



Father's Day message:

Men On Mission

Titus 2:1-2

Pastor Daniel Barrett

June 14-15, 2025

The passage of God's Word we will be focusing on today, about 15 minutes from now, is Titus 2:1-2. I invite you to open your Bible or utilize your cell phone or handheld device, as we study Titus 2:1-2 together. God's Word will also be displayed on the screen. If you do not have a Bible of your own, I invite you to take home one of the Bibles here in the Worship Center. It is God's gift to you.

As this is Father's Day weekend, we want to acknowledge and thank all the dads for the important role they play in the lives of their children. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church in Thessalonica, wrote this, "For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:11-12). As we consider this passage of Scripture, it reveals three practical functions of a godly dad. The first is that he **ENCOURAGES** his children.

When you go to a football game, it's not uncommon to see cheerleaders rooting on the sidelines. When their team is doing well, you can't miss them - they can often be seen enthusiastically jumping up and down, cheering the team's accomplishments.

But it's not just when the team is doing well that the cheerleaders are active; they're also involved when the team is struggling and behind on the scoreboard. Regardless of how bad it gets, they are a consistent presence, encouraging the team to press on, not give up, and keep playing. Additionally, to encourage the team even more, the cheerleaders work to rally everyone in the stands to cheer the team on as well.

Dads, may you be the loudest, most excited, and consistently supportive cheerleader for your children. In the stadium of life, may you be the one running up and down the sidelines cheering your son or daughter when they score ... and whenever things get tough, when your child starts to feel overcome by the different opponents he or she faces in life, whenever your child throws an interception, fumbles, or makes a bad play, may you be the one to encourage your son or daughter to press on, not give up, and keep playing.

This leads us to another function of a godly dad: He **COMFORTS** his children. Dads, whenever your child messes up, it's often best to comfort first and lecture later. If your child throws an interception, fumbles, or makes a bad play in life, they likely already realize what they did, understand how they let other people down, and feel terrible about what they did. Rather than compounding the matter and making it even worse, may you come down to where the child is - whether your son or daughter is 5 years old, 15 years old, 25 years old, or whatever years old - and comfort them as their dad, reassuring them that you still love them and that they are not alone; you are right there with them.

As dads, may we not underestimate the power of presence. Whenever a person is struggling and feeling discouraged, it's important for a dad to be present and demonstrate earnest humility, letting our children know that we, too, have made lots of interceptions, fumbles, and bad plays in our own lives. But praise be to God ... He doesn't stop loving us and He doesn't give up on us, for His grace is greater than our sins and His purposes will still prevail, despite our missteps. How good it is to know that whenever we fall, Jesus, the Savior King, is extending his hand to pick us up.

So we take Jesus' hand and get up.

We own what we did.

Instead of blaming others, we take responsibility for our actions, confess what we did, ask for forgiveness, and move forward in God's grace.

This leads us to the third function of a godly dad: He **URGES** his children to live a life worthy of God, who calls us into His kingdom and glory. Note this one word: Urge. The role of a dad is not to *make* his children live a life worthy of God; it's to *urge* them to live a life worthy of God.

May we not make the mistake of reducing Christianity to a set of rules to follow and standards to live by, for at the very core of Christianity, we find this: It's about being in relationship with the God who made us. The living God of all creation cares about us greatly. The God who made us wants us to know Him, enjoy Him, and share life with him; now and forevermore. The God who made us wants to know us, enjoy us, and share life with us; now and forevermore. Although our sins separate us from a holy, righteous, and just God, the God of the universe is also full of mercy and grace, and would rather forgive us of our sins so we can be with Him than hold our sins against us and be apart from Him. This is why Jesus came, sent by God, the Father, to share in our humanity, take our sins upon Himself, and accept the punishment of our sins by His death on a cross and resurrection from the dead. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

God loves us so much and has made a way for us to receive His love and love Him back. Given this, dads, you cannot *make* your children love God; otherwise, it's not really love. Your role is to encourage them, comfort them, and urge them to live a life worthy of God, but how they respond is up to them.

To accentuate this, may we consider something Jesus said.

As recorded in Matthew 11:11, Jesus said this: "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist." Let this really sink in.

Historians, when surveying the lives of men leading up to the first century, have classified certain men as being great. Men like Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates. Men like Julius Caesar, Cicero, and Alexander the Great. During the Old Testament era, men like Abraham, Moses, and King David. Of all the people over the years, decades, and centuries leading up to the time when Jesus, the Son of God, came, Jesus said that there was no one greater than John the Baptist.

What was John's role? To prepare the way for the Lord. While John urged people to repent and turn to God, there was only so much he could do. John gave his life ministering to people, helping them to have hearts ready for the coming of Jesus, but when Jesus finally came, it was up to them what they did at that point.

Dads, do you want to be a great dad? If you do, live your life in such a way that you are instrumental in the lives of your children, preparing them for the Lord. Encourage them, comfort them, and urge them to live a life worthy of God, who calls us into His kingdom and glory, and when it comes to that time in your child's life when Jesus is near and they come to understand how much God loves them, it's up to them whether or not they receive God's love and love God in return.

I invite you to turn your attention to the screen and hear from three men right here at Edgewood and how they have lived this out in their own lives.

VIDEO

I love how the last person who spoke, who is 90 years young, is still focused on being the best dad he can be. What an example for us all!

As we now turn to Titus 2:1-2, the focus of the text is not just on dads, but rather on all older men. Dads are not the only ones who make an impact in the lives of children; it's also other men, those father-like figures, who can play a key role in the life of a child. If you are a person who grew up without a dad, may we take this weekend to thank and praise God for the father-like figures He has placed in your life. And of course, above all, may we thank and praise God for being the Heavenly Father we need most.

To the older men who do not have any children of their own, may you be encouraged knowing the difference you, too, can make as a father-like figure in the life of someone else. It's a great need, and when such needs are met, it ends up being a mutual blessing. A blessing to the one who needs a father-like figure in their life, and a blessing to the person who meets that need in another.

If you are able, I invite you to stand for the reading of God's Word. Titus 2:1-2 says this: "But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness."

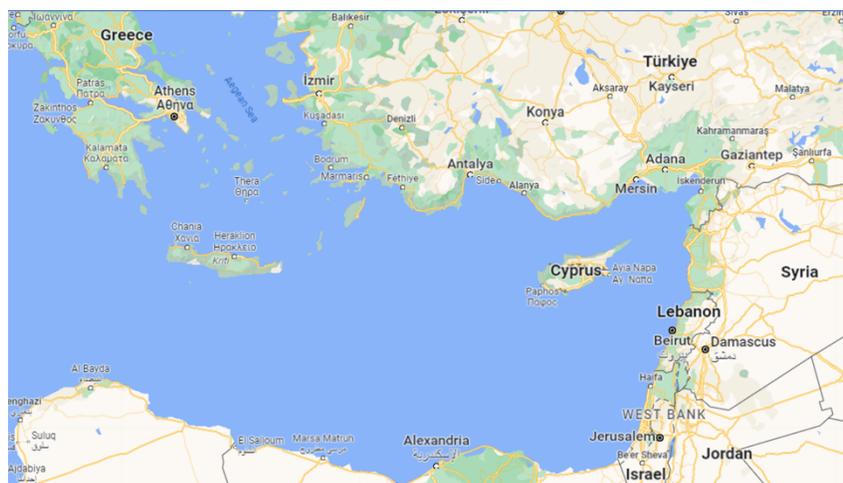
Today's text starts with these four words: "But as for you ..."

The "you" in this passage of Scripture refers to a man named Titus. Titus was a Gentile, a non-Jewish man of Greek heritage who was led to faith in Christ by the Apostle Paul. Titus was an early church leader, a trusted companion of Paul in his ministry travels, and a faithful servant of the Lord. Titus was dependable, trustworthy, and a person Paul left on the island of Crete to complete certain ministry work.

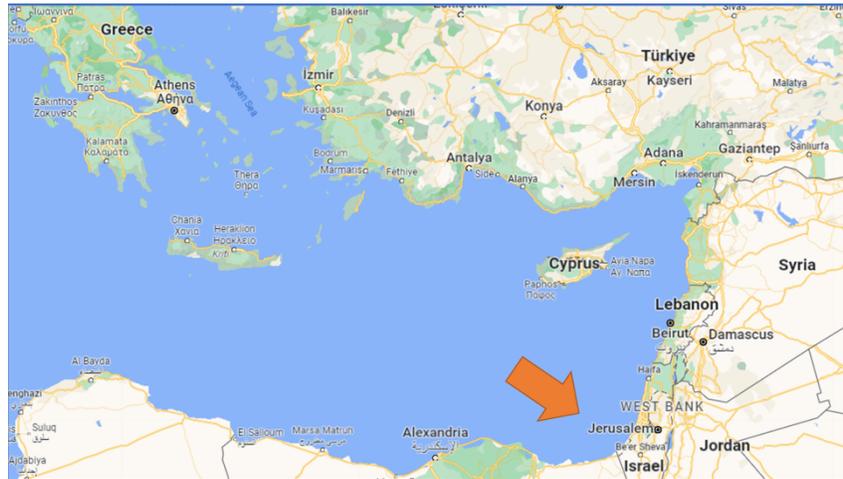
Today's text reveals one of the elements of Titus' mission: To teach what accords with sound doctrine. To better understand the need for this, let's take a closer look at where Titus did his ministry.

The island of Crete is still populated today, with people living there as they did 2,000 years ago. In fact, a plane is scheduled to go there from the Quad Cities International Airport this Father's Day. After departing at 3:47 p.m. and going to Chicago and Munich, the plane will arrive on the island of Crete in about 18 hours.

The island is located in the Mediterranean Sea, and it is now called Heraklion (pronounced hair-a-kly-un).

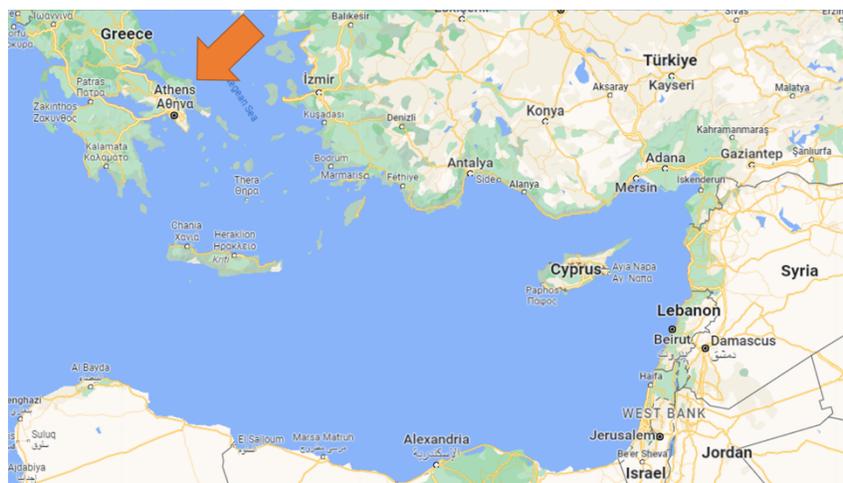


If you look at the next slide, an arrow pointing toward Israel will appear, with the city of Jerusalem prominently displayed on the map.

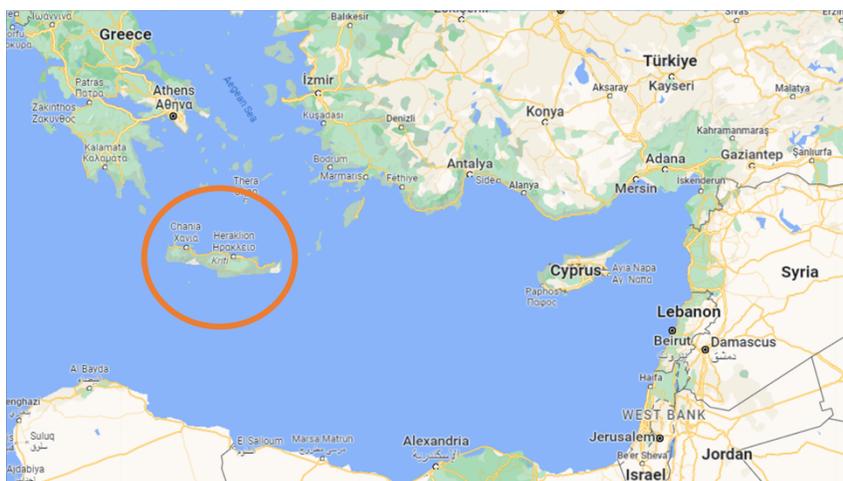


On the other side of the map, you will see another familiar country: Greece.

As the next slide appears, you will see an arrow pointing to the historic city of Athens.



Two hundred fifty miles from Athens, Greece, is the island of Crete. To take a closer look at the island, let's look at the next slide.



Modern Crete, the largest of Greece's nearly 2,000 islands, has a total area of roughly 3,200 square miles.



To give us a better idea of its size, consider this: Here in America, there are two states smaller than the island of Crete: Rhode Island and Delaware. If you combine these two states together, they would still be a tad bit smaller than the island of Crete.

Here are some pictures of the island of Crete today.



Isn't it beautiful? Look at that water! Let's now see it from another view:



How great it would be to ride a bike along the road ... or walk along the seashore.

Check out this cool-looking boat:



How fun it would be to go for a ride on this boat and do some sightseeing.

Here are some storefronts to visit and restaurants to eat at:



Check out modern Crete at night:



It's just beautiful.

But remember ... Crete is also an island with a rich history.



In the first century, the people living in Crete were not only influenced by Greek culture; they grew up with Greek religious beliefs.



For us living in the 21st century, we have become familiar with Greek religious beliefs through an assortment of books and movies. And while we refer to it as Greek mythology, for the people living centuries ago, it was a central way of understanding how life came into being and how it is to be lived.



This next slide shows the place known as the cave of Zeus:



This is actually one of many caves attributed to Zeus. When arriving at this cave, it is not only a place to look at; it is a place one can go inside and explore.



In the Greek religious system, it was believed that Zeus was born and raised on the island of Crete.

When we think about Zeus, perhaps what comes to mind is the wisdom he exercised as ruler of the gods, or perhaps it is his power, wielding thunderbolts and leading a successful revolt against the Titans.



While Zeus is often heralded for his wisdom and might, we also need to take into account his character and personal conduct. Zeus was very impulsive. Although married, Zeus had many affairs, abusing his power to seduce both gods and humans.

Zeus was also spiteful and cruel. He not only delivered torturous punishments onto his enemies, Zeus manipulated others and was vengeful toward his own subjects.

Zeus was also deceitful. This is especially noteworthy. As a lying, cruel, and corrupt God, Zeus was lifted up and admired by the people of Crete. Over time, they ended up being just like him, reflecting his character and conduct. Note what one of the Cretans said about his own people in the first century: “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.” This serves as a good reminder that what we believe to be true, and who or what we look up to, will eventually not only influence us, but shape us in how we live our lives.

This was the context Titus found himself in. To make matters even worse, throughout the island of Crete, false teachers rose up and caused severe problems for Christians among the churches. The Apostle Paul said that there were many of them! Although these false teachers professed to know God, they denied God by their works. As individuals who distorted God’s Word, they ended up turning entire families away from the truth. Sadly, these false teachers on the island of Crete didn’t care about the people in the churches, for Scripture says this about them: They only cared about their money.

This is why Paul writes to Titus: “But as for you ... teach what accords with sound doctrine.”

The word doctrine simply means teaching, instruction. Within the Christian context, it is teaching and instruction about God, who God is, what God is like, why God created everything, and what life is all about. But note what Titus was to do: He was to teach what accords with *sound* doctrine.

Why did the Apostle Paul use this particular word?

Imagine a person going to a doctor for a physical. After examining the person and running all kinds of tests, the doctor shows the person the results and says, “I have good news: You are as healthy as you can be. There is no sign of any sickness or disease, and every part of your body is functioning well. To put it concisely, you are in sound health.”

Doctrine that is *sound* is teaching and instruction about God and the things of God without error. It has not been corrupted in any way. It is teaching and instruction that is true and right, for it is not based on our speculation about God and who we think God is and what life is all about, but rather it is rooted in who God has revealed Himself to be through His creation, in history, by His Word, and most intimately, in Jesus.

This is so important. So much so that when the Apostle Paul left Titus on the island of Crete, he told him to appoint elders in all the churches. And what was each of these elders to do? Titus 1:9-11 provides the answer: “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.”

Note the very first thing Titus was to emphasize to the older men: They were to be sober-minded. They were not to be influenced or swayed in any way by things that were not true about God and how God designed life to be lived.

Men, are you living your life today based on sound doctrine? Just like alcohol can influence us and sway us in how we think and behave, we need to be careful about the things we let into our minds that can influence us and sway us away from the truth about God, how God designed life to be lived, and what happens after this life. Men, God calls us to be sober-minded. In light of this, may we make it a priority to be in God's Word ... so God's Word gets into us ... and we put into practice what God's Word says. May we do this personally, and may we do this with other men.

All the men who came today should have received a bookmark when they entered the Worship Center. If you did not, I encourage you to go by the Welcome Desk on your way out and pick one up. The bookmark has today's passage, along with the days and times our Men's Ministry meets throughout the week. I encourage you to get involved and grow with other men, for as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Note what Titus was also to emphasize to the men: They are to be dignified. It's valuable to consider how another translation puts it: worthy of respect. Respect is a big deal to men. In this passage of Scripture, what Titus is to convey to the men is this: Live your life in such a way that it warrants being respected.

On June 6, Edgewood created a Legacy Wall on Facebook and wrote this: "To celebrate Father's Day this year, we're asking everyone to post a picture of their dad in the comments, along with a few words that best describe him. Go ahead, brag about your dad!"



Below are some of the ways dads were described:

- A man of integrity
- Dependable
- Consistent
- Trustworthy
- Faithful
- Devoted
- Hard-working

- Wise
- Patient
- Loving
- Caring
- Kind
- Protector
- Supportive
- Steady
- Encouraging
- Selfless
- A great example of Christian living

When summarizing the responses provided about dads and the respect people have for them, the focus is not on job titles and accomplishments (what they have done), but rather the focus is on their character (who they are).

Men, we tend to focus on tasks, work, and what we can accomplish, but what matters most is who we are from the inside out, how we treat others, and how we reflect Christ. 2 Peter 1:5-7 says, “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.”

Titus was to next emphasize to the older men to be self-controlled. When we read Titus 2:1-6, we discover that Titus was to address four different groups of people: Older men, older women, younger women, and younger men. For the younger men, there was just one thing they were to focus on: Being self-controlled. That’s it. Nothing else. It’s like the Apostle Paul saying, “If the younger men can just get a handle on this, they are doing well!” For the older men, note that it is still on the list. When someone goes from being a younger man to an older man, he is still to exercise self-control; there are just a few more things to focus on as well.

On the island of Crete, to live a self-controlled life was not the norm. Remember how one of the Cretans described his own people: “Always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.” A person who lives like an evil beast is one who is animal-like in their behavior, exhibited by unrestrained indulgence. Simply put, it’s an individual who continually, as a way of life, gratifies the cravings of their sinful desires without reverence for God or regard for others.

The matter of living a self-controlled life can be found throughout God’s Word, but it’s noteworthy that in the entire Bible, it is repeated the most ... here in the book of Titus.

Living a self-controlled life can take many forms, such as watching what we eat and being disciplined about how we spend our money. Are we living within our means? Have we developed a budget, and are we sticking to it? When we are at the grocery store, and we see some extra items for sale by the register ...



... if we want to stick to our budget and secure our waistline, it's important to exercise self-control and resist buying a bunch of candy bars at the checkout line.

How about going to bed at a reasonable time?



Once you get on your phone, sometimes it can be hard to get off.

If you have to work the next day, it's probably not a good idea to stay on your phone until 1:00 in the morning. What a great opportunity to exercise self-control and put the phone down and go to bed.

How about this one – you can't say yes to everything.



All of us only have 24 hours in a day, and there is only so much each of us can do. Even Jesus Himself did not say yes to everyone. An example of this can be found in Matthew 4:42-43, which says, "At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.'"

Sometimes, in order for Jesus to say yes to the Father, He had to say no to certain people. The same is true in our lives. What is it that God is calling us to do? When we become clear about this, there will be times when we need to exercise self-control and say no to certain things ... and certain people.

What about the things we do for fun? While working is good, we don't want to overwork – it's good to take a break, relax, and enjoy various activities. Perhaps you like to read, watch sports, build things in the garage, or play video games.



The key is to allocate a certain amount of time to it, balanced with everything else in your life. If playing video games dominates your life, and you are spending numerous hours gaming to the neglect of important priorities, then it's time to exercise better self-control.

Another area in life to monitor when it comes to self-control is purity.

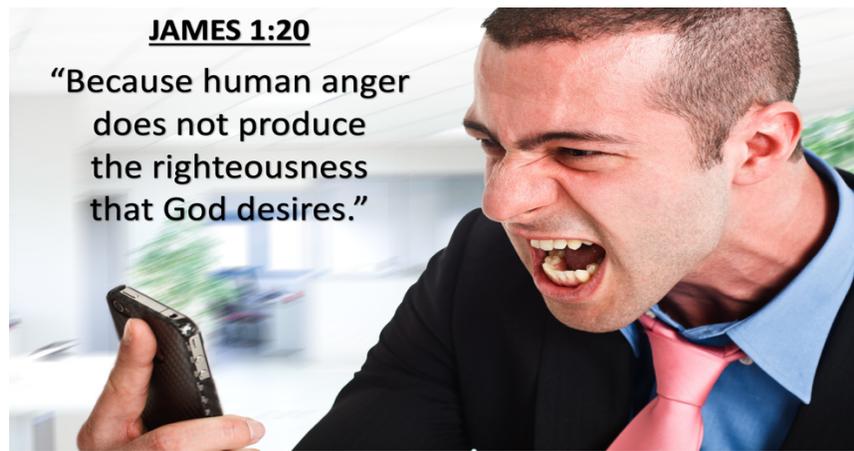


“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.”

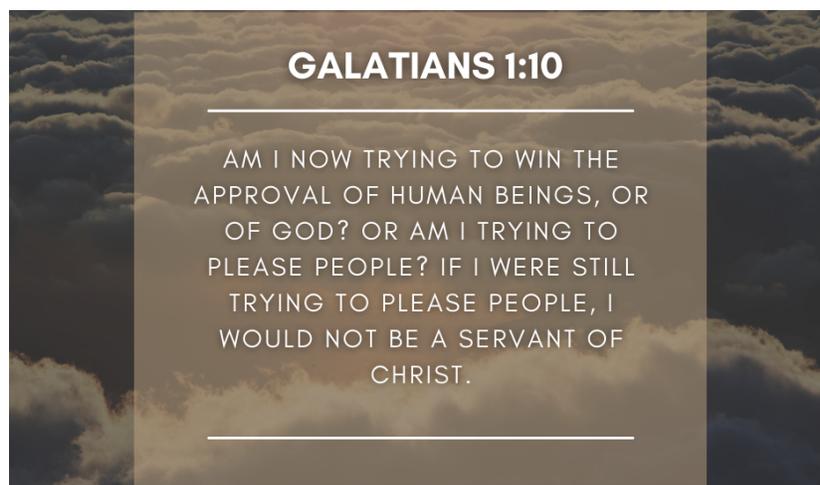


Another area is outbursts of anger.





Another area to exercise self-control is our inclination to be a people pleaser. In light of this, we need to consider our motives before doing things.



While our natural impulse may be to please others, we need to exercise self-control and be obedient to God's will over the will of others.

Lastly, perhaps one of the most significant areas in our lives to be mindful of regarding exercising good self-control is our propensity to take matters into our own hands. The Author, Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of all life is the only One who is truly in control. During those times when we struggle to understand what is going on and why things are taking so long, rather than waiting on God and allowing God to work out His good, pleasing, and perfect will in His time and in His way, something very compelling tends to stir within us to take matters into our own hands and address it ourselves. It's one of the most dangerous desires that can lead to a lifetime of problems, so we need to be alert to it and ask God in prayer to empower us by His Holy Spirit, that by His mighty grace, we might exercise self-control.

The last areas for older men to focus on are these: To be sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Here is that word *sound* again. This time, let's frame it a bit differently.

Imagine going to buy a new truck this weekend. At this point, you may be thinking Happy Father's Day to me! Knowing this, you undertake a lot of research. You search the internet, you read truck magazines, and you talk with other guys to hear what they think. Before buying a new truck, you put hours upon hours in researching different trucks to compare engine size and towing capacity, fuel economy, the long-term reliability of the truck, customer satisfaction, and resale value. Even if it means putting in a lot of

time, exerting a lot of effort, and sacrificing doing other things in order to determine the best truck to buy, you do whatever it takes, because you want to make a *sound* decision.

Men, God is calling us to be sound in faith, sound in love, and sound in steadfastness, for these areas of our life are of paramount significance. So may we take the time, put in the effort, and be willing to sacrifice to prioritize living by faith, loving God and others, and persevering whenever things get tough, enduring when circumstances become hard, pressing on when we want to quit, and being steadfast because perseverance leads to character, and character leads to hope.

As we close our time together, let's watch and listen again to the three guys from here at Edgewood and how they are putting this passage of Scripture, Titus 2:1-2, into practice in their own lives.

VIDEO