**Series**: The Book of Titus 2021

**Title**: Preserving the Family - Part 1

**Scripture**: Titus 1:4-7

**Description:** We seek Identity, Power, Pleasure, Justice and Value - but without Christ, the only way we know how is by destroying our family. Titus is given 5 destructive characteristics of family leaders.

# Read Titus 1:4-7

# Context

Why did Paul release Titus for this? = "*for the sake of the faith of God's elect*" IE = the Faith! Leaving him on Crete was not just an organisational restructure. They're carrying the Light of the World, the Command of God, the authentic Faith of God's elect

(Key distinctives of orthodox (true) faith are 3, and we see them here:

* God as Trinity
* The Person of Christ and His Work on the Cross
* The Scripture - God's word

*"(1) God's promises... the command of God our Savior;... Grace and peace from God the Father and* ***Christ Jesus our Saviour****.*")

It's safe to say: apparently Titus was losing some traction in the work. Ill-confident? this letter written to remind & urge: "*as I commanded you*". Titus must remember, this is all "*for the sake of the faith of God's elect...*"

# Introduction - Sustaining Work in the Home

And we can make some immediate observations about this work Titus has to get traction on:

1. Believers need reform (5a) "that you might put what remained into **order**". The work of Gospel renewal is to challenge culture and capture it for righteousness - its beliefs, behaviours - ideas about Identity, Power, Pleasure, Justice and Value; The **Christian** life is a new way; Life changes, and believers need reform - life is a reordering of these things

2. Largely responsible for this reform taking place in believers' lives, is the Leadership to carry it out! '*into order and appoint elders in every town*' : It won't happen without right leadership.

And here's the thing - Right Leadership in the church, is the same as Right Leadership in the home. What is necessary to lead **God's family** in renewal, is necessary for leading **your own**!

And that's going to set the basis for our time today. We've used Timothy and Titus a lot already to (rightly) understand the qualifications for church leaders - and it will be implicit again today. But what I'd like to do, is point out the **parallel** between church leadership and home leadership, since right now in this world, families in homes are suffering crushing defeat, even Christian homes. This passage gives us the standard of leaders which are necessary for strong homes.

**The Parallel: read v5b-7a**

appoint elders in every town as I directed you-- 6 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. 7 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. [and then he gives a list of character qualifications 5 negative and 6 positive]

Now can you see it? It's not just that a leader in the church has a **similar** ***role*** as a leader in the home, but that the leader of the church must be the **same** ***quality*** of a good leader in the home.

Paul explicitly says so in 1Tim3:5

5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

Notice on the One Hand:

* The indicators of a good leader are his relationship with his **wife** (at home)   
  *if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife*  
  and his relationship with his **children** (at home)  
  *his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination*  
  - that's an indicator of his leadership...
  + '*debauchery*' = prodigal son who wants to take everything he can and waste it on sensation
  + *'insubordination'* = hates authority
* This is what Titus must investigate. The way he is in private, will be obvious by the behaviour of those who live with him

On the Other Hand:

* *an overseer, as God's steward* : A church leader is 'God's Steward' which means - **God's Home Manager** - a steward was typically a trusted slave who had the role even of *guardian of the master's children*. He was the overseer of the household to make sure that everything from people to possessions in the home was healthy - 'epi-skopos'.
* ILLUS: I think of Foster Parents. And what terror or blessing they can be. So who best to foster God's children? The one who is a good husband/parent at home.

The concern is : (6) *if anyone is* ***above reproach***... (7) *must be* ***above reproach*** = mening accusations of disqualification don't stick, ... because those he lives with 24x7 demonstrate him to be fit.

# Proposition

So what? Instead of narrowing our sights to elders in the church family, let's broaden it to consider God's will for leaders in the home. Men - husbands and fathers, particularly, You have a profound responsibility, accountability and impact in your hands. You may not be well trained and skilled at leading - but even Titus had to appoint elders in young churches - and though they had much growth to do, there were some essentials that all could be held to.

***5 tools to destroy a family***

*He must not be.... Arrogant, Quick tempered, a Drunkard, Violent, Greedy* - It's not surprising that an elder must not be these. No one wants such. No one wants to be known as such. **What is surprising** is that it's *still necessary to say it*! In other words, there's often a difference between what we think and say we do, and what we really do.

The desire for Identity, Power, Pleasure, Justice and Value - resulting in Arrogance, Temper, Drunkeness, Violence and Greed - fair pursuits... ending in destruction; But Christ will reorder those desires and fill it with Himself.

Let's spend some time here - because whether we're leaders in the home family, or the church family, we can humbly, introspectively detect and determine to put off, before we cause further destruction - [elders - get this right in the home and you'll get it right in the church] **Ps139:23Our prayer as we go through:**

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

* We'll look at each - **describe** and **detect** in ourselves
* Then **how to destroy sin and save the family**

***PRAY***

**he not be...**

# Arrogant

## Described

An arrogant man has 2 sides - **The side facing his peers**: he looks down and scoffs

Proverbs 21:24 the name of the arrogant is "Scoffer", a haughty man who acts with arrogant pride.

* I knew a man like that. I was very privileged to know him everything he said was right! And in every conversation, he was perfectly able to say the last word, topping it with his profound wisdom. (I'm not being honest, of course)

**Then the side facing his authorities**: he looks up and despises

2Pet2:10 those who ... despise authority. Bold and willful [=**arrogant**], they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, [angelic authorities]

* The arrogant man believes he is above everything, so he despises anyone that claims otherwise; he cannot handle that anyone else would have the final word
  + The Greek philosopher Aristotle said one man lives to please everybody, and another lives only to please **himself**. That's the word Arrogant. For him, life is a party, but only he is invited. And the way he gets there is to think himself as above all others.
  + W. Barclay said that since he believes in his own superiority, he is "**intollerant:***... condemning everything that he cannot understand and thinking that there is no way of doing anything except his*"

## Detected

* "*Lord, search me and try me... see if there is any such wicked way in me*"
  + His children grew to despise his authority. They 'didn't care how much he knew since they felt how little he cared'; And his wife stopped listening to his speeches; She resented his self-interest; She was even convinced, and I think rightly so, that even the birthday gifts she unwrapped from him were really a gift to himself.
* I think arrogance is listed first because it's near the root of all sin - Pride. Sin is intrinsicly self centred. Arrogance happens when that pride gets opportunity : when you have the *intellect* - you become arrogant. or Strength, or Gifting, or Presence - anything an edge over others - Whatever ability you don't employ for Love, flourishes into arrogance. And this makes it probably most common, especially in a privileged class.
* What about those times when you scoff at people? What about those times when you despise your authorities? Does your wife feel heard and understood? Do your children love your authority - that it's for their good and not your own?

# Quick tempered

## Described

Well, James says, 1:19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be ... slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Everyone gets angry. Even God (Jhn 3:36). We ought to be angry about some things. Eph4:26 assumes we will be angry, "*be angry ...*" but then it adds: "*and do not sin*". And that's James point - not all anger is righteous. Now in v7 Paul's focus is not the anger but the man - a man who gets hot quickly. Easily provoked. ILLUS: His "pilot light" is burning, ready for the gas. Therefore he is characterised by anger.

The Bible describes a number of side-effects:

* It separates people - Pr 15:18 *A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, ... contention.*
* It results in foolishness - Pr 14:17 *A man of quick temper acts foolishly*
* It becomes habitual - Prov *22: 24 Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, 25 lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.*
* It fosters all kinds of sin *Prov 29: 22 A man ... given to anger causes much transgression.*

## Detected

* "*Lord, search me and try me... see if there is any such wicked way in me*"

Walking on eggshells. That's what it feels like to live and work with a quick-tempered man. He flares up when things don't go his way. Before he arrives home there is a mad rush to make everything perfect, lest he explode at the dirty dishes, toys in the lounge... he's a ticking time bomb ; living with him is all about extinguishing his fuse. You wouldn't say he's happy; but it works for him. He has successfully created his perfect world by offering **peace** to all who please him, and **embarrassment** for those who don't.

In the church, or at work, everyone will dance to his tune. You'll know what his tune is because he loudly accuses and denounces people, even slamming the pulpit or overriding meetings; a great way to win his approval is by being angry together with him. And if you disagree, just keep quiet for peace' sake.

That is not the righteousness of God.

* Are your children obedient... only when you're around? Have they learned very well to manipulate the system for their maximum benefit; Are they longing for the day they can leave home like the prodigal?
* Is your wife well trained at orbiting you, maybe pandering to your every will, and urging others to not upset the applecart. ... or does she feel cherished
* When last did you get angry? Maybe the best people to ask will be your children. I've been surprised at the anger they sense than I realised I gave. Ask your wife too: "Am I more often angry or affectionate?" (and when she answers, can you not bite back?)

# Drunkard

## Described

* I know a man who found solace at the bar. That's what alcohol and other substances can do - ease the mind. Eventually, his wife was putting the kids to bed, and then discovering him on the couch the next morning as she left for work. By the time he was ready to be truthful with her, she'd already determined to divorce him - to protect her children and spare herself the broken promises.
* A drunkard cannot function - cannot be entrusted with responsibility, (though strangely the more they're intoxicated, the wiser they consider themselves) - it's not for those in responsible positions!

Prov31:4 It is not for **kings**, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for **rulers** to take strong drink, 5 lest they drink and **forget** what has been decreed and **pervert the rights** of all the afflicted.

* This word meant more than drunkenness : even *outrageous conduct* by sober people... behaviour so bad, that they may as well be ***out of their mind***...
* And that's the issue - whoever doesn't have a **present mind**, the ability to **engage** with the world around him, is going to destroy those who depend on him - Leaders in the Home have to be fully engaged.
* Eph 5:18 18 *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery* (you wonder where the kids get it, **v6** *accused of debauchery*)*, but be filled with the Spirit* - As a ship's sails are filled by the wind that drives it, so too the gift of the Holy Spirit driving the believer, in contrast to wine controlling a man - putting him to sleep when, as God's Image and Agent, he should be engaged.

## Detected

I'd like to use this picture from Proverbs to illustrate the effect, and help us detect the principle in our own lives, even if it isn't wine per se...What's actually happening is abdication from human dignity - The man is asleep - he lives in a dream, and when reality strikes, he creeps away to hide again.

Prov 23:29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? 30 Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. 31 Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. 32 In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. 33 Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things. 34 You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. 35 "They struck me," you will say, "but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink."

* In today's world there are unlimited opportunities to creep away and hide, to disengage from the family around you - it might be a bottle, but it can also be a screen. It can be a job. It can even be something good in itself (like wine) which becomes a means to self-indulging and avoiding responsibility.
* "*Lord, search me and try me... see if there is any such wicked way in me*"
* You might not consider yourself a drunk, but you could be as engaging and responsible as one to your family. What presence do you give to her? Is there meaningful time with your children, without your phone in hand?

# Violent

## Described

I discovered with a mix of amusement and horror that in the 4th century, certain over-zealous bishops hit erring church members! (the Apostolic Canons lay it down: "*We order that the bishop who strikes an erring believer should be deposed*.") Speaking with a school teacher this week I asked about her own stories of violent husbands and fathers. She related 2 dads in the school parking lot physically fighting each other; the one turned out to be a wife-beater, the other horribly full of himself who manipulated, dominated and estranged his wife, who took the 3 daughters and left him. But the teacher also said, these days both mom and dad fight - even equally matched! Such is the nature of changing cultural norms and how sin manifests.

* We've spoken about anger - but anger when left to itself, becomes violence -

Mat 5:21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder [=violence]; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is **angry** with his brother will be liable to judgment;...

* + violence is more than physical; we can be violent in words: words and schemes to crush someone beyond recovery. "Violence" doesn't seek **reconciliation** but **annihilation**

## Detected

* Firstly, if you are raising your hand at your wife, come and see me - we need to do whatever we can to save both of you
* Secondly, don't ever discipline your children out of anger; Surrounded by loving counsel, gospel, repentance, full reconciliation. Not protracted abandonment, shame, degrading words. Not retaliation, Not bruising.
* But then consider your words. Do you build your wife up or cut her down?
* Are your children bullies? Have they learned reconciliation or annihilation?
* "*Lord, search me and try me... see if there is any such wicked way in me*"

# Greedy

## Described

Interestingly enough, contemporary historians of Crete made these comments about Cretans:

Polybius: They are so given to making **gain** in **disgraceful and acquisitive ways** that, among the Cretans alone of all men, ***no gain is counted disgraceful***. Culturally acceptable to Extort, Bribe, Corrupt...

and Plutarch: ***They stuck to money like bees to honey***

* That will destroy a family. Something so promising is really devastating... the love for money: 1 Timothy 6:9-10

those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs

* The allure of money is so powerful because it promises Hope : hence even wandering from the Faith of Eternal Hope - but it's a lie. And leaders in the home who believe the lie will sacrifice the family
* **Literally**, Paul tells Titus, the man must not be a ***shameful*** gainer - Perhaps the most shameful gain is the one that **pays with family** to **gain a worldly standard** of living - debt, waste... it's legal but it's no less shameful
* But in general - the a person has integrity with money is a good test of the integrity of his soul. A leader who cheats and lies for personal gain, will do the same with his household.

## Detected

* What value do your children place on money, and what money can buy? Would they squandor it? They will learn it from you.

# Destroying sin to Preserve the family

Sin is inherent in the flesh; We seek Identity, Power, Pleasure, Justice and Value - but without Christ, the only way we know how is by destroying our family. Reordering in the New Christian Life is war. And the home is the prime experience of this! You never know how much of a sinner you are until you get married, and then you have kids!

How do we destroy sin and not the family? Well these 5 have a common cause -

* **Arrogance, Drunkenness, Greed** are sins of **Avoiding** - by Arrogance : overlooking family, by Drunkenness : escaping family, by Greed : letting go of family - ***to preserve me***
* **Anger and Attack** are sins of **Aggression** - forcing Family - ***to praise me***.

The common cause is ME. Sin serves Self. If you're detecting any of these in you- you're detecting the presence of sin. Sin boldly refuses God - that's your heart refusing to Love Him and Love our Neighbour.// Instead of preserving my family and praising God, I'm preserving me and praising me.

But this is why Paul left Titus on Crete. There is Hope, even for Cretans. The Good News of Jesus Christ is that sin has been nailed to the cross. **Christ Jesus is the Saviour**;

When we repent of our sin, and trust in His forgiveness, will receive from Him His Spirit of reform.

Christian Life is war - but He has won the war - He is sufficient to overcome our self-centredness. He has destroyed sin to save the family! And just as the churches leaders need to be home leaders, the home's saviour needs to be the church's saviour!

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to cleanse us of all unrighteousness* - will you pray with me?