

# The Heartfelt Embrace of Young Womanhood

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Titus 2:4-5 speaks of the older women who are to be “teaching what is good so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

So many godly women love and appreciate Titus 2 for the clear instructions that the Lord gives to both older and younger women. The Lord has spoken clearly in these verses. He has provided timeless truth, perfect principles, and needed exhortations for joyful womanhood.

In this first blog, I'll elaborate on the first few virtues of young womanhood from Titus 2:4-5a. To begin, however, I should remark that Paul calls the older women to *encourage* the young women to do these following 7 virtues. That teaches something very urgent: these qualities do not come naturally to a young woman; they must *learn* these essential marks of womanhood. These don't come easily. Culture, social media, Netflix, coworkers, and the entertainment industry do not help in promoting *biblical* womanhood. So, at this very point, Paul calls upon the older and more mature women of faith to come alongside of the younger women to *deliberately teach* them.

In fact, the word that Paul uses for the older women to help the younger women is to “encourage” (NASB). The Greek word can refer to an urging, deliberate training, admonishing, even schooling the younger women in these particular virtues. This is far from a text message here or there. It's more than reading a few blogs on the topic or hearing a sermon every few years on womanhood. This requires the intentional, thoughtful, deliberate and proactive training and discipleship of an older woman coming alongside of a younger woman to particularly train her in these qualities of a biblical, young woman.

When reading these marvelous virtues in the text, one should immediately recognize the priority is placed on the *home* -- marriage, parenting, homemaking, godly conduct. Contrary to the cultural pressure today to go out, get a job, make money, flourish personally, do what you want, be who you desire, thrive as a corporate woman, God's glorious and timeless plan is for the *biblical woman* to find her primary calling in the context of the home. Her responsibilities and duties are tethered first to her husband, then to her children, then to her home-making and her godly conduct in such an environment. This is so counter-cultural and desperately needed!

**I. She is to love her husband.** In verse 4, the older women in the local church must train the younger women to love their husbands. Amazingly, if they need to be *taught* this, then it presupposes that it doesn't come naturally. The Greek word φιλάνδρους literally could be rendered: a lover of the man. This obviously refers to a heterosexual marriage between a woman and a man. But additionally, it brings out a very unique element. To love the husband, as Paul describes it, has to do with a friendship, brotherly kind of love. This is a genuine affectionate, respectful, best-friendship kind of love. This is not the *agape* self-sacrificing, dying to self love that Paul so often calls for among believers. That's important but that's not the same

word used here. Paul wants the older women to come alongside of the younger wives and deliberately train them in respectful, affectionate, honorable relations with their husbands. The older women have been there. Perhaps they can train from personal experience. They can teach through loving and compassionate reproof and rebuke when necessary. They can teach through biblical instruction (which means older women don't have to all be married in order to fulfill this duty; even if they don't have the *personal experience*, they have the *all-sufficient Scriptures*).

**2. She is to love her children.** In verse 4b, Paul moves from the loving of the husbands to the loving of her children. And like Paul did with the previous word, here Paul uses a similar word for the young mothers. They are to be taught to φιλοτέκνουσ. This, again, includes the *phileo* kind of love where the sense of friendship, affection, care, enjoyment and nurture comes to the forefront. I think every mother would understand the *agape* type love in parenting. You love the child when they can't love you back (nursing, feeding, changing diapers, etc!). But this is different. This is an affectionate, caring, enjoyable and nurturing kind of love for the children. This, according to God, doesn't come naturally to young women and so they need to be trained in this virtue by Godly, older women. In the context of the church, the older women are to intentionally come alongside of the young mothers to give tips on parenting, on loving the children, on being caring and affectionate with them, disciplining them with tenderness, and raising them in the context of a happy and holy home. This is not something that's found on social media or viewed on the common movies in the theaters. Here's why Paul calls upon the older women of God to school the younger mothers in these vital qualities of womanhood.

**3. She is to be sensible.** Turning to verse 5, Paul mentions that the older women must urge the young women to be sensible. The Greek word refers to one who is wise, self-controlled, thoughtful, deliberate, and careful in conduct. This word is a favorite of Paul's in the book of Titus. Elders must be sensible (1:8). Older men must be sensible (2:2). Younger men must be sensible (2:6). And here, it's implied that the older women must be sensible as they are to admonish the young women to live this out in their lives (2:5). The idea is the young woman living wisely in the home, practicing self control in the home and resisting the temptation to give into and pursue every craving and lust and pleasure that comes her way. To live sensibly means that she may have something she *wants* within her grasp but she still has the ability to resist and refuse it -- by God's grace. If there is any virtue needed among young women in our culture, self-control and living sensibly has got to be near the top of the list. But, again, that Paul places it here reveals that this quality does not come by nature to young women. Youthful women often follow their lusts, pursue their pleasures, live without self-control and live without serious thought. But may the older women of God obey Paul's mandate to deliberately assist the young women to know and live out the virtue of self-control and living in a sensible way -- for Christ's glory and for her joy.

In the posts to follow, I will spell out in more detail the remaining virtues of biblical womanhood as Paul lists them in Titus 2:5.