

The

A B C's



Integrating the names, character qualities, and attributes of God

with the principles taught in Titus 2:3-5

of T 2 : 3

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THE ABCs of T2:3 - Sample Chapter (Lesson 2)

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Lesson Two: A / B – “In Behavior as Becometh Holiness”

“The aged women likewise, that they be **in behavior as becometh holiness**, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *to be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”
—Titus 2:3-5, KJV

Weekly Outline:

- I. *Praise to the Lord (two names, character qualities, attributes, or actions of God)*
- II. *Principle to Learn (one instruction from Titus 2:3-5)*
 - A. *The words (the meaning of the words in the instruction from Titus 2)*
 - B. *The wisdom (the practical application of the instruction from Titus 2)*
 - C. *The women who lived it (women in Scripture or history that positively applied the instruction from Titus 2)*
- III. *Projects to Live (one or more ways to live out the instruction from Titus 2)*

DAY ONE

How did you do on your reading of the book of Titus? Were you as amazed as I was at how quickly you could read an entire book of the Bible? There’s something about getting the “big picture” of the book that I just love. Maybe that’s why art galleries—and even libraries—are often housed inside breathtaking architecture. The beauty of the “big picture” makes you want to go inside and see more beauty!

In Lesson One, we learned that Paul instructed Titus to “...teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.” (Titus 2:1, NIV) At first glance, that sounded as though it were meant for seminary-educated theologians, and therefore, we might be tempted to skip over it. However, further study taught us that this phrase meant that Titus was to provide sound doctrine that could be reflected in godly living.

Sound teaching is that which points us to God. So, let’s jump right in on the outline we’ll follow each week (see above), start at the beginning of the alphabet, and learn more about our amazing Heavenly Father!

I. Praise to the Lord

When we see the names, character qualities, and attributes of God in the Bible, we know better what character qualities and attributes of His should be “reflected in godly living.”

A. Looking for a description, name, or attribute of God that begins with the letter “A,” read Colossians 3:11 and complete the following:

“Christ is _____.”

That’s a pretty small word with a very big meaning to kick off our study, isn’t it?

Before reading further, what does that mean to you about Who God is?

Commentator J.C. Ryle (1816-1900) wrote a little tract entitled “Christ is All.” In it, he said these words:

These three words [Christ is all] are the essence and substance of Christianity. If our hearts can really go along with them, it is well with our souls; if not, we may be sure we have yet much to learn.

Our days are filled with choices too numerous to mention. In how many of those choices is Christ “all, and in all?” In stopping to answer that question, I also had to stop and talk with my Lord about my sorrow in not being able to quickly reply, “all of them,” and I had to seek His forgiveness for that. I willingly admit that I “have yet much to learn.”

Author J.C. Ryle went on to say, “He that follows after holiness will make no progress, unless he gives to Christ His rightful place.” But this doesn’t just *happen*. (Wouldn’t it be awesome if it did?) We have to *choose* to put Christ in “His rightful place.” We have to *choose* not to replace Him with anything that obscures our view of Him as Lord of all.

A family friend, Dr. Ken Collier, often quotes this simple (but great) reminder: “Just two choices on the shelf: pleasing God, or pleasing self.”

Read the following verses and jot down how they show the importance of Christ’s being “all” in order for their words to be true:

1. Philippians 1:21

2. Galatians 2:20

When Christ is truly 100 percent “all, and in all,” our lives will be transformed beyond recognition! (Won’t that be *amazing*?)

Day One was an “easy” one this week, but we have a lot to think about before jumping back in on the next letter tomorrow. It might be a good idea for each of us to take a few moments today to ask God to show us the areas in which He is not “all.” But it’s not enough just to see those areas; remember, we then have to *choose* to remove the distractions that prevent Him from *being* “all!”

From what area(s) are you holding back percentage points from God? If it will help you to follow through on it, commit, in a written prayer, to make Him “all.”

DAY TWO

I can't wait to learn more about the God Who is all, and in all, can you? Let's keep moving down the alphabet (and into the next sub-point on our outline) and see what He wants us to know about Him today.

Before we begin, though, I invite you to join me in a brief, silent, one-or-two-sentence prayer, asking Him for guidance as you study His Word today.

B. Looking for a description, name, or attribute of God that begins with the letter "B," read Titus 2:13 and complete the following:

We are to be "looking for that _____."

The hope of Christ's return is a divine motivation! This "blessed hope" is a hope for His appearing, but even more exciting, it is a hope that He instills in us, knowing that we will see Him face to face! Therefore, because He not only *gives us* a blessed hope but also *fulfills* that blessed hope, Jesus Christ Himself *is* our Blessed Hope! (Wow!)

During a sudden and unexpected job loss, I came to realize, in a new way for me, the significance of the word hope. Hope is what keeps us moving forward in the journey. The choice for someone to just "give up" seems to come when they feel that they have no hope.

Have you ever had a time when you felt hopeless about something...or about life? Without dwelling on the negative, write the circumstances that caused you to lose hope. But—be sure to end it with an explanation of how hope returned. If you're still in the midst of what seems to be a hopeless situation, end your paragraph with these words: "I'm waiting for the Blessed Hope to be my blessed hope." Hope will return—I wish I could tell you when, but it *will* return....

We are told in Titus 2:13 not only that we have a blessed hope, but that we are to be looking in hope toward its fulfillment! Hope motivates us to continue!

What motivates you? Don't think too hard about this, but list three or four motivating factors in your life right now (ex., health, pleasing others, etc.)

A chiropractor who treated me for a while suggested to his patients that they come up with their "big why." *Why* do you want to be healthy? *Why* do you want to use your skills and abilities? In other words, what motivates you? As a believer, he also encouraged us to find a Bible verse that would (1) support our "motivator" and (2) be a firm foundation when the right choices became difficult to make.

As we conclude day two, I am challenging you to come up with your "big why" today. Yours should be unique to you, but here is my own "big why" to give you an example:

My big why: Throughout my life, I want to accomplish what God wants for me to do—nothing more, nothing less. In order for that to happen, I must be what He wants me to be. My "motivation-support" verse is a quotation of what God's own Son, Jesus, said at the end of His life on earth in a prayer to His Father: "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do." (John 17:4, NIV) This verse motivates me to be what He wants me to be so that I can do what He wants me to do!

Now it's your turn! Write out your big why.

DAY THREE

It's amazing to me that the words of Titus 2:3-5 were not only written to the believers on the island of Crete, they were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God (II Timothy 3:16-17) and recorded for all time. We, too, can take their truths and learn from the principles contained in them.

And that's exactly what we're going to do today! Don't let the Greek words scare you. I'm just one who feels that the more we know about the words He has given to us, the more we can reflect them in godly living!

II. Principle to Learn: "in behavior as becometh holiness" (KJV)

As we will do with each of the following lessons, let's take a closer look at this phrase in Titus chapter two in order to gain greater knowledge and understanding of what Paul is saying to Titus—and to us.

A. The words (reminder: these definitions are taken from *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*)

1. The Greek word used here ("becometh holiness") is *hieroprepes*—a compound word.
 - a. The first part of this compound word comes from *hieron*. Its definition is: "sacred, holy, consecrated to God." In fact, it is the word that was used to describe the entire Jewish temple complex, signifying its depth of consecration.
 - b. *Prepo*: This word means "to be fitting, seemly, suitable, right." This is the same word Paul used in Titus 2:1 when he said to Titus, "Speak the things that *become* (are fitting, suitable for) sound doctrine."
 - c. Therefore, the compound word, *hieroprepes*, means "venerable." This word refers to "respect through age, character, or attainments." It further means "pertaining to proper reverence; *worthy* (emphasis, mine) of reverence."

Think of a really great outfit that you (humbly, of course!) know looks good on you. When you wear it, you know it is "becoming" on you—it flatters your strong elements, and it enhances the beauty within your heart. That's the idea of this word. They were to be women whose daily "behavior" was "becoming" to a holy life. The bottom line for us is that we are to be godly examples of holiness.

Can you think of two practical ways that your reactions or actions can be "becoming to holiness" ("reverent in the way [you] live," NIV) today?

2. The second word we want to look at is found earlier in the phrase we're looking at this week. Let's look at the Greek word *katastema*—the English word “behavior.”

- a. This word means “deportment”—the way in which they presented themselves.
- b. They were to be in dress, gait (the way they walked), and general deportment in keeping with what their holy calling required.
- c. They were not to be like the world.

Remember that these women were “Cretans.” Because Christianity was only a generation or so away from its beginnings on Crete, they most likely had only observed ungodly examples of womanhood. In fact, these women were known for being crude, brash, and anything *but* reverent in their deportment (behavior)!

B. The wisdom

The take-away from this is that we are not to be like the world, but like the church (the bride of Christ).

Some of you might be thinking, “Oh no, here comes the list of exactly what someone thinks I'm supposed to wear to earn my way into God's (actually, an organization's or a person's) good favor.” Others are thinking, “Hurry—tell me exactly what to wear so that I can earn my way into God's (actually, an organization's or a person's) good favor.”

But there's one major reason I'm not going to do that: Paul wrote “teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live;” therefore, I don't feel qualified to add anything further! The Holy Spirit guided Paul in what to write, so He can certainly guide me in how to live, what to wear, what to say, and so on. The only thing I need to do in this is follow where He guides me!

Does this sound impossible? Does it sound like something only “perfect” women who are in vocational Christian work can do? It's not! Scripture even records examples of everyday women who lived in this way. We'll look at them tomorrow.

DAY FOUR

When I graduated from high school—and to my young friends, no, Mary and Martha were not my classmates!—one of the gifts my parents gave me was a book entitled *All the Women of the Bible*, written as part of a series by Herbert Lockyear. It's a rather encyclopedic look at many of the women we know—and many that we have never heard of—from within the pages of Scripture. For me, it opened my mind to the fact that these women were *real*. They served the same God I serve, felt the same way I feel, and battled the same things I battle. Since that time, I have taken a more personal look into the lives of many of these women from days gone by.

Starting with today's lesson, each lesson in this book will include a brief insight into the lives of one or two women from the Bible who lived what we are learning. I hope that these glimpses into their lives will ignite in you a desire to study their lives—and learn from them—on your own.

C. The women who lived it

1. Phoebe

Okay, seriously—is there anyone who wouldn't want to have this said about them by the great Apostle Paul?

I ask you to receive [Phoebe] in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me. —Romans 16:2, NIV

We can tell from this one, short verse that this dear woman, Phoebe, was not out to please herself. She clearly took time to learn about God, and then she lived it out by thinking of others and helping many of them in their time of need. Her behavior beautifully reflected one who looked like the bride of Christ! I somehow have a feeling that she was probably even humbled by the fact that Paul would mention her with admiration in his letter to the church in Rome.

2. The second woman I want us to sneak a peek at is actually a *group* of women: the women in the early church.

- a. Read I Timothy 2:9-10 and 3:11 and jot down the descriptions of godliness given to these women. Note: In your answer, please don't focus on what they were *not* supposed to do but place the importance where *God* places the importance!

- b. Now, repeat the same steps as you read I Timothy 5:10.

I love that in I Timothy 2:10, we are told that “good works” are becoming (“attractive”) on women who profess godliness. Tomorrow, we’ll “bring it on home” by looking at some “good works” you can put into practice this week!

DAY FIVE

In writing this Bible study, I have realized that if all we do is study it, we have not fulfilled God’s commands. After all, in the often-quoted verse, II Timothy 2:15, He clearly tells us that some follow-up action is part of the command:

Study to **show** thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. —II Timothy 2:15, KJV (emphasis, mine)

III. Projects to Live

- A. If you didn’t take time to do it on DAY TWO, go back and write out your “big why.” Be sure to include a Scripture verse as the unshakeable foundation for your motivation. If you are doing this study as a group, you might want to plan a minute or two to share these at the beginning of Lesson Three.
- B. Set a tone of reverence and respect in your home or workplace. Here are a few suggestions to help you accomplish this:

1. Play soft background music. Be respectful of the tastes and proximity of others—particularly in the workplace. (I recommend you only use instrumental music so that people aren't tempted to sing along!)
 2. Be intentional to apply the teaching of Proverbs 15:1 (NIV): "A gentle answer turns away wrath...."
 3. Go to church on Sunday with a prepared heart. A peaceful and calm spirit is much more likely to enable you to listen and learn when the message is given. This might mean doing some preparation on Saturday night.
- C. Cut out one "irreverent" deed or thought process that is normally a part of your life. If it will help you to be successful, set up an accountability system for this.
- D. Though there is no DAY SIX or DAY SEVEN listed, read the book of Titus at least once during those two days.

Concluding thoughts:

Because He is the Blessed Hope, we must devote our time, energy, talents, and efforts to make Him our all. When we do this, our behavior will reflect with reverent awe the Lord that we serve!

Suggested additional, related reading:

Choices, by Lorraine Strohbehn (available for Kindle)

My Heart Christ's Home, by Robert Munger