

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works”. (Titus 2:11-14)

Why are we here, and what are we hoping to accomplish?

In this study, we will be examining what the Bible teaches us about what it means to be a Christian woman, and we will encourage one another to live it out in practice. We will look at the areas laid out for us in Titus 2 where Paul talks about how the older women must teach the younger women what is “good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled” (Titus 2:3b-5). But before we touch on those areas, we must first realize that we have no hope of conforming to the biblical ideal without first understanding and embracing the Gospel.

The Gospel is both our means and our motivation for godly living (read Titus 2:11-14). The grace that saves us also instructs us to live in a new way. This change in lifestyle is rooted in the atoning work of Christ, and in the expectation of Christ’s return. A true understanding of how Christ became sin for us and bore the wrath of God (that we deserve) will humble us to glorify our Redeemer in all that we do and say. An eager expectation of Christ’s return will drive us to holiness. One purpose of Jesus’ death was to make his people holy, therefore to forsake godliness is to despise, or drastically undervalue, the sacrifice of Christ.¹

Why should we learn to live in the ways described in Titus?

2:5 _____

2:8 _____

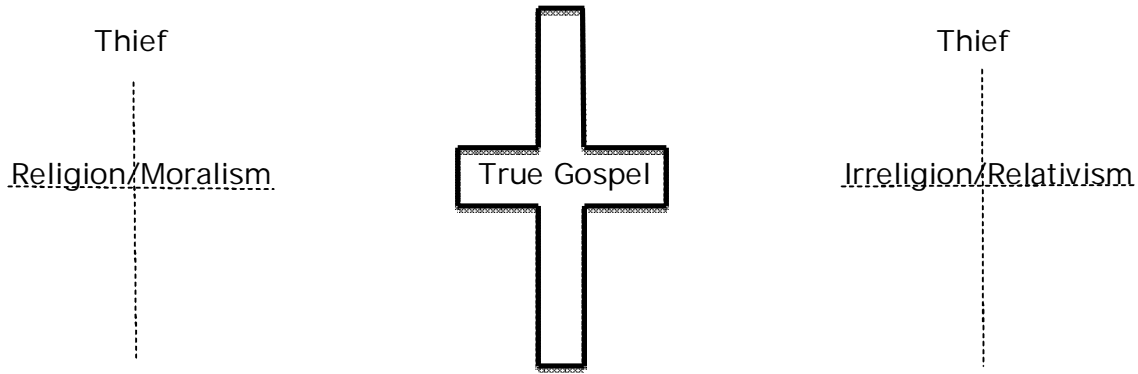
2:10 _____

3:3-8 _____

True Christian living commends the Gospel to others.

¹ With excerpts taken from the ESV Study Bible notes.

What is this Gospel, and what is it not?



- truth without grace
- (obey to be saved)

-Ephesians 2:1-10

- grace without truth
- we decide what is true for us

There are two basic false ways of thinking that rob you of the power of the gospel:

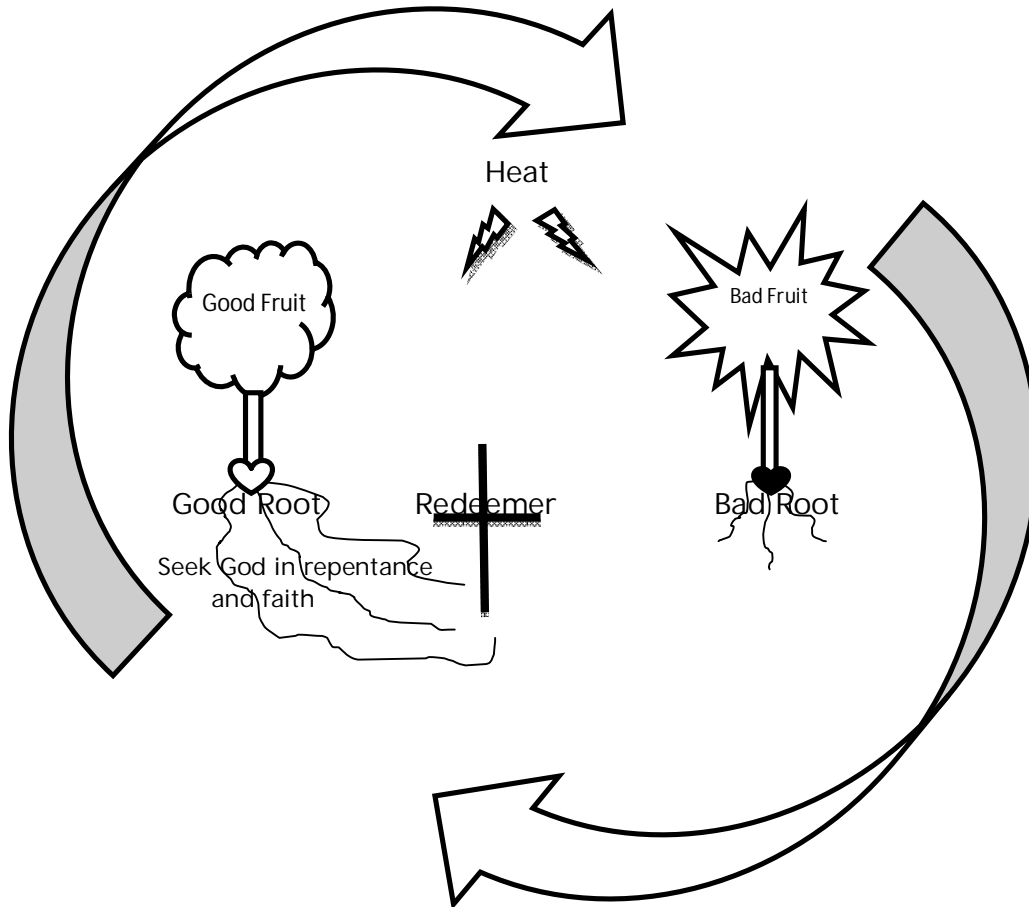
Moralism/Religion: You are acceptable through your performance/accomplishments. If you are religious, you are likely very conservative and have many rules to follow. Breaking the rules leads to self-hatred and guilt because you can't live up to the standards set before you. Keeping the rules leads to self-inflation (pride), or a sense of superiority, because you think you *have* lived up to the standards. Moralistic people can be deeply religious, but have no transforming joy or power.

Relativism/Irreligion: You might be religious but you prefer "liberal" religion. On the surface you seem happier and more tolerant than the moralist. You think that everyone must determine right and wrong for themselves. You might believe in God but you see him as loving or impersonal, rather than seeing him as a just God who must punish sinners. God accepts you because he is so welcoming, or because you're not that bad.²

What do these two views have in common?

² Tim Keller, *The Centrality of the Gospel*

What is the condition of your heart? Are you rooted in the Gospel?



THE BIG PICTURE (adapted from *How People Change* by Timothy Lane & Paul Tripp)

Heat= the person's situation in daily life, with difficulties, blessings and temptations

Thorny bush= the person's ungodly response to the situation. It includes behavior, the heart driving the behavior, and the consequences that result.

Cross = the presence of God and his redemptive glory and love. Through Christ, he brings comfort, cleansing, and the power to change.

Fruit= the person's new godly response to the situation resulting from God's power at work in their heart. It includes behavior, the heart renewed by grace, and the harvest of the consequences that follow.

Thus says the Lord:

"Cursed is the man who trusts in man
and makes flesh his strength,
whose heart turns away from the LORD.
He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.
He shall dwell in the parched places of
the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the
LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.
He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit."
(Jeremiah 17: 5-10)

For further reflection and study:

1. Is one of the thieves robbing you of the joy and power of the Gospel? Examine.
2. What are some other Scriptures that support the idea that we are only able to live godly lives by grace through faith and the work of the Holy Spirit (ie – not in our own strength)?
3. Think of a recent difficulty you have had. How did you react to that difficulty? What was at the heart of your reaction? Did you bear "good fruit" or "thorns"? If "thorns", what would the sanctified response have looked like? Consider these questions in all situations in which you have not produced "good fruit" so that you can identify root sins that cause you to stumble. Bring these to the Lord in prayer. Your heart can be changed by the power of the Gospel.
4. If you are having difficulty devoting time to the study of God's word, pray that He would give you the desire and the time to read more. We cannot live out the word of God if we do not know what it says.

Helpful Quotations

"In the midst of our various responsibilities and many possible areas of service in the kingdom of God, one overarching truth should motivate all our work and affect every part of who we are: *Christ died for our sins*. This...is the main thing. Nothing else—not even things that are biblical and honorable—are of equal or greater importance than this: God sent His Son to the cross to bear His wrath for sinners like you and me. If there's anything in life we should be passionate about, it's the gospel. And I don't mean passionate only about sharing it with others; I mean passionate in thinking about the gospel, reflecting upon it, rejoicing in it, allowing it to color the way we look at the world and all of life." (C.J. Mahaney *Living the Cross-Centered Life*).

"For a fallen sinner to become eager to do what is good is the radical work of the gospel." (Susan Hunt, from the 9Marks website: <http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/wanted-more-older-women-discipling-younger-women>)

"The earth does not produce rain, nor is it able to by its own power or work to get it. The earth simply receives the rain as a gift of God above from above. It is the same with Christian righteousness. It is given to us by God without our deserving it or working for it." (Tim Keller *The Message of Romans, Leader's Guide, pg 8*)

"Just as the earth does not bear fruit until it receives the rain from heaven as a gift, so when we receive the Christian righteousness, we consequently can live a good life, naturally, out of gratitude." (Tim Keller *The Message of Romans, Leader's Guide, pg 9*)

"The main difference between a real Christian and a religious person is not so much their attitudes toward their sins, but toward their "good" deeds. Both Christians and Pharisees repent of their sins, but only Christians also repent (admit the inadequacy) of their "righteousness!" (Tim Keller *The Message of Romans, Leader's Guide, pg 37*)

"When bitter, it is because we have forgotten that we are already totally saved by grace alone – so how can we withhold grace? When we are overworking out of fear of failure, or depressed because we have failed, it is because we have forgotten that we cannot earn our own righteousness, that in God's eyes we are righteous." (Tim Keller *The Message of Romans, Leader's Guide, pg 5*)

"Beware of moralism disguising itself as Christianity. There is wisdom in living according to biblical principles. But there is a difference between biblical principles and the gospel. And only Jesus can save you and transform your life. That's the good news." (Bob Lepine)

"All our problems come from a failure to apply the gospel". (Tim Keller, *The Centrality of the Gospel*)

"Only the gospel – that we are so sinful that we need to be saved utterly by grace – allows a person to see God as he really is. The gospel shows us a God far more holy than the legalist can bear (he *had* to die because we could not satisfy his holy demands) and yet far more merciful than a humanist can conceive (he had to *die* because he loved us)." (Tim Keller, *The Centrality of the Gospel*)

"To 'get the gospel' is to turn from self-justification and rely on Jesus' record for a relationship with God. The irreligious don't repent at all, and the religious only repent of sins. But Christians also repent of their righteousness." (Tim Keller, *The Centrality of the Gospel*)

"Any person who is trying to earn their salvation does 'the right thing' in order to get into heaven, or in order to better their self-esteem (etc.). In other words, the ultimate motive is self-interest. But persons who know they are totally accepted already do 'the right thing' out of sheer delight in righteousness for its own sake. Only in the gospel do you obey God for God's sake, and not for what God will give you. Only in the gospel do you love people for their sake (not yours), do good for its own sake (not yours), and obey God for his sake (not yours). Only the gospel makes 'doing the right thing' a joy and delight, not a burden or a means to an end." (Tim Keller, *The Centrality of the Gospel*)