



Q&A

Walking in Titus 2: The Obedience of a Titus 2 Woman

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Using quotes from resources from Elisabeth Elliot, Susan Hunt, & Carolyn Mahaney

Jodi:

Last year at our retreat days we explored the “What” of “what is good”: reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine..., 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.

This year we would like to focus on the “HOW” of teaching and training and the “HOW” of learning and growing. For the older woman, how could she “teach what is good and so train the young women”? We want to explore the HOW in this Q&A session. Of course it will not be exhaustive but we do hope to give some practical direction to our thoughts and actions. We are going to start with the Bible and also look at a number of faithful older women of the past 50 years who have done major teaching and training in this specific area of Titus 2:3-5. Those ladies include, Elisabeth Elliot, whose life we peeked into this morning, Carolyn Mahaney, author and blogger of *Feminine Appeal* and *Girltalkblog.com*, and Susan Hunt, author of *Spiritual Mothering*, published in 1992.

Kelly:

The first place we want to begin in our question and answer series is with the question: What does God’s Word say about this topic: older women teaching and training the younger women in the church body about what is good?

Jodi:

Titus 2:3-5 is our central command. But our Lord Jesus Christ gave each believer this same command: to teach and train others about what is good in the Great Commission in Matthew 28.

The Great Commission

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:16-20 ESV)

Didn’t Pastor, just teach on this last week?

Kelly:

Yes, isn't our Lord so good and gracious to provide timely teaching on this very passage just this past weekend on this section, which serves as the basis for HOW we teach and train others in what is good.

Matthew says this is how a Believer, a Christian woman teaches and trains: SHE "makes disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

So we teach and train: By making disciples and teaching them to observe all that the Lord Jesus has commanded US. Matthew 28's Great Commission is a similar command to Paul's instruction to Titus for the women: the older women were to teach and train the younger women all that Christ Jesus, their Lord had commanded them.

This is discipleship:

Growth in Christlikeness

Growth in Godliness

Spiritual maturity in the Faith

Living a life that observes all that the Lord Jesus has commanded us

Jodi:

So what is essential for women's discipleship in the local church, in our local church at Summit Woods?

Kelly:

Our first quote is from an article by Carolyn Mahaney. She indicates in her blog post: that two things are essential for women to grow in Christ:

1. a Titus like Pastor who is preaching sound doctrine all the time so women may grow in spiritual maturity as she learns healthy, sound truth
2. older women teaching younger women within the church so that the Word of God would not be reviled

Carolyn Mahaney writes and I quote:

Discipleship of Christian women includes more than the teaching of Titus 2, but never less. Here is an explicit agenda for a home-focused curriculum to be taught by older women to younger women that we dare not neglect if we are to remain faithful to Scripture. Paul's instructions do not limit or restrict Christian discipleship for women, but they should shape our priorities. ...As we shape ministry to women and define discipleship in our local churches, a healthy church, like the one Paul is describing for Titus, needs a pastor who preaches sound doctrine, and older women who teach younger women how to live according to that sound doctrine.

The pastor cannot do our part any more than we are called to do his part in leading the church. A pastor must teach sound doctrine, "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), but there are many lessons of godly womanhood that a woman needs to learn from the example and instruction of another woman. Therefore we must not marginalize or shrug off our assignment.

Jodi:

So we have the leaders, elders, and shepherds of our local church body who are striving to place sound doctrine before us as Paul tells Titus to do in Titus 2. How do we establish a culture in our body where older women in the faith are sought after, looked to for teaching and training in the ways of Christ and the faith?

Kelly:

We establish a culture in our church by individuals recognizing the need to guide as an older woman and to follow as a younger woman.

Carolyn Mahaney uses this story of the whooping crane to powerfully make this very point:

“Seven decades ago, the whooping crane population was nearly extinct: there were only sixteen birds left on the planet. Wildlife biologists got to work preserving the endangered bird and today there are almost six hundred whooping cranes and counting. ...

The scientists weren’t content with boosting numbers; they wanted to restore the whooping crane “culture”—to help ...cranes teach other ... cranes what it means to be a real ...crane. As it turns out, part of being a real whooping crane involves a yearly migration ... to sunny Florida.

So these wildlife biologists trained and then tracked the migrating birds.

But soon an anomaly appeared. While some groups of migrating whooping cranes glided straight to their destination, other groups drifted forty to fifty miles off course. There was only one difference between the birds that flew straight and “the crooked fliers:” *an older bird in the group.*

The birds that flew more accurately followed an older bird.*

...[This is a] parable for Christian women. As younger women trying to fly straight according to God’s Word, we need *older women* to help us stay on course.

Scripture is clear about this. Titus 2 most famously tells us: “*Older women are to teach what is good, and so train the young women...that the word of God may not be reviled*” (v. 3-5).

And peppered throughout the epistles are instructions for younger Christians to follow more mature Christians: “*Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith*” (Heb. 13:7). “*Join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us*” (Phil 3:17).

Three things (at least) stand out in these verses:

1. Some Christians are older and some are younger (and it is important to know which you are).
2. An older Christian is one who has an “outcome” (not merely an opinion) worth following.
3. Younger Christians are to “keep their eyes on” the older Christians (not follow the younger Christians or figure it out for themselves).

Jodi:

How does an older woman know she is ready to teach and train younger women? Isn’t this presumptuous of her to think she can teach and train others?

Kelly:

Susan Hunt writes and I quote, “To think of yourself as a woman of “sound doctrine” and “spiritual maturity” may seem presumptuous...Don’t sell yourself short, and don’t rob the kingdom of what you have to offer! If you are a Christian woman who is seeking to grow in the faith and to live obediently, then you are qualified for spiritual motherhood. If you are not seeking to grow in the faith and live obediently, then you have a problem that must be confronted! Sound doctrine does not mean that you are a theological expert. Spiritual maturity does not mean that you have reached super sainthood. It does mean that you are growing in your knowledge of the Word and in your desire to apply the Word to every area of your life.

Jodi:

In the Scriptures, Paul wrote Titus 2:3-5 to Titus addressing women in the local churches on the Island of Crete. What does that practically look like in our day?

Kelly:

Elisabeth Elliot says, “It is doubtful that the Apostle Paul had in mind Bible classes or seminars or books when he spoke of teaching younger women. He meant the simple things, the everyday example, the willingness to take time from one’s own concerns to pray with the anxious mother, to walk with her the way of the cross—with its tremendous demands of patience, selflessness, lovingkindness—and to show her, in the ordinariness of Monday through Saturday, how to keep a quiet heart...Through such an example, one young woman—single, or married, Christian or not—may glimpse the mystery of charity and the glory of womanhood.”

She had one such example from her own life from that she retells in her article “A Call to Older Women”:

In 1948 when I had been at Prairie Bible Institute ...only a few weeks, I was feeling a bit displaced and lonesome one afternoon when there came a knock on my door. I opened it to find a beautiful rosy-cheeked face framed by white hair. She spoke with a charming Scottish burr: “You don’t know me, but I know you. I’ve been praying for you, Betty Dearr. I’m Mrs. Cunningham. If ever you’d like a cup of tea and a Scottish scone, just pop down to my little apartment.” She told me where she lived and went on to say that my name had been mentioned in a staff meeting...and the Lord had given her a burden for me.

Many were the wintry afternoons when I availed myself of her gracious offer and we sat together in her tiny but very cozy basement apartment while she poured tea for me and I poured my soul out to her. Her radiant face was full of sympathy, love and understanding as she listened. She would be quiet for a little, then she would pray and looking up, cheer and strengthen me with words from God. During and after my missionary years she wrote to me until she died....

The apostle Paul tells Titus that older women ought to school the younger women to be loving wives and mothers, temperate, chaste and kind, busy at home, respecting the authority of their own husbands. That’s from Titus 2.

My dear Mom Cunningham schooled me not in a class, or seminar, or even primarily by her words. It was what she **was** that taught me.

It was her availability to God when He sent her to my door.

It was the surrender of her time and offering to Him, for my sake.

It was her readiness to get involved, to lay down her life for one anxious Bible School girl. Above all, she herself, a simple Scottish woman, *was the message*.

“She herself, a simple Scottish woman, was the message”

Where are the women, single or married, willing to hear God’s call to spiritual motherhood, taking spiritual daughters under their wings to school them, as Mom Cunningham did me? She had no training the world would recognize. She had no thought of such. She simply loved God and was willing to be broken bread and poured out wine for His sake. Retirement never crossed her mind.

Jodi:

Elisabeth loves to pass on poems to illustrate her points. Here’s one to remind us of the gifts God has given each of us to use for the good of others. This is from Canon George Body from 1840:

“Say not you cannot gladden, elevate and set free,
that you have nothing of the grace of influence,
that all you have to give is at the most only common bread and water.
Give yourself to your Lord for the service of men with what you have.
Cannot He change water into wine?
Cannot He make stammering words to be imbued, filled or charged with saving power? Cannot He change
trembling efforts to help into deeds of strength?
Cannot He still as of old enable you in all your personal poverty to make many rich?
God has need of thee for the service of thy fellow men.
He has a work for thee to do.
To find out what it is and then to do it is at once,
thy supremest duty and thy highest wisdom.
Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.”

Jodi:

What does it look like when a woman of faith and spiritual maturity enters into a nurturing relationship with a younger woman?

Kelly:

Susan Hunt in her book *Spiritual Mothering* writes, “[This is] spiritual mothering: When a woman of faith and spiritual maturity enters in to a *nurturing relationship* with a younger woman in order to encourage and equip her to live for God’s glory.

...A nurturing relationship may be structured and ongoing or informal and infrequent. It may be up close or at a distance. It may involve formal instruction, or it may simply mean a weekly telephone call to a new mother who needs support as she adjusts to motherhood. It may mean one-to-one Bible study, or it may mean meeting for lunch once a week to give practical guidance to a colleague about living out her faith in the marketplace. Whatever form it takes, the similarity is that the faith of the younger woman is nourished and enhanced by the relationship.

Let me say that again: Whatever form it takes, the similarity *is that the faith* of the younger woman is nourished and enhanced by the relationship.

Jodi:

What are things that an older woman should emphasize as she disciples or teaches and trains a younger woman? In other words, what should her curriculum be?

In a general sense, Susan Hunt states, “Women need to learn the theological basis for our creation design, our roles in the home and church, and our calling to be life givers in every role and stage of life. Women need women who will share their lives to train them how to apply the Word in all of life – how to love others, care to their families, cultivate community, work productively, and extend compassion according to God’s Word. They need godly women who prayerfully and continually point them to the sufficiency of Scripture...”

Then, Susan Hunt gets specific when she writes, “The topics to be covered in the older-woman/younger woman “curriculum” are not simply behavioral. They are expressions of the dominant theme of Paul’s letter to Titus: godliness...Godliness produced by grace gives authenticity to our faith. Godly living presents a spiritual reality to the world that will penetrate the darkness of our present age. This reality is to be evidenced in a life of love that governs women’s relationships and conduct. Thus we might categorize the elements of the curriculum [in three ways]:

LOVE,
RELATIONSHIPS, and
CONDUCT.

Jodi:

Ok, so tell us about love?

Kelly:

Paul gives the classic description of Biblical love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (ESV)

Susan Hunt says, ...To “do love” we must take off those things that will prevent us from being a servant. This demands dealing with selfishness, pride, laziness, insensitivity, and anything else that hinders our ability to execute love...We must teach love by demonstrating love. No spoken words will ever teach young women how to love as powerfully as love-filled lives of older women. As young women watch love, day in and day out, they will learn how to do it. And remember, our goal is that younger women be encouraged and equipped to live for God’s glory so that His Word will not be maligned.

Jodi:

So that was love, what should we be teaching about relationships?

Kelly:

Again Susan Hunt helpfully writes, “The fact that God has entered into a relationship with us should radically change the way we relate to others.

[A wise woman] will help a young woman recognize selfish attitudes in herself that are barriers to right relationships in her home.

A Wise woman will help a young woman to see the good qualities in her husband and to appreciate him. She will help the young woman to understand the differences between men and women and not to expect her husband to meet all of her needs

...She will help a young woman know how to train her children for righteousness. She will be available to share insights on discipline, standards and traditions.

Life experiences and life observations about family living are rich reservoirs of insights for older women to share with younger women. It is not necessary for all of the older woman's experiences to have been positive. Failures, coupled with the realization of what could have been done differently, are valuable lessons.

Just because a woman's teenage or adult children are not walking with the Lord or her marriage has failed does not mean that she is disqualified from encouraging a younger woman in this area. ...Widows can be potent encouragers...[and] just because a woman is unmarried does not mean she has nothing to offer younger woman regarding the family relationships. (pg. 60)

We must instill in women a vision of enduring relationships and a passion for reflecting Christ in our relationships. ...Submission is simply being empty of self, and this is the key to enduring relationships.

Let me repeat that: We must instill in women a vision of enduring relationships and a passion for reflecting Christ in our relationships. ...Submission is simply being empty of self, and this is the key to enduring relationships.

Jodi:

We're still looking at those three areas to teach and train others in. Tell us also about CONDUCT?

Kelly:

For Conduct, Susan Hunt says:

A disciplined life of purity is essential to serving our Father in holiness. (pg. 63)

The reasonable response for Christian women is to courageously bring their lives under the authority of God's Word and to live according to His standards of purity. But we must not stop there. We must also lovingly influence other women to this same quality of life—so that God's word will be venerated. (pg.64)

Jodi:

So the three areas Susan Hunt pointed out of LOVE, RELATIONSHIPS, and CONDUCT should serve as the curriculum of what we are teaching and we use words and the example of our lives.

How do we then teach this curriculum to other younger women the Lord places in our lives, in families, in our local church body at Summit Woods, and any place we find ourselves?

Kelly:

Susan Hunt again writes, "According to Scripture, the "curriculum" that parents are to teach their children is not found on the pages of a text book and is not to be taught at 7:00 a.m. The curriculum is a way of life based on Biblical truth. You are to impress them on your children. Talk about them when you

sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” ...In a similar fashion, the spiritual mothering curriculum is to be *impressed* on younger women....(pg. 66-67)

Jodi:

So she is saying, spiritual mothering is to be impressed on younger women as we go about our daily lives. It's the day in day out of living for Christ, living according to His word, living godly, in front of other women in such a way that they can see your life and imitate it. And encouraging them to imitate you as you follow and obey CHRIST!

Is that not how the Apostle Paul lived his life when he told the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 11:1: Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ? Yes!

Kelly:

Elisabeth Elliott has a beautiful story to prove this point in her own life. She describes her first spiritual mother in the following quote from Susan Hunt's book: "Elisabeth Elliot was only fourteen when she was "introduced" to Amy Carmichael. The headmistress of the school she attended often quoted from Carmichael books. "I was captivated, and told her so. She lent me the books," writes Elisabeth Elliot. "Amy Carmichael became for me what now some call a role model. She was far more than that. She was my first spiritual mother. She showed me the shape of godliness."

Spiritual mothering has more to do with demonstrating "the shape of godliness" than with teaching lessons plans. (pg. 67)

Jodi:

The shape of godliness—this is what older women are to show to younger women. This is very practical: you show by your life, whatever life you are living out the "shape of godliness" to others.

So women in our church are hearing sound teaching.

They are seeking to obey the Lord and His word by His grace day by day.

They know the curriculum of LOVE, RELATIONSHIPS, and CONDUCT to address biblically in their own lives and how to point other women to those truths, all again by God's grace.

What are some ways we could heed this call to what Susan Hunt calls "spiritual mothering"?

Kelly:

Elisabeth Elliot answers this question practically:

If some of my listeners are willing to hear this call but hardly know how to begin, here are some suggestions.

First of all, pray about it. Ask God to show you whom, what, how.

Second, consider writing notes to or telephoning some younger woman who needs encouragement in the areas Paul mentioned.

Three, ask a young mother if you may do her ironing, take the children out, baby-sit so she can go out, or make a cake or casserole for her.

Number four, do what Mom Cunningham did for me. Invite somebody to tea. Find out what she'd like you to pray for. I asked Mom Cunningham to pray that God would bring Jim Elliot and me together. Pray with

that lady.

Number five, start a little prayer group of two or three whom you can cheer and help. You'll be cheered and helped, too.

Six, organize a volunteer house-cleaning pool to go out every other week or once a month to somebody who needs you.

Seven, have a lending library of books of real spiritual food.

Eight, be the first of a group in your church to be known as the WOTTs: Women of Titus Two. See what happens. Something will.

Jodi:

Those are practical ideas. And simple ideas for us to each think about. Maybe pick one and do it this week!

As we wrap up our time together, I would like to share a couple of examples of the effects of a Titus 2 older woman in the life of a younger woman from that we've found to encourage you:

Susan Hunt shares about the impact of one dear saint in her church, Miss Elizabeth: "I simply could not believe the [number of] women who talked about their families being invited to a meal in her home, or those who told how she had invited them to church, or how she had been the first person to greet them when they visited the church, or the women who talked about receiving cards and telephone calls from her. As I have contemplated the power of her life, I have also been struck by what she did not do. Gossip, complaint, and criticism had no part in her life. ... She simply loved Jesus and lived each day for His glory. She imitated Him by serving those around her."

Here's another story from Susan Hunt [quoting Barbara Beach on her Titus 2 friend Jane]: "Jane stressed the importance of the discipline of reading God's Word and praying. ... As my problems grew worse, she did not waver from her stand on Biblical truth. She held fast to God's Word and encouraged me to do the same. ... She went through [her own difficulties] with such grace and trust in God."

And finally from Megan Hill on cbmw.org blog: Until I moved to another state this past summer, I prayed once a week for ten years with Carol, an older woman in my church. From the outside, it wouldn't have looked like much of a mentoring program. We didn't have coffee, we didn't study a book together, we didn't even spend much time in conversation. Tuesday after Tuesday, we'd sit in Carol's living room, and we would just pray. We prayed for ourselves and our families. We prayed for our church and its ministry. We prayed for our sisters next door and our sisters in chains on the other side of the world. We prayed for Christ's glory and his kingdom's advancement and his church's peace and purity. We prayed for his return. Never once did Carol directly instruct me: Confess this. Pray this. Lament that. Instead, she prayed extended, Scripture-rich prayers expressing her confident faith in the God who hears. She praised God, confessed sin, and boldly asked for the fulfillment of his promises. And as I joined her at the Throne, she disciplined me in the whole Christian life.

Kelly:

There are three phrases that are helpful to say again in summing up our time:

to walk with her the way of the cross...and to show her, in the ordinariness of Monday through Saturday, how to keep a quiet heart

demonstrate the shape of godliness

disciplined in the whole Christian life

This is how we obey Titus 2:3-4 training and teaching what is good.

This is how we obey the Great Commission to make disciples and teach them to observe all that the Lord has commanded us.

May our Resurrected Christ who promised that He would be with us until the end of the age grant us grace to obey Him in all that He's commanded us to do.

Resources Used:

Elisabeth Elliot, EE Newsletters, article "A Call to Older Women"

Susan Hunt, *Spiritual Motherhood*

Carolyn MaHaney, Girltalkblog.org "What is Essential for Women's Discipleship"

Megan Hill from an article on cbmw.org blog