

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES
"Rising Out Of Dysfunctional Family Backgrounds Into Godly Living"
(Titus 1:12-13a; 2:1-3:15)

Introduction (To show the need for the message...)

The dysfunctional family is fast becoming the norm in America...:

(1) Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, shared this week that "we have a major black child crisis, the worst since slavery." Half of black adults say that these are "really bad times" for black kids; a third thought these are "tough times", and only 14% said these were "good times" or "very good times" for children. (2) The "Day One" news program this week presented children in ghettos with the challenges they meet. One child reported that his father built him a brick-lined play fort in his basement that would be bullet proof. As long as this 7 year old played in the fort, he knew that a stray bullet would not get him!

(3) L. Brent Bozell III reported in the Republican-American on October 25, 1993 that before condoms were introduced in Arkansas school districts, the teen pregnancy rate there was 6.8%. Six years later after the condoms had been distributed, it had risen to 15% in those same schools!

(4) In the 1970s, pro-abortionists argued that legalizing abortion-on-demand in America would virtually stop child abuse. Well, it hasn't. Frances Clem of Bantam, in a letter to the editor of the Waterbury paper stated that according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, from the Roe vs. Wade legalization of abortion in 1973 to 1987, child abuse in America **rose** over **1,000%**!

(4) We can add some statistics on alcoholism in America: every year, 450,000 **additional** people **become** alcoholics. 80% of them are employed or are employable, living in **family** units and **not** on skid row! (Hendricks, Chr. Couns. for Cont. Prob., p. 157)

(5) Just this past month I received word of a marital crisis between a Christian husband and wife, both of whom had been **saved** since before I was **born**! The police were even involved in the matter!

The dysfunctional family is fast becoming the norm! Well, how does one who has come to Christ and has excess baggage from his dysfunctional family past get rid of that baggage...?

(We turn to our "Need" section of the message...)

Need: "Since so many people today come from such deeply abusive family backgrounds, how can they be effectively disciplined?!"

- I. **The Island of Crete where Titus ministered was full of abuse with its typical dysfunctional family problems, Titus 1:12-13a:**
 - A. Paul said that Cretans were liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons, 1:12f.
 - B. We can only conclude that dysfunctional family problems abounded on Crete: family members responded to abuse with (1) martyr complexes or (2) backlashing verbal abuse or (3) controlling the lives of others or (4) ambivalence or compulsive workaholicism as defense mechanisms, Hendricks, Chr. Counsel. For Contemp. Probs., p. 162.
- II. **Accordingly, Paul gave Titus the following instructions to enable those with dysfunctional family backgrounds to live victoriously:**
 - A. As building blocks for **why** they were to live, Paul gave those with dysfunctional backgrounds the following foundational doctrines:
 1. Doctrine One - Christ's Salvation positionally separates sinners from their sins; thus, we are to live righteously, 2:11-12.
 2. Doctrine Two - Christ will return, a fact that motivates us to work productively so as to give an account to Him, 2:13f.
 3. Doctrine Three - God's great kindness led to Christ's death to save us, 3:4-7. Thus, we believers should also be kind, 3:2-3.
 - B. Having constructed the doctrinal foundation for **why** believers from dysfunctional backgrounds are to live as they should, Paul presents the practical specifics of **what** they are to **do** to as a result as follows:
 1. Specific Instructions On Living For Older Men: (Tit. 2:1-2; 3:13f)
 - a. Christ wants older Christian men from dysfunctional family backgrounds to be separated from sin and follow in Christ's example of kindness. Thus, He tells them to be self-controlled and respectable in their conduct, choosing to endure pain without being abusive or resorting to substance abuse as an escape from what bothers them, 2:2.
 - b. Because God wants older Christian men from dysfunctional backgrounds to be ready to meet the coming Christ, they are to work to support their families and others in need which satisfies Christ's wishes, Titus 2:13-14 with 1 Tim. 5:8.
 2. Specific Instructions On Living For Older Women: (Tit. 2:3-5)

- a. God wants older women from dysfunctional backgrounds to be separate from sin and follow in Christ's example of kindness. Thus, He urges them to be self-controlled and not to abuse others by slander, v. 3.
- b. Because God wants older Christian women from dysfunctional backgrounds to be ready to meet the coming Lord, He asks them to focus on home duties. This means submitting to their husbands, loving them and their children, being keepers of the home and teaching younger women to do the same, v. 4f.
3. Specific Instructions On Living For Younger Women: (2:4-5)
 - a. Since God wants younger women from dysfunctional family backgrounds to be separated from sin, He urges them to be self-controlled in handling their drives and ambitions, v. 4b.
 - b. Since God wants younger women to be ready to meet the Lord when He returns, He asks them to give attention to domestic duties as taught in "II,B, 2, b," above, Titus 2:4-5.
4. Specific Instructions On Living For Younger Men: (Tit. 2:6; 3:13f)
 - a. Since God wants younger men from dysfunctional family backgrounds to be separated from sin, He urges them to be self-controlled in handling their drives and ambitions, 2:6.
 - b. To prepare for the return of Christ, God urges young men, like older men, to work to support those in their care! (3:13f)

III. Paul gave crucial input on reaching others in problem families:

- A. People with dysfunctional backgrounds **tend** to view godly authority lightly, remaining in their error even if confronted about it, 2:15 (where "despise" = "think around," Hendriksen, I-II Timothy-Titus, p. 377). Thus, those who disciple them must not only be kind, but unbending in requiring behavioral changes, 1:13b; 2:15c.
- B. If the disciple **still** does not heed you, expect God to get his attention via trials until he "listens up," Rev. 3:19! Just hang in there!

Lesson Application: *To attain a godly lifestyle though having a dysfunctional family history, one must (1) believe on Christ for salvation from sin to be created anew in Christ, Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:17. (2) As a believer, he must live by means of the New Nature to produce godliness, Ep. 4:22-24. This is done by (a) keeping one's sins confessed (1 Jn. 1:9) to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and by (b) relying upon the Spirit for behavior control, Gal. 5:19-23. (c) Then he obeys Titus 2:1-3:15 as explained above!*

(Note: Any service to God in a church setting must be done only AFTER these basic family duties are Biblically accomplished, cf. 1 Tim. 5:8, 14!)

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson...)

(1) Mona Charen, a syndicated Washington columnist in the Waterbury paper wrote an editorial decrying the moral decay in America. She reported on an incident in which a 21-year-old college student loaned out a pen to a perfect stranger in a Washington, D.C. doughnut shop. When he asked for it back, the borrower stood up and pumped 14 bullets into the student, killing him on the spot!

(2) Bothered by this senseless mayhem that is so typical of events in larger American cities, Mona Charen examined the political left and right wing positions on stemming this crime rate that tears away at families. She said that left-wing politicians want 50,000 more officers hired to walk American streets. Right-wingers want more prisons.

(3) Concerned about which plan might be better, Mona decided to interview a criminal who has become reformed--she asked Chuck Colson which plan seemed to be the best. Chuck believes that neither approach will work. He believes that "...No approach to crime can succeed...until we recognize that it is not poverty or lack of police that causes crime, it is the **moral decay of our people.**"

(4) But until the morality of the American people can change, Mona Charen reported that Chuck Colson suggested that relatively minor criminals be "...required to pay restitution to their victims. That would free prison space for the truly dangerous, who must be quarantined, and would prevent prisons from serving as hatcheries for more efficient criminals." (This sounds a lot like Ephesians 4:28!!)

(5) In other words, a change of heart through conversion to Christ followed by Biblical obedience regarding crime would do much more for our nation than upping taxes to hire more police or to construct more prisons!

Tomorrow we celebrate the 50th anniversary of D-Day, the Invasion of Normandy by Allied forces. The Supreme Commander of those forces, Dwight D. Eisenhower, said, "The spirit of man is more important than mere physical strength, and the spiritual fiber of a nation than its wealth" (The Rebirth Of America, The Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, p. 190). We Americans will see families rebuilt in this nation only as we turn to God through Christ's salvation!!