These are the marks of a man who has let decades of following Christ mature him. The list quietly rebukes the idea that aging is mere decline; in the church, it can be ripening.

Make the question personal for every age. The older saints we admire did not become that way by accident; they were shaped by thousands of small, daily choices over many years. The young person who wants to be steadfast at seventy must begin practicing faithfulness at twenty-seven. Help students see today's choices as the seedbed of tomorrow's character.

Draw out the communal value of mature older men. “Sound in faith, love, and steadfastness” describes exactly the kind of person a church needs when storms come. Their steadiness anchors others. Encourage students to honor such saints and to aspire to become them.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Aging as potential ripening, not mere decline, in the Christian life
- Character as the cumulative fruit of daily choices over time
- The stabilizing role of mature, steadfast saints in the church
- Self-control and soundness as lifelong pursuits

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Which of these qualities do you most want to mark your later years?
- What choices today are shaping the older person you are becoming?
- How can the church better honor and learn from its mature saints?

### **Question 3**

#### **Student Question:**

*Paul says older women are to be “reverent in behavior” and to “teach what is good,” so that they may train the younger women (vv. 3–5). What does this passage reveal about God’s design for older saints to disciple the next generation, and why is this kind of example-based teaching so powerful?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Focus on God’s design for older women as disciple-makers. They are to be reverent, not slanderers or slaves to drink, and to “teach what is good” so that they may train the younger women in love, purity, and the ordering of their homes. This is a clear, beautiful mandate for intergenerational discipleship among women.

Note the kind of teaching in view. It is largely teaching by example and personal mentoring, woman to woman, life to life. This fits the New Testament pattern in which older women instruct and train younger women, an arrangement that is both wise and in keeping with God’s order for teaching in the church. Affirm this honorable and vital ministry plainly.

Help students see why example-based, relational teaching is so powerful. Younger believers do not just need information about marriage, motherhood, and faith; they need to watch someone live it. Truth embodied in a trusted older woman’s life carries a weight that no lecture can match. Encourage older women present to embrace this calling and younger women to seek it out.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- God's design for older women to disciple younger women (intergenerational discipleship)
- Teaching by example and personal mentoring, life to life
- Older women instructing younger women in keeping with the New Testament pattern
- The power of embodied truth over mere instruction

#### **Discussion Prompts**

- Why is example-based teaching so effective in passing on the faith?
- How can our congregation foster these older-to-younger relationships?
- What good things can older saints teach that no class can replace?

#### **Question 4**

##### **Student Question:**

*Paul envisions older believers actively pouring into younger ones. Who has played that role for you, and whom might God be calling you to invest in now? Name one specific younger or less mature believer you could intentionally encourage or mentor in this season.*

##### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This self-examining question turns the discipleship vision into a personal assignment. Begin with gratitude by asking students to recall someone who invested in them. Naming that person makes the value of mentoring concrete and personal.

Then turn it forward. Paul assumes that every maturing believer eventually becomes a giver, not just a receiver, of discipleship. Many people hesitate, feeling unqualified, but the model here is not expertise; it is a life a step or two further down the road, shared honestly. Almost everyone has someone they could encourage.

Press for one specific name. Vague intentions to "invest in others someday" rarely materialize. Ask each student to identify one younger or less mature believer they could intentionally encourage, pray for, or spend time with, and to take one step this week.

##### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Every maturing believer called to give, not just receive, discipleship
- Mentoring grounded in a shared life, not in expertise
- Gratitude for those who have invested in us
- Intentionality as the difference between good intentions and real discipleship

#### **Discussion Prompts**

- Who invested in you, and what made their influence stick?
- What holds people back from mentoring others, and how can that be overcome?
- Whom could you intentionally encourage this week?

## Question 5

### Student Question:

*Paul instructs younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, “that the word of God may not be reviled” (vv. 4–5). How does this passage present God’s design for the home and the distinct, honorable roles within it, and how is this rooted in love rather than mere duty?*

### Commentary and Teaching Notes

Approach verses 4 and 5 with both clarity and warmth, because they touch God’s design for the home. Paul calls younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, kind, working at home, and submissive to their own husbands. The teacher should present this as God’s good and honorable design, not as a cultural relic, while also being pastorally sensitive to the varied situations of those present.

Emphasize that the foundation here is love, not mere duty. Paul tells the older women to train the younger to love their husbands and children. The ordered home he describes is meant to be a place of warmth, devotion, and care, where roles serve relationships rather than crush them. Submission in Scripture is never servility or the erasure of a woman’s dignity; it is the wise, voluntary ordering of a partnership under God, alongside the husband’s call to sacrificial, Christlike love (Ephesians 5:25).

Address the stated purpose: “that the word of God may not be reviled.” How believers order their homes is a public testimony. In Paul’s day, Christian households that were marked by love and order, rather than chaos or scandal, commended the gospel to a skeptical world. The same is true now. Help students see the home as a primary arena of witness, and present the distinct roles within it as honorable and good, taught with confidence and free of harshness.

### Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s good design for the Christian home and its distinct, honorable roles
- Love, not bare duty, as the foundation of the household Paul describes
- Biblical submission as wise, voluntary partnership under God, not servility, paired with the husband’s call to sacrificial love (Ephesians 5:22–33)
- The ordered home as a public witness that commends or discredits the gospel

### Discussion Prompts

- How does grounding these roles in love change the way we hear them?
- Why is the home such a powerful testimony to a watching world?
- How can the church support marriages and families in living this out?

## Question 6

**Student Question:**

*Paul repeatedly calls for “self-control” across every group in this passage (vv. 2, 5, 6). Where in your own life is self-control most lacking right now, your tongue, your appetites, your reactions, your screens? What would it look like to surrender that specific area to the Spirit’s control this week?*

**Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This self-examining question seizes on the word that runs through the whole passage: self-control, urged on older men, younger women, and younger men alike (vv. 2, 5, 6). Paul clearly regards self-control as a near-universal Christian need. Help students take it personally rather than abstractly.

Invite specificity. Self-control is not a vague virtue; it shows up in concrete arenas: the tongue, the appetites, the temper, the use of time and screens, the management of desire. Ask each student to locate the one area where control is most lacking right now. Honesty here is the doorway to growth.

Point to the source of real self-control. It is listed as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23), which means it is finally produced in us by God, not manufactured by sheer willpower. Genuine self-control grows as we walk in the Spirit and surrender specific areas to His work. Encourage one concrete act of surrender this week.

**Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Self-control as a recurring mark of Christian maturity in this passage
- Self-control as fruit of the Spirit, not mere willpower (Galatians 5:22–23)
- Specific arenas of self-control: tongue, appetite, temper, time, desire
- Surrender to the Spirit as the path to lasting change

**Discussion Prompts**

- In what area is self-control most lacking for you right now?
- Why does willpower alone tend to fail where the Spirit succeeds?
- What would surrendering that area to God look like this week?

**Question 7****Student Question:**

*Paul tells Titus to urge the younger men “to be self-controlled,” and then adds that Titus himself must be “a model of good works” with “integrity” and “sound speech that cannot be condemned” (vv. 6–8). Why does Paul place such weight on the teacher’s own example, and what does this say about how Christian truth is meant to be passed on?*

## Commentary and Teaching Notes

Focus on the weight Paul places on Titus's personal example in verses 7 and 8. Titus is to teach the younger men, but first he is to "show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works," with integrity, dignity, and sound speech. The teacher's life is part of the curriculum.

Draw out the principle: Christian truth is passed on not only through words but through watched lives. Paul could have told Titus simply to lecture the young men; instead he tells him to be the kind of man they should become. This is how discipleship has always worked, from Jesus and the Twelve onward. People are shaped by examples they can see.

Apply this beyond official teachers. Every believer is, like it or not, an example to someone, a child, a younger colleague, a newer Christian. Help students take responsibility for the example they set, and to see it not as pressure to be perfect but as an opportunity to point others to Christ through an honest, growing life.

## Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The teacher's example as part of the message (1 Corinthians 11:1)
- Discipleship through watched lives, not words alone
- Integrity and sound speech as credentials of a teacher
- Every believer as an example to someone

## Discussion Prompts

- Why is a teacher's example as important as the teacher's words?
- Who learns the faith by watching you?
- How does being an example differ from having to be perfect?

## Question 8

### Student Question:

*Paul tells Titus to show himself "a model of good works" so that opponents will be "put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us" (vv. 7-8). Where is your example being watched, perhaps by children, coworkers, or skeptical friends? What is one area where your example could give an opponent of the faith less to criticize?*

## Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question applies verses 7 and 8 to each student's sphere. Paul wants Titus's conduct to be such that opponents have "nothing evil to say about us." The aim is not to be liked by everyone but to give critics no legitimate ammunition against the gospel.

Help students locate where their example is actually being watched: by children at home, by coworkers, by neighbors, by skeptical friends or relatives who associate Christianity with the

Christian they know best. Our witness is often won or lost not in arguments but in the consistency of ordinary conduct.

Move toward one concrete step. Perhaps it is the way they speak about a difficult boss, the integrity of their work, the patience they show at home, or the honesty of their finances. Ask each student to name one area where tightening up their example would give an opponent of the faith less to criticize.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Conduct that leaves critics with no legitimate accusation (1 Peter 2:12)
- Witness carried more by consistent living than by argument
- Awareness of the specific people watching our example
- Ordinary integrity as apologetics

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Who watches your life as a representative of Christ?
- Where might your example currently give critics something to seize on?
- What is one area you could strengthen this week?

### **Question 9**

#### **Student Question:**

*Paul instructs servants (workers under authority) to be submissive, well-pleasing, honest, and trustworthy, so that “they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” (vv. 9–10). How does the gospel transform even our work and our relationships with those in authority, and what does it mean that ordinary faithfulness can make the gospel attractive?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Address Paul’s instructions to bondservants in verses 9 and 10 with historical care. As in the Philemon lessons to come, the New Testament does not endorse slavery; it speaks into a world where it was pervasive and plants seeds that undermine it. Here Paul’s concern is how believers in that lowly station could live in a way that displays the gospel. The principles apply directly to our relationships with employers and those in authority over us.

Highlight the dignity Paul gives to ordinary work. Servants are to be submissive, agreeable, honest, and trustworthy, “not pilfering, but showing all good faith.” These are humble, daily virtues, and Paul attaches to them the highest possible purpose: “so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.” The lowliest worker, doing honest work faithfully, beautifies the gospel.

This is the climactic appearance of the word “adorn,” which pictures arranging something to display its beauty, like a jewel in its setting. The teacher should let this land. There is no

insignificant Christian work. The believer who is honest and diligent in an unseen job is making the gospel attractive. Connect this to Colossians 3:23, working heartily as for the Lord. Faithfulness in ordinary labor is genuine service to Christ.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- The New Testament speaking into, not endorsing, the institution of slavery
- The dignity and gospel significance of ordinary work (Colossians 3:22–24)
- Honest, trustworthy labor as a way to adorn the gospel
- Submission to legitimate authority as Christian witness, applied to employment

### **Discussion Prompts**

- How does the gospel transform the way we view ordinary work?
- What does it mean that honest labor can make the gospel attractive?
- Where could your work life better adorn the doctrine of God?

### **Question 10**

#### **Student Question:**

*Look back across these verses. Paul has shown how sound doctrine reaches into every age, every relationship, and every workplace, turning ordinary faithfulness into a display of the gospel's beauty. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through this passage. What is the single truth from Titus 2:1–10 that you most need to carry into this coming week?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This capstone asks students to gather the whole passage into one personal takeaway. Resist a generic recap; press for one specific truth and one specific way Christ is forming them through it.

Help the group feel the sweep of the chapter. Sound doctrine has reached into every age (older and younger), every relationship (across generations and in the home), and every workplace, and in each it has produced the same result: lives that adorn the gospel. Nothing has been too ordinary to matter.

Close on the dignity of the ordinary Christian life. Send students home knowing that their unremarkable Tuesday, lived faithfully, preaches a sermon about God. Ask each to name the one truth from this chapter they most need to carry, and one place to live it out.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- The dignity of the ordinary Christian life as a display of the gospel
- Sound doctrine reaching every age, relationship, and workplace
- Personal formation as the goal of the study

- Carrying one specific, applied truth into the week

#### **Discussion Prompts**

- What one truth from this chapter do you most need this week?
- Where is your ordinary life preaching a sermon about God?
- How is Christ forming you through this passage?