

Abstract

This thesis seeks to provide an in depth study of the Titus 2 Mandate and explain how the Mandate should be applied to our lives today. An overview of the book of Titus is given, as well as a study on Titus 2. How Titus 2 was modeled through the lives of women in the Bible, as well as how it was exemplified through women in Church history is also explained. It is important for Christian young women to understand their Biblical roles; this thesis seeks to provide clarity and a greater knowledge of what those roles are and how they should be implemented.

A Study of the Titus 2 Mandate and
How It Has Been Exemplified in the Lives of Women

For Christian women living in the twenty-first century, amidst many feminist views, one may wonder, what is their Biblical role and what does the Lord desire of them personally? While the Bible contains many commands that Christ gives his disciples, this study will focus on the Titus 2 mandate. The purpose of this thesis is to study the Titus 2:3-5 passage and research Biblical examples of women who have exemplified the principles found in this passage. The thesis will conclude with how women today can apply this mandate to their own lives. When we become doers of the Word and not hearers only, (James 1:22) we will see transformation in our own life and the lives of others. Through a study of Titus 2 and a study of a few of the women throughout history who learned to put into practice what is commanded in this passage, hopefully one will be motivated to put these commands into action in their own lives as well.

Before we dive deep into Titus 2, a brief study of the book of Titus (its authorship and history) will be presented. It is always imperative when studying a passage of Scripture to understand the context in which it was written and the historical background to truly grasp the meaning of the passage.

A Study of the Book of Titus

There is not much known about Titus personally; he has been called “the most enigmatic figure in early Christian history.”¹ However, Paul does reveal some about this young man whom he had entrusted with such a great task. We know that Paul had known Titus for quite some time prior to their work together in Crete, which is where Titus was

¹ James Hastings, *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible: V.6*. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1942), 431.

when he received this self-entitled letter from Paul. We learn from Paul in Galatians 2:1-3, that Titus was a Gentile, “whose lack of circumcision was a key factor in Paul’s securing the right of the Gentiles to a Law-free gospel.”² Titus is also mentioned by Paul in II Corinthians 2:13, 7:6-16, 8:16-24 and briefly in II Timothy 4:10. Through these passages we can see that Paul and Titus had a relationship with each other and had served together for quite some time prior to their work together in Crete.

It is also believed that Titus was a convert of Paul’s. In Titus 1:4, Paul addresses Titus as his “true son in our common faith...” Paul used similar wording in I Corinthians 4:14-15 when he references his audience as his “dear children” and says, “...In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.” In Philemon 1:10, Paul says, “I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains.” Throughout each of these passages Paul references those whom he has led to Christ as being his sons and him being their father. However, Titus 1:4 has one difference from the other passages and that is how Paul refers to Titus as being his “true” son. This is believed to mean, “that his (Titus’s) ministry is a legitimate expression of Paul’s.”³

It is believed that after Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment that he, Timothy, and Titus traveled together to Crete and evangelized many of the surrounding towns. However, they encountered some opposition, so Paul left Titus there to put the churches in order while he and Timothy continued on their way to Macedonia. While on their journey to Macedonia, they stopped at Ephesus only to realize that false teachings were infiltrating the churches. Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to address this

² Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 2.

³ *Ibid.*, 3.

situation. Once Paul arrived in Macedonia, he wrote letters to both Titus and Timothy to give them instruction and encouragement.⁴

As previously mentioned, in order to truly understand the meaning of a book, passage, or verse, one must first understand why the book was written and the circumstances surrounding its authorship. In Titus 1:3, Paul states his reason for leaving Titus in Crete and that is so that he may "...straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you." Paul, Timothy, and Titus had already evangelized the people of Crete and churches had been established. However, in Titus 1:10 Paul further explains the necessity of Titus staying behind: "For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group." Paul explicitly states here where the opposition lies and goes on in verse eleven to state that, "they must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach..." And in verse twelve Paul says that, "even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.""

While the gospel had been presented to the people of Crete and the foundation had been laid, there was still much more that was yet to be accomplished in Crete. Even a prophet of their own had nothing uplifting to say about them! The Cretans knew about Jesus, but had not yet matured in their faith or began to put it into practice. The Cretans were causing more harm than good. For this reason it was necessary for Paul to leave Titus behind to begin to create order amongst the present chaos. It was evident that they needed a strong leader, but Titus could not do it alone. His most important task was to find men who embodied the characteristics and requirements that Paul had set forth.

⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

Titus was instructed to appoint elders in every town so that they would be able to “encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9). For a leader to appoint others to smaller groups of people was not a new concept at this point in history. In Deuteronomy 1:9-18, Moses appointed “experienced leaders” from each tribe to be commanders over smaller groups of people because it had become too much for him to handle on his own.

Titus’s primary tasks in Crete that Paul had instructed him on were to appoint and organize leaders, and then to begin helping the Cretans to become strong believers in Christ. Paul stated that, “they claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him” (1:16). Titus’s job was to prepare the Cretans for the “meat” of Christ, rather than being satisfied and living on only “milk” as Paul makes reference to in I Corinthians 3:2. This verse is again going back to becoming a strong and mature Christian who can digest and understand the more complex and deeper aspects of the Christian life. The criteria that Paul gives to Titus concerning finding and appointing elders can be found in Titus 1:6-9. This guideline is still used in our churches today as the standard one must meet and adhere to in order to be considered for a position as an elder in the church.

Much of why Paul was writing Titus and what Titus’s tasks were while he was with the Cretans is covered in the first chapter of Titus. However, in the second chapter, Paul begins to give Titus more detailed instructions on how this is to be carried out and implemented. Paul commands Titus that he must teach sound doctrine (2:1) and then goes on to instruct him on what must be taught to the various groups of people. Paul instructs Titus to teach the older men, the older women (who will in turn instruct the younger women), the young men, and servants. For the purpose of this study, we will

focus on Paul's instructions to the older women and how they are to instruct the younger women.

A Study of Titus 2

What is known as “the Titus 2 mandate” consists of only three verses. However, these verses are instructions and admonitions for women that are still applicable to us today. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a mandate as “an authoritative command; *especially*: a formal order from a superior court or official to an inferior one.”⁵ It is essential that Christian women today have an understanding of these verses and learn how to implement the commands into their own lives. According to Alexander Strauch, “In a culture that is obsessed with self-fulfillment and the idea that marriage adversely affects a woman's health and career, Titus 2 needs to be clearly heard and affirmed by Christian couples.”⁶

In order for our marriages and churches today not only to survive, but also to thrive, men and women must learn to embrace their individual God-given roles that have been set before us in Scripture. It is important to note that the commands that pertain to the roles of men and women, such as those in Titus 2, are not only mentioned throughout the New Testament, but the Old Testament too. It begins all the way back in Genesis chapter two and verse eighteen when God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (NIV).

A “mandate” was defined as a command, and in this case, it is God's commands on how women are to conduct themselves given through Paul to Titus. In Titus 2:3, the

⁵ Merriam Webster Online. Accessed January 12, 2013. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mandate>.

⁶ Alexander Strauch, *Men and Women: Equal Yet Different* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1999), 66.

New Century Version uses very similar wording in this verse to the King James Version and says, “In the same way, teach older women to be holy in their behavior, not speaking against others or enslaved to too much wine, but teaching what is good.” The NIV uses the phrase “reverent in the way they live” instead of “holy in their behavior.” While “holy” and “reverent” have similar meanings, they are not identical, I personally believe that holiness has a stronger meaning and places a greater urgency and burden upon us. I Peter 1:16 says, “for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.””

In the next command, Paul says not to speak against one another: “The aged women are to be careful how they use their tongues in the community; they are not to be false in their conversation...They are to tell the truth at all times, and be silent if they cannot speak those things which become holiness and which would contribute to holy living – both to themselves and those with whom they come in contact.”⁷ Paul knew that Titus was dealing with people who were not mature in Christ. In Titus 1:10-11 Paul mentioned how they were “talkers and deceivers” and that households were being ruined because of false teachings. These verses were highly applicable to them, but what about today? Even in our churches we still have those who have a tendency to spread gossip and speak against one another. In turn, this causes division amongst believers who are called to work together as the body of Christ.

Paul goes on to say that women are not to be addicted to wine, but are to teach what is good. Who are they to teach? Verses four and five elaborate upon this and say, “then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind and to be subject to their husbands, so

⁷ Oliver B. Green, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to Timothy and Titus* (Greenville, SC: The Gospel Hour, Inc.), 440.

that no one will malign the word of God” (NIV). Now, notice the first word in verse four is the word “then”. This reveals that the older women cannot begin to be the mentors and leaders to the younger women until they get themselves in order. First, they must abide by the commands that Titus is to teach them and *then* they may teach the younger women. These verses overflow with wisdom and instruction for ladies in Christ! The end of verse three and beginning of verse four instruct the older women in the faith to teach the younger women what they have learned over the years. These women are passing on the wisdom that they have gained. How necessary this is for us to grow closer and to learn from one another as women in Christ, but also for younger women to mature and learn how to become the wife and mother that they need to be to their husband and children! According to Alexander Strauch, “For Christian wives and mothers, Titus 2:4-5 is profoundly significant. It teaches that their primary responsibilities center on their husbands, children, and homes...She is not confined only to what Paul describes here. But she dare not excuse herself from these responsibilities or neglect them for other ambitions.”⁸

One may wonder why Paul instructs the younger women to “love their husbands and children” in verse four. As women, generally being of a nurturing nature, is it really necessary to command them to love those that should be closest to them? Unfortunately, because of our sin nature, it is very necessary. Our God is a God of order and He has shown us through his word time and again that while men and women are equal, they are different in nature and have different roles to fulfill. I Corinthians 11:11-12 says, “...woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as a woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from

⁸ Strauch, 66.

God.” This verse supports the fact that while men and women are equal, they have different roles, but God is still the head of both. Ephesians 5:22-33 echoes these thoughts again and in effect states that the man is to be the head of the household and is to love his wife, while the wife is to submit to her husband’s leadership and guidance, but Christ is still the head of both of them. I Corinthians 11:3 is another verse in support of this concept. Emerson Eggerichs, author of *Love and Respect: The Love She Most Desires, The Respect He Desperately Needs* made the following statement: “husbands need respect and wives need to feel loved just as much as they need air to breathe.”⁹ This statement by Eggerichs illustrates just how important it is for husbands and wives to operate as they are commanded to in the Bible.

We know that today, even in evangelical churches, oftentimes men and women do not operate in their God-given roles. This is because there was a role reversal at the time of the fall of man. It has been an ongoing struggle for men and women ever since the fall. However, just because it has been a struggle and will continue to be a struggle, does not mean that one should no longer strive to live according to the commands that are in Scripture. Hebrews 12:1-4 in essence encourages us to fix our eyes on Jesus and to run the race that has been set before us with perseverance; perseverance being the key word here. The definition of perseverance is “continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition.”¹⁰ In the same way, we must continue striving to live according to the Word and God’s will for our lives, just as Hebrews chapter twelve states.

⁹ Emerson Eggerichs, *Love and Respect: The Love She Most Desires, The Respect He Desperately Needs* (Colorado Springs, CO: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 37.

¹⁰ *Merriam Webster Online*. Accessed January 30, 2013. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perseverance>.

In verse five in the New International Version, the word “self-controlled” is used. However, the King James Version uses the word “sober”. Going back to the original language that the text was written in is often helpful when trying to discern what a passage means in context. The New Testament was written in Greek and the “Greek word translated “sober” could also have been translated “wise”... The meaning of the Greek word is that the aged women should instruct the younger women to have their desires and passions well under control and regulated in the fear of God...”¹¹ The older women are instructed here to teach the younger women to be wise, and while one can definitely learn from another’s wisdom and teaching, James 1:5 also says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” Proverbs 4:7 also states that, “wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.” It is made apparent through scripture that wisdom is of utmost importance and is something to be desired and sought after.

There are two key phrases within verse five that should be highlighted. The first is that as wives, the women should be “subject to their husbands.” Since the fall of mankind, it has been a continuous struggle for men and women to live within the bounds that Christ has set concerning gender roles. In Titus 2:4-5, women are commanded to love and be subject to their husbands. These verses serve as a reminder to women of their roles as a Godly wife. The second key phrase is the end of verse five which says, “...so that no one will malign the word of God.” Paul is saying that women are called to be Godly witnesses in private and in public, giving no one a reason to criticize the word of God. When Christian women take these verses to heart and apply them to their lives,

¹¹ Green, 441.

other men and women who are not believers will begin to take notice and will not have reason to speak against them.

Titus 2 Exemplified in the Lives of Women Throughout the Bible

A little bit of background concerning why Paul was writing to Titus and what the condition of the people was has been given, and a study of the Titus 2 mandate has been presented, but what examples of these commands being portrayed in the lives of real women do we have? The Bible is full of “Titus 2” women! These “Titus 2” women were not perfect by any means, but each of them feared the Lord and played a significant role in history that women today can learn from. Paul instructs the older women to teach the younger women, but this does not only have to mean that the women must see each other face-to-face, or even live within the same era. Women today can learn immensely from women who lived during the time the Bible was being written.

Oftentimes when women are mentioned in the Bible, there may not be much said about them or the life that they led. They may only be listed in a single verse. However, we can still learn from them through the lives that they impacted and how they had a hand in influencing history. The lives of three mentors and mentees will be studied and we will see how each pair of women displayed aspects of the Titus 2 mandate. The three sets of women will include the following: Ruth and Naomi, Mary and Elizabeth, and Lois and Eunice. All of these women had great faith in the Lord and are still being used today as examples of a great role model.

Ruth and Naomi

In today’s society, jokes and horror stories often surround the relationships between in-laws. Ruth and Naomi’s lives had the potential to go in a similar negative

direction. Naomi's family had to move to the country of Moab due to a famine in their land. Naomi's husband, Elimelech, had "made a decision out of God's will when he went to Moab."¹² Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. Soon after moving, Elimelech died and Naomi's sons married Moabite women, one was named Orpah and the other was named Ruth: "Instead of helping to support their mother they took wives of the alien country they were in. The Jewish law forbade marriage outside of the nation."¹³ The reason they forbade marriage to Moabite women was because in Moses' day they were the ones to seduce the Jewish men into immorality and idolatry (Numbers 25). A lot had occurred within a short period of time in Naomi's life; she had moved away from her family, her husband had died, and now her sons had taken foreign wives, but she never renounced her faith.

While Naomi believed in the one, true God, her daughters-in-law still sought after the gods that they had grown up learning about in Moab. Aside from growing up and being used to different cultures, the fact that Naomi's daughters-in-law also did not share in her faith would have made it even more difficult for them to find a common ground. According to Ruth 1:4-5, after they lived in Moab for about ten years, Mahlon and Kilion died. Being that Naomi's husband and both sons had died, she had nothing left for her in Moab and she decided to return to her hometown of Bethlehem. While both of her daughters-in-law offered to return with her, Naomi insisted that they return to their families and their gods, for she had nothing left to offer them (Ruth 1:10-14). Orpah decided to return, but Ruth refused. It is here in verses fifteen through nineteen that Ruth

¹² Warren W. Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament Wisdom and Poetry* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2003), 180.

¹³ Herbert Lockyer, *All the Women of the Bible: The Life and Times of All the Women of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 117.

makes her famous declaration and promise to Naomi. She emphatically states that she will return with Naomi to her hometown, Naomi's people will be her people, and Naomi's God will be her God. After this, they continue on their way and arrive safely back in Bethlehem. At this time in history, one must realize that women often did not do well alone. Without a man to provide for their needs and protect them from dangers, it would be difficult to find food and shelter on their own and with no other family in the area. Ruth stayed true to her word though and took care of Naomi as best as she could. She was able to glean grain from a field that belonged to a relative of Naomi's and eventually, Ruth married this relative, whose name was Boaz.

Naomi did not lead an easy, pain free life, but her faith and trust in the Lord is evident throughout the chapters in the book of Ruth. She still had feelings and emotions. These were made evident in chapter one and verse twenty when she stated that, "the Almighty has made my life very bitter." Ruth had every reason to turn back and simply go home when Naomi gave her the chance. Her husband had died and there was not another son in the family for her to marry. To add to this, she had been living with a woman who served a God who was not her own, and Naomi was planning on making the long trip from Moab back to her hometown of Bethlehem, which Ruth would not have been familiar with. This trip would have been about thirty miles, which is not a long distance to us today, but would have been a long enough journey for them since they did not have any form of transportation.¹⁴ Despite all of these mounting circumstances, she went.

The simple fact of Ruth leaving her family to accompany her mother-in-law into a land that would have been foreign to her says a great deal about Ruth, but also about

¹⁴ Ibid., 117.

Naomi. The Bible does not go into great detail about the relationship that Ruth and Naomi may have had prior to the death of Ruth's husband and Naomi's son, but Naomi must have left quite the impression on this young Moabite woman. Ruth and Naomi's story is a prime example of two women implementing the Titus 2 mandate. Even though the book of Titus had not yet been written, we can still look to these women as an example to learn from.

While we are not given great detail about Naomi and Ruth's relationship, there are a few things we can infer from what we do know. We know that prior to making the decision to accompany Naomi to Bethlehem that Ruth followed her own gods. However, in Ruth 1:16, Ruth proclaims that she will follow Naomi's God, the one, true God. There must have been something within all of the years that Ruth had been married to Naomi's son that gave her the strength and faith to make this declaration. Was it Naomi's prayers? Was it the strength that Naomi portrayed amidst the deaths of her husband and two sons? We don't know, but something must have transpired between the two to allow Ruth to be able to make this life changing decision. Naomi was teaching and having an affect upon Ruth even during these times, maybe without even realizing. This is still true of mentoring and applying these verses in Titus 2 today; one may be mentoring and teaching indirectly without realizing it, simply by example.

We also know from Ruth 2:4 and 4:10 that Boaz was a believer and that he took Ruth to be his wife. In Ruth 3:11 Boaz says, "All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character." What a compliment! For a Moabite woman to receive such a compliment from a Jew would have been unheard of, it is apparent that Naomi has been teaching her daughter-in-law and has had quite the influence. In Ruth 4:15 the

women of the town said to Naomi, “your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons...” We can only imagine the conversations that Ruth and Naomi may have had and the wisdom that Naomi must have passed on to Ruth. We can only imagine how Naomi may have encouraged Ruth to be self-controlled, pure, busy at home, kind, and to submit to her new husband, Boaz. What we do know is that without the leadership and guidance of her mother-in-law Naomi, Ruth may have never come to believe upon the Lord and take Him as her God, and she would not have had the opportunity to meet Boaz and for him to take her as his wife. As a result, she also would not have been listed in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:5. What an impact one woman had on another, and she never even knew the extent of that impact.

Mary and Elizabeth

Two other great women of the Bible who exemplified the Titus 2 mandate and what it means for an older woman to teach a younger woman are Elizabeth and Mary. In Luke 1:11-20 we see the Angel Gabriel appears to Elizabeth’s husband, Zechariah. Gabriel proclaims that their prayers will be answered and that Elizabeth will conceive, even in their old age. In Luke 1:26 we are told that in Elizabeth’s sixth month of pregnancy, Gabriel is also sent to Mary, a virgin who is pledged to be married to Joseph, to announce that she will also bear a son and his name will be Jesus (Luke 1:26-31). In Luke 1:39-56 we read that Mary left immediately after learning this news, traveled to her cousin Elizabeth’s home, and stayed there for about three months. James Hastings states that Mary was a “happy maiden who has a mother or a motherly friend much experienced

in the ways of the human heart to whom she can tell all her anxieties; a wise, tender, much-experienced counselor, such as Naomi was to Ruth, and Elizabeth to Mary.”¹⁵

From the time Mary was told that she would conceive, until verse fifty-six when we read that Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home, the Bible conveys Mary’s joyful attitude. Mary could have had a very different reaction given the circumstances, but instead she trusts in the Lord. In fact, verses forty-six through fifty-six only contain Mary’s song to the Lord. In Mary’s first response to Gabriel she asked how it could be that she would conceive, and then immediately states that she is the Lord’s servant (Luke 1:34-38).

According to Bruce Metzger, Mary is believed to have been around fourteen to sixteen years of age when Jesus was born.¹⁶ We read in Matthew and Luke that Mary was betrothed, or engaged to, Joseph when she conceived Jesus. Richard Losch states, “By the custom of those days a betrothal was a significantly more sacred bond than an engagement is today. A couple might be betrothed from childhood, and this bond was legally as strong as marriage except that they lived apart and had no conjugal relations, and the woman’s family was still responsible for her care and support.”¹⁷ For Mary to conceive outside of wedlock at this point in history would have been detrimental to her reputation to say the least, and could have cost her life. It also would have meant a great disgrace to Joseph’s name as well. We read in Matthew chapter one that Joseph thought about divorcing her, which would have been the most compassionate and honorable thing

¹⁵ James Hastings, *The Greater Men and Women on the Bible: V. 5.* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1942), 7.

¹⁶ Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, *The Oxford Guide to People and Places of the Bible* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191.

¹⁷ Richard R. Losch, *All the People in the Bible: An A-z Guide to the Saints, Scoundrels, and Other Characters in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 233.

to do, but an angel of the Lord appeared to him and he decided to take Mary as his wife instead. Joseph's actions to show her compassion and to take her as his wife reveal a great deal about his character and faith. Given her circumstances, Mary also could have easily resented the fact that she had been chosen to be the one to carry Jesus, however, she rejoiced in the fact and embraced it instead.

Now, how do Mary and Elizabeth fit into the framework of Titus 2? Both were unlikely women chosen by God to give birth to two key people in the Bible: Jesus being the greatest and most important and John whom preceded and prepared the way for Jesus as we see recorded in Matthew chapter three. From this fact alone, we can gather that both Mary and Elizabeth must have been women of great faith. The Angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary also gives support to this as he addressed her as "highly favored" and said that the Lord was with her. Luke 1:6 also states that Zechariah and Elizabeth were "upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly." We also see Elizabeth's faith and joy in verse twenty-five when she states that it is through the Lord that she will conceive and that it is he who has shown his favor towards her and taken away her disgrace.

We do not know if Mary's mother had passed away or if she felt that she could not confide in her, but whatever the reason, Mary found a mother-figure in Elizabeth. It is here within these three months that Mary stays with Elizabeth when Elizabeth takes on the role of the older woman who teaches the younger woman. While Elizabeth would soon be a new mother herself, she was much older and wiser than Mary and would have been able to teach and guide her in the ways of the Lord. She would have been able to teach her how to respect and submit to her soon-to-be husband, Joseph. During this time

Elizabeth would have been able to pass along the faith that she had for all of these years, trusting that one day the Lord would provide her with a child. If at any time during these months Mary or Elizabeth's faith was to waiver and they began to wonder if all of this truly would come to pass, Zechariah (whom the Lord had made mute due to his lack of faith) would have been there to remind them of the goodness and severity of God.¹⁸ Mary would need all of the encouragement that these months must have been to her through Elizabeth, as well as all of the lessons that Elizabeth must have been able to teach her to help her endure and persevere through the road she would have ahead. As previously mentioned, to be a woman pregnant out of wedlock in these days would have been extremely unfavorable and a great disgrace.

Mary and Elizabeth are never mentioned again throughout Scripture to have had any more interaction with one another than we read about in these few verses in Luke chapter one, but what an example they set for women throughout history. We do not know for sure that Mary and Elizabeth did not have any further contact with one another, but travelling long distances in those days would have been very difficult, especially for two women. A lesson for us to take from this today would be to make the most of our time together, just as Mary and Elizabeth did in the three short months they had to encourage and glean wisdom from each other. There is so much to learn from our older and younger sisters in Christ, we must not take them or what they have to offer for granted.

Lois and Eunice

Lois and Eunice's story may be found to be very applicable and encouraging to many women today. Eunice's husband was not a believer and it is probable that he died

¹⁸ Hastings, V. 5., 7.

during his son's infancy as there is nothing mentioned of him other than that he was a Greek.¹⁹ Here again, there is little that is said about these two women, but what is said speaks volumes about their character, the lives that they led, and how they raised Timothy. Eunice was Timothy's mother, and Lois was his grandmother. Both of who were "lauded by Paul for their faith and for the training of Timothy."²⁰ Acts 16:1-3 is the first we read of Lois, Eunice, and Timothy. We find that they were from Lystra, and that Eunice was a Jewess and a believer, but Timothy's father was a Greek. Delroy Markland states that this difference in Timothy's parents' beliefs "in and of itself, carried with it a lot of religious and cultural difficulties, yet here were committed women with a genuine faith who were determined to educate this young man in the way of the Lord and the Scriptures. Without these two... Timothy might not have made it to ministry because he was timid, had a spirit of fear (2 Tim 1:7), and cowardice, as the Greek word for fear "deilia", denotes."²¹

We also read in Acts 16:2-3 that the people in Timothy's hometown of Lystra spoke well of him and Paul ended up taking him along on his journey after Timothy was circumcised. As previously mentioned, Paul often refers to his converts as his "sons" or "children". Paul addresses Timothy as his "son" or "true son" in his greetings in both first and second Timothy. According to Herbert Lockyer, "evidence seems to point to the contention that Lois, Eunice, and Timothy were won to Christ by Paul on an earlier visit to Lystra (Acts 14:6, 7). Although Lois and her daughter were Jewesses and well-versed

¹⁹ James Hastings, *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible: V. 6.* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1942) 411.

²⁰ Delroy E. Markland, *Women! Be Silent No More* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2009), 173.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

in the Old Testament Scriptures...it was Paul who brought them to see that the One who did upon the cross to save sinners was the long-promised Messiah.”²² It is believed that Timothy would have been about fifteen years of age at the time of his conversion.²³ The fact that Paul thought so highly of Timothy and allowed him to journey with him is a great testimony to how Lois and Eunice raised Timothy to know the Scriptures and fear the Lord. Timothy ended up becoming an evangelist with the Apostle Paul (2 Timothy 4:5), how happy this must have made Lois and Eunice!

In II Timothy 3:14-15 we read Paul’s encouraging words to Timothy simply admonishing him to continue in the scriptures and in what he has been taught since infancy by Lois and Eunice. It seems that Eunice truly exemplified the Titus 2 mandate by first teaching her daughter the Scriptures and raising her to love her husband and children as Titus 2:4 instructs the older women to teach the younger women. Lois and Eunice also both exemplified Titus 2 through the raising of their son and grandson. While it is very difficult and undesirable in today’s society for a mother to have to raise her child alone, it would have been even more difficult in Lois and Eunice’s day and time to raise a child alone without male support given the culture with which they lived in. Yet, with the help of the Lord they were able to so and he grew up to be a great friend and support of the great Apostle Paul, as well as an evangelist. They also still stand as great women in Biblical history that raised their son and grandson to fear the Lord and are great examples to women even today.

²² Lockyer, 54.

²³ Hastings, V. 6., 414.

Women in Church History Exemplifying Titus 2

Throughout church history, there have been many women who in some form or another changed the course of history through their own relationship with the Lord and willingness to serve. While there was a time in history when women were not highly valued or considered to be of much worth to society, there were women who did not let this become a stumbling block to them, but instead trusted in Jesus Christ to be their ultimate Judge and the One who would see them through, even if it meant that they would sacrifice their own lives for the furtherance of His Gospel. For some, they did not sacrifice their lives in death, but they sacrificed their time, energy, and resources in order to reach the souls of those around them and for many years to come. These women took their faith seriously. They understood what it meant when Jesus said to deny yourself, take up your cross, and to follow Him (Matthew 16:24).

As a society we have moved from women not being permitted to speak in church or lead a ministry, to women leading many types of ministries and even women pastor's being acceptable in some denominations. While I do not uphold the belief that the Bible teaches that women should be allowed to preach, we should be thankful for those who rose up as leaders in a time when it was not easy to do so. Many of these women truly characterized the Titus 2 mandate and there is much we can learn from them. Saint Monica, Amy Carmichael, and Ruth Bell Graham were three women who had a great influence in their day and their legacies still continue today.

Saint Monica

Saint Monica was one of these women who forged the way for women in Christian history. Monica truly exemplified Titus 2:4-5. These verses state that wives

are to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, kind, and to be subject to their husbands. While Monica was raised in a Christian home, for unknown reasons her parents arranged her marriage to Patricius who was an unbeliever. He was said to have an uncontrollable temper. After they were married, his mother also lived with them and the two of them verbally abused Monica.²⁴ Despite her circumstances, Monica continued to pray for both of them and they eventually came to faith in Jesus-Christ.

Monica also prayed fervently for her son, Augustine. According to Kenneth Curtis and Daniel Graves, authors of *Great Women in Christian History*, “most of what we know about Monica comes from the writings of her son, Augustine, one of the most influential Christians of all time.”²⁵ Monica spent many long years in prayer, weeping over her son’s lost soul. Augustine later wrote a prayer about his mother and the influence she had upon his life. A couple of lines from the prayer are as follows: “My mother, your faithful servant, was weeping for me to you, weeping more than mothers weep for the bodily deaths of their sons. For she, by that faith and spirit, which she had from you, saw the death in which I lay and you, Lord, heard her prayer.”²⁶ Oh, how we could learn from Monica’s prayer life! As Christians, prayer is one of our greatest privileges, as it is communicating with our heavenly Father. However, it also seems to be one of the biggest things that we neglect to do. James 5:16 says, “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

²⁴ Hope Gatto, *Saintly Support: A Prayer for Every Problem* (Kansas City, MO: Andrew McMeel Publishing, 2003), 1.

²⁵ A. Kenneth Curtis and Daniel Graves, *Great Women in Christian History* (Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers and Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute, 2004), 39.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

Monica died young at the age of fifty-six, but she accomplished so much in her years. She was able to help lead her husband, mother-in-law, and son to Christ. Augustine went on to write his famous autobiography, “Confessions”. *Great Women in Christian History* states that “neither Augustine nor Monica could have foreseen that Augustine’s ministry would remain influential for centuries after his death and show itself in the thinking of men such as Luther, Calvin and countless other theologians...”²⁷ Many women today are married to unbelievers or may have children who have not come to know Christ as their Savior. Monica serves as a great example to these women of a woman who truly took Titus 2:5 to heart and eventually saw those she loved come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Amy Carmichael

Amy Carmichael was a great woman of God who sacrificed much in order to carry the Gospel to other countries. Amy was raised in a Christian home and from an early age felt the Lord’s calling on her life to do something great for His Kingdom. She first went to Japan and then to Ceylon, now known as Sri Lanka, but she struggled with many health problems. After receiving a letter from a friend in India, Amy remarked that, “India might be a good place for her as the climate would be conducive to her health.”²⁸ Despite having so many health problems, she did not allow it to deter her from her calling.

After moving to India, around 1897, Amy began to gather in her home a few young converts and run-away’s looking for protection. She then felt God calling her to

²⁷ Ibid., 41.

²⁸ Lewis and Betty Drummond, *Women of Awakenings: The Historical Contribution of Women to Revival Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregal Publications, 1997), 224.

move to another city, and once doing so her small community of women began to grow tremendously. Lewis and Betty Drummond, authors of *Women of Awakenings*, state the following: “For some time Amy had been concerned about a deplorable situation that persisted in most of the pagan Temples of India. Young girls were taken in, many times only as children, and made temple prostitutes.”²⁹ It was difficult and if caught they would be severely punished, but sometimes the girls were able to escape and Amy would take them into her home. Once in her home, Amy would care for them and teach them about Christ. This became the ministry that Amy is most known for, rescuing these young girls from prostitution in the Temples.

Amy was a wonderful example in her day to the younger women, and her testimony lives on even today to encourage other women, young and old alike. Amy fulfilled the Titus 2 mandate to its fullest. She not only was a mentor to the girls and women, but she brought them into her home to provide for their physical and spiritual needs and provided for them the refuge that they so desperately needed.

Ruth Bell Graham

Ruth is a more recent woman whom contributed to church history. She recently passed away in 2007. Ruth was born into the family of Nelson and Virginia Bell, missionaries to China. Ruth was highly influenced by the writings of Amy Carmichael and by age twelve had dedicated her own life to becoming a missionary.³⁰ She fully believed that the Lord had called her to be a missionary in Tibet, but the Lord had other plans. In 1937, war between China and Japan had broken out and her parents sent her back to the United States to attend college with her sister, Rosa, at Wheaton College in

²⁹ Ibid., 226.

³⁰ Ibid., 327.

Illinois. During her college years, Ruth did experience a time of doubt and spiritual warfare. It was during this time that she made her now famous statement, “Jesus was either God or He was a liar or crazy.”³¹

Ruth and Billy Graham first met at Wheaton College in 1940. Lewis and Betty Drummond state that, “the first real impression that Billy made on Ruth was at a prayer meeting... What really impressed Ruth was his prayer life. Ruth said, I had never heard anyone pray like that before, I sensed that here was a man that knew God in a very unusual way.”³² Billy proposed to Ruth the summer of 1941, and after a period of separation they were married on August 13, 1943.

Due to Billy’s ministry, he was forced to travel a lot and she was often left at home alone. According to the Drummonds, “Ruth never found it easy with Billy to be gone so much, but as she said so often, “I’d rather have a little of Bill, than a lot of any other man.”³³ Ruth would often give her input on Billy’s sermons or help him study. She was a strong woman who encouraged and was a great help to her husband, even though times were tough.

Ruth Graham was a great example of a praying and submissive wife. That is not to say she did not have great personality and a lively spirit. To the contrary! She had a great respect for her husband and most certainly passed that on to their daughters, as well as to many other young women. Ruth was a great model of the Titus 2 mandate and all that it encompasses. The last part of verse five in particular stands out in relation to Ruth. The last portion of Titus 2:5 states the following: “...so that no one will malign the word

³¹ Ibid., 330.

³² Ibid., 332, 333.

³³ Ibid., 336.

of God.” It was stated earlier that Paul is saying here that women are called to be Godly witnesses in private and in public, giving no one a reason to criticize the word of God. Ruth’s life came to be pretty highly publicized due to her husband’s ministry as an evangelist and many women in her day looked to her as an example, as women still do today. Despite this, Ruth was still able to maintain her witness and nothing could be said against her. She was not perfect, of course, but she was a woman who sought the Lord and His will for her life daily. Ruth played a vital role in the life of evangelist Billy Graham and Christian women today can learn much from the example that she set.

How to Apply the Titus 2 Mandate to our Lives Today

Learning to live in obedience to this passage of Scripture, like any other, is no easy task and we cannot do it on our own. We must seek the help of the Holy Spirit; even then we will never reach perfection, but we must continue striving to live according to Scripture. After gaining a foundation upon what the Titus 2 mandate is, how women of the Bible showed us through their examples, and how women of Church history exemplified the mandate in their lives, it is now time to assess our own lives. How can Christian women today live out this chapter in Titus chapter two? Oftentimes, we read passages of Scripture, but do not study them or seek to understand how we may apply them to our own lives today. These verses within Titus 2 have a lot of meaning packed into them and they are very applicable to Christian women today.

It is important that we define this mentoring relationship that the older woman is to have with the younger woman. Author Susan Hunt defines this mentoring relationship as “when a woman possessing faith and spiritual maturity enters into a relationship with a

younger woman in order to encourage and equip her to live for God's glory."³⁴ Notice that within this definition we see that the older woman possesses faith and spiritual maturity. This is not something that can be easily or quickly attained, but takes lots of prayer and studying the Word, and also being taught or mentored by someone else who is more mature. A Godly, mature woman has strived, and is still striving, to live according the Word and all that Christ has called women to be. She has a desire to continue in her spiritual growth, but also to pass along what she has learned over the years. Also notice from the above definition that it says that the older woman "enters into a relationship with a younger woman..." The older woman has initiated this new relationship with a focus and purpose which is to "encourage and equip" the younger woman to live for the glory of God.

It seems that there are many women today who do not feel confident entering into a mentoring relationship. However, it is important to point out that a relationship like this does not necessarily have to be formal. While deep theological conversations are needed and a mentoring relationship will at some point touch on theological issues, the relationship is not defined by these types of conversations. Mentoring a younger sister in Christ may take on a very casual shape as well. There should still be focus, but the relationship can turn into one of a deep friendship and does not have to be formal. In *Spiritual Mothering*, Susan Hunt states, "Whatever form it takes, the similarity is that the faith of the younger woman is nourished and enhanced by the relationship. Whatever the degree of involvement and however the relationship works itself out, the command is

³⁴ Susan Hunt, *Spiritual Mothering: The Titus 2 Model for Women Mentoring Women* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992), 25.

clear. Older women are to encourage and equip younger women to live for God's glory."³⁵

One misconception that some women have concerning this passage in Titus is the age difference between the two women. While naturally the more life experiences one has, the more they will know and understand. However, one's physical age actually has very little to do with whether or not they may be an "older" or "younger" woman. The relationship has much to do with the spiritual maturity of the "older" woman, though it is possible that she would be younger in physical age. One's relationship and maturity in Christ carries a heavier weight than the physical age does.

Another aspect that should be considered is that while an older woman is mentoring a younger woman, she may at the same time be being mentored herself. Susan Hunt states, "To a degree, we can all be both an older and a younger woman."³⁶ There is so much to teach and pass on to one another. It may include anything from sharing spiritual insight and wisdom to simply teaching the younger woman how to be a better homemaker. One never becomes too old to learn something new. This learning may take place from the younger woman that she is mentoring! The older and wiser generation has so much knowledge and insight to pass on to the next generation, but that does not mean that they cannot also learn from the younger generation.

Whatever the fear or excuse for not mentoring or being mentored may be, one should take it to the Lord in prayer and ask that He help replace the fear or excuse with a desire; to teach and to be taught. One should pray that they grow deeper in their own spiritual walk with the Lord and also be able to help another to do the same.

³⁵ Ibid., 46.

³⁶ Ibid., 47.

Conclusion

Christian women in today's society have many obstacles and distractions that the world throws their way. They are constantly being taught by society that they should be more independent and that they don't need a male to provide for them or protect them. As a whole, society says that it is every man for himself and there are no absolutes. However, this directly contradicts the Word of God, and in particular, the passage that Paul wrote to Titus in Titus chapter two. Men and women were not created to operate independently of one another, but to complement each other. Women are to be submissive and respectful towards their husbands while men are to provide for, protect, and love their wives. Paul also states within Titus 2 many absolutes. They are not options, but are commands and there is no "grey" area within Scripture. Paul instructs Titus within this passage how the church is to operate and grow. Verses three through five were studied more in depth and these passages were directed towards the women of the church. They outlined how the older and more mature women of the faith are to instruct the younger women of the church.

There are many examples throughout the Bible of women who exemplified aspects of the Titus 2 mandate in their lives. For the purpose of this study though, the lives of Ruth and Naomi, Mary and Elizabeth, and Lois and Eunice were considered. While none of them could fully embody all that the Titus 2 mandate calls women to be, they were great women of faith whom women today can learn much from.

Moving throughout church history there were many women who made a great impact on the Kingdom of God. Due to social norms of their day, it was not always easy for them as a woman to make their mark and make a difference, but they sacrificed their

families, reputation, and the comfortable lives they could have lived for the glory of God. Saint Monica, Amy Carmichael, and Ruth Bell Graham were three women of Church history that were focused upon. Each of them contributed to the furthering of the kingdom in their own way. From being a prayer warrior who saw those around her saved, to one who rescued young women from sexual slavery, to the pastor's wife who stood by her husband and was a great example of a helpmeet and faithful wife and mother. All of them had an impact upon the world that continued, even after they were gone.

As Christian women living in today's society, there is much that we can learn from Titus 2 and the many women throughout history who have applied this passage to their own lives. It may not be easy, particularly at first, but once the process has begun and the relationships begin to build both women will be tremendously blessed and the Lord will be glorified. Elisabeth Elliot, another great Christian woman in history once made the statement, "the fact that I am a woman does not mean I am a different kind of Christian, but the fact that I am a Christian does make me a different kind of woman. For I have accepted God's idea of me, so that my entire life is an offering back to Him of all that I am and all that He wants me to be."³⁷ May our prayers be that others will see Christ through us, and that we will have the courage and faith to give our whole lives back to Christ as an offering.

³⁷ Elisabeth Elliot, *Let Me be a Woman* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1976), 43.

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