

'Let the Men be Mature' Supplement

Woodlands Community Church

Date: 11/08/2024

Speaking: Rhys Lamont

Book: *Let the Men Be Men* by Chris Mueller

Chapter #4: Let the Men be Mature (The Goal of Godliness)

Scripture: "Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance." (Titus 2:2).

Summary of Chapter Three

1. **In our last session, we considered the second chapter entitled 'Let the men be Grounded' and why it's so critical that a Christian man have deep roots in the Word of God.** When Christian men are not grounded in the word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ we see all sorts of problems emerge, problems that Chris pointed out such as becoming irresponsible, always negative and bitter, distant from those around us, overly complacent and what Chris called the Peter-Pan man, an overgrown boy. Rather, using some of the principles we extracted from Titus 1, we must lay strong foundations for our spiritual health to live out of.
2. **Two of the most basic foundations for a spiritually grounded man was firstly that he actually be a born again Christian and secondly that he be connected to a local church.** Chris said of the former, "God must save you—you can't save yourself. Jesus Christ accomplished your salvation through His perfect sinless life, His substitutionary death on the cross for your sin, and His resurrection from the dead. Your sin has fallen on Christ and, for you to be justified, His righteousness must cover you. Christ took your place so you could exchange all that you are for all that He is. If this is not true of you, then the rest of what Paul has to say is of secondary importance. Salvation is the starting place—the launchpad for biblical manhood." But of the second, we noted that being connected to a local church is part of God's design for the growth of His people. And in fact nowhere does the New Testament ever envisage Christians disconnected from corporate gathering under biblically qualified elders and in fellowship with other believers.
3. **Another key facet to being a spiritually grounded young man for God is that we ensure our lives are contrasted to the world.** As Paul said to Titus in Titus 2:1, "but as for you". It was required of Titus that his life be markedly different than the pervasive false teachers he faced in his day, and so it will be for us, generally, in that we ought to live different to the world.

Chapter Four 'Let the Men be Mature'

Introduction

1. **Chris Mueller's purpose with this chapter, self explanatory as in the title, is to help us on in our Christian lives towards spiritual maturity.** Speaking for our Western culture today anyway, the biblical model of relationships between the older and younger is counter-cultural to what is a "youth-elevated" culture. God's way is that the older are to model Christlikeness for the younger and the younger are to look up to and pursue Christlikeness as they see modelled in the older.

2. **It ought to be our goal to become godly, spiritually mature men of Christ.** This happens in two ways, first that which is learned as we grow in knowledge of the Christian faith. And second, that which is modelled for us by others. And this will be one reason why the Apostle Paul addresses the older Christian men in Titus 2. **“Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.”** (Titus 2:2). Both of these are, of course, overflow of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as those saved by and in Christ.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE ON OLDER MEN

The Blessing of Older Men

1. **Our society's marketing messages diminish the importance of older people and treats ageing as something to be avoided.** The prevalent mindset in our society is that it's a good thing to be young and a bad thing to become old. Chris says, **“We are all familiar with advertising that tries to convince us our grey hair can be turned back imperceptibly to its “natural color” —presumably because grey is labelled “unnatural.”**
2. **And it's true, isn't it?** We see products for anti-ageing, this, that, and the other thing. Women take botox for the lips and cheeks, using artificial means to maintain a youthful look. All of this feeds into a perpetual culture that once aged, you are no longer relevant. The world has moved on without you. No longer considered beautiful. No longer desirable. Slow. In the way.
3. **God's view of ageing is quite different.** **“A grey head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness.”** (Proverbs 16:31) **“Grandchildren are the crown of old men, and the glory of sons is their fathers.”** (Proverbs 17:6) **“The glory of young men is their strength, and the honour of old men is their grey hair.”** (Proverbs 20:29).
4. **Paul teaches Titus that a healthy church consists of believers of all ages pursuing their God-given designs and roles is one of the most powerful ways the scripture demonstrates the importance of older people in the church.** Jumping off the page, in Titus 2, there are four people groups. Older men, older women, younger women, younger men.
5. **It's a great tragedy that in many churches today, so-called evening worship or evening services have become almost a youth-driven movement and are unbalanced to the side of youth rather than mixed.** This phenomenon is often seen in church advertisements, where they advertise traditional Sunday morning services at 10 a.m. and contemporary evening services at 6 p.m. Age-tailored worship contradicts the church's New Testament pattern and vision.

Q: What do you think about Chris's claim that it's a sign of decay in our culture, towards immaturity, and that we elevate youth over age? Why might this be the case?

What does older mean?

1. **But what exactly does the Bible mean when it says an older man?** Chris says, **“Putting all the evidence together, it appears that men in their mid-40's and above would qualify as older men.”**
2. **However, chronological age is really a secondary issue, for Paul's focus in writing to Timothy is concerning the importance of spiritual maturity in believers, no matter who.** But who better to address than the older men? If the older men don't get this right, the younger men coming behind them won't have the adequate role models they need. Chris says, **“As interesting as that question is, the primary emphasis in this passage is not on chronological age, but on spiritual maturity. The two**

categories tend to overlap to some degree, of course, because we would expect a reasonable amount of time to elapse in a man's life before he becomes a very mature Christian. The main factor in spiritual growth is not time, however, but how well a person submits to the truths of Scripture and lives by the power of the Spirit. So a young man can accelerate his spiritual growth by constantly responding to the Spirit of God according to the Word of God. To use an illustration, your spiritual strength is not determined by how long you have been in the boat, but by how hard you have been pulling on the oars. Some Christian young men are more spiritually mature than some older men, simply because they have been living dependently upon the Spirit and obediently to God's Word as a way of life."

3. **So, we need to frame, for the matters of our study, that this standard put before older men be for all believers a spiritual target.** A spiritually mature Christian man is useful to God in his society, in his family, and in his church, and it won't just simply "happen." In my late teens, I vividly recall the local cop pulling me up as I was leaving Wyndham heading towards Edendale. I started speeding from the 50 km zone into the 100 km zone prematurely. I don't think he gave me a ticket, but I've never forgotten his words. He said it's a sign, not a target!
4. **However, the reverse of that principle is true for our spiritual maturity.** The Christian man, from the moment he is conscious of himself before God and others, should be targeting these kinds of qualities and getting up to speed before he gets there (old age).

Q: What are some of the different spiritual roadblocks you can think of which which young men have to navigate in today's world to advance in spiritual maturity that perhaps are new to our times?

CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Temperate

1. **The meaning of this word temperate is moderate and balanced, and its root word means sober.** That is to say sober-minded. Chris says, "Being temperate means a life that is watchful, alert, guided by clear thinking, and remaining steady in the storm. Godly older men are the experienced sailors on the ship of faith."
2. **One helpful way that Chris illustrates the idea of being temperate is often instead of "acting", we are "reacting".** But a temperate person is not on an emotional pendulum, going between hot and cold all of the time, unbalanced, unpredictable, always swinging between opposite extremes. If you recall the last time you experienced an emotional outburst, take it as an example of what is not temperance. If it only takes two minutes for you to ignite into a rage, then you lack temperance.
3. **Aside from the emotional aspect, another way a man can exhibit temperance is by thoughtfully choosing how he uses his time.** If you reflect on your childhood, you may recall the guiltless hours you spent mucking around, playing outside, or playing Halo, RuneScape and Call of Duty. However, as you become older, you realize that a man must become a man and take on responsibilities, obligations, and commitments. Therefore, efficient use of your time is crucial, all part of the temperate life. Chris says, "Young men will think nothing of spending six hours playing video games into the wee hours of the morning, even though they have to work, go to school, or serve in some ministry commitments where they would benefit from a good night's sleep. An older, temperate man will go to bed so that he is well rested and ready to fulfil his obligations and commitments."

Dignified

1. **To be dignified is to live a life worthy of the respect of others.** A dignified man is not shallow, flippant, directionless, or irresponsible. He is serious, noble, purposeful, committed, and has integrity. If a dignified man had a certain look, he isn't one slumped over, and ill-presented. His shoulders are back, and his head is high. He knows what he's about. Yet this doesn't make him proud or stoic. As Chris says, "That does not mean mature men are never light-hearted or fun, but they know what they believe and trust in the Spirit of God to live what they believe. Those who are dignified take the Lord very seriously, but do not take themselves seriously at all. This is the kind of person who is able to laugh at himself, laugh with others, and otherwise live a joyful life because of a deep and personal intimacy with the Savior who calls him to a serious mission in the midst of a hostile world."
2. **This dignified man thinks of himself as continually living in the presence of his Lord and master, Jesus Christ.** To aid in our sanctification and become spiritually mature and dignified men, we need to recognise the true presence and immediacy of God with us. Chris says, "He is not one to joke about people going to hell, nor is he one to find pleasure or entertainment in immorality, vulgarity, or anything else that is sinful. He is not one who laughs at what is tragic or at the expense of others. He loves the things that God loves and grieves over the things that grieve the Lord."
3. **A dignified man is less attracted to the pleasures this world has to offer.** He understands that what the world offers to satisfy is a snare and a trap. The three vices of men have been stated as "girl's, gold, and glory." But a dignified man, as he grows in Christ, is less and less attracted to the temptation of sin. The things of this age are less and less important to him, and the things of the age to come take primacy.

Q: How can a man be lighthearted or fun yet still be "dignified" (as defined in this chapter)?

Sensible

1. **The word sensible, from the Greek, brings together two root words, "to save" and "the mind."** Being sensible implies exercising control over your thoughts according to a biblical worldview, which will inevitably lead you to live out a spiritually mature life. In a way Paul put it, "we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ," (2 Corinthians 10:5). Peter talked about preparing the mind, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:13). He is a man in firm control of the inputs coming into his mind, He doesn't allow the world to pump, as it were, along sewage pipes, that which will only pollute the mind. "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." (Philippians 4:8).
2. **But a sensible mind is not only preventing a certain way of thinking, but actively taking on that which will feed and grow his mind in Christ.** To break one habit, you need to replace it with another good habit. Godly biblical discussions with friends can be beneficial in this regard. We should converse about ideas and theological truths and insights instead of gossip; focus on facts rather than conjectures. We should read and listen to Christian literature instead of enduring mindless secular entertainment.
3. **The sensible man also controls his appetites.** He doesn't live in bondage to impulses and passions, whatever they may be, food, money, sexual related etc. Chris says, "Contrary to cultural expectations, he does not experience a "mid-life crisis," because he has trained himself to be sensible. He seeks to have only the Spirit of God and the Word of God empower, control, and direct him."

Q: Looking at these three traits, Temperate, Dignified and Sensible, do any stand out to you as a particular struggle to you in your Christian life?

CHARACTERISTICS OF GODLINESS

1. **Chris says to introduce this next section,** "Next, Paul tells Titus that older men are to be "sound in faith, in love, in perseverance." Whereas "temperate," "dignified," and "sensible" relate to a man's maturity, "sound in faith, in love, in perseverance" refers to his godliness. In the Greek text of Titus, the word "sound" is a participle connected to all three of the words following—"faith," "love," and "perseverance."

Sound in faith

1. **To be sound in faith is to be theologically and doctrinally grounded in the word of God.** You want to be a man who, when cut, in a manner of speech, bleeds the Bible. Pursue this so far as you are able. With what intellectual capacity you have, and in the time afforded you. And it's never too late to start. But the best time is always in our youth. In a way, you become an older man who is sound in faith because of what you spend loading into your storehouse over the previous 20 years or more.
2. **The importance of being sound in faith couldn't be more obvious. We want to be able to speak the truth, don't we?** Chris says, "Many men today find themselves on shaky ground. Very few are willing to speak up and say another person's actions or beliefs are in violation of Scripture. But spiritually mature men are ready and willing to speak the truth, share the gospel, speak out against sin, correct theological error, and lovingly point out when fellow Christians are off track in their thinking. They do so, saturated with grace, but never compromising truth, just like Christ - who is "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14)."
3. **But this is about more than head knowledge.** To be sound in faith means you have a vital, living relationship with Jesus Christ. You live before the cross of Christ, recognising that He alone qualifies you to participate in eternal life in the age to come. You're fully reliant upon Him in prayer, confident in His promises. You trust in God's sovereign plans. And you want to finish well. You're weary of the world's idea of retirement and ease. You want the fight, the good fight, to the very end of your life, to live for God's glory. Chris says, "He seeks to live every moment of his life for God's glory and does not give in to the world's view of "retirement," where some devote their twilight years to things like motorhomes, golf, and travel instead of the Great Commission." You hold the words of Christ with you concerning living for God's purposes not your own, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.'" (Matthew 26:39)

Sound in love

1. **But the mature Christian man is also sound in love, so though he has strong convictions, he is equally full of compassion and care.** Chris says, "One of the greatest dangers associated with aging as a Christian is the possible drift toward criticism and fault-finding. Sometimes sympathy fades away with age. For other men, their heart becomes hardened and they don't respond with grace."
2. **One helpful way to frame the discussion on being sound in love as the illustration Chris uses of the child's bib vs. adult apron.** Chris says, "Paul wanted Titus to remind older men to continue to cultivate a heart that loves to give and will seek out those most in need of care. It's been said, "A mark of spiritual maturity occurs when a believer takes off the bib and puts on an apron." Immature believers, like infants and toddlers, expect others to meet all their needs. Mature saints have learned to put on aprons for the joy of serving others."
3. **We shouldn't view character qualities of compassion and care for others as sloppy or sentimental.** Further, true love does not compromise the truth but rejoices in it. To be truly loving means at times

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you'll have to say hard things that people don't want to hear.

Sound in perseverance

1. **While as we get older we may fade in strength physically, our spiritual strength should only get stronger as time goes on!** Chris says, "Such perseverance and endurance is not stubborn endurance but steady consistency. When the going gets tough, it will be the godly older men who say to us all, "God will show us a way—He always has!" Spiritual maturity in this way, means you're not concerned about trials but see them as an important part of the Christian life, for it is through trials that we learn to trust in the Lord and have biblical perseverance, knowing that he is in ultimate control of all things.
2. **In terms of our goal to become such a man, Chris emphasises that the first step is to remain resilient in the face of adversity.** James writes, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:2–4). One of our natural responses, or knee-jerk reactions, to discomfort, or challenging situations, whatever that may be, is to run away. However, to persevere, we must learn to accept and overcome adversity. A church congregation is always ebbing and flowing in different degrees of pressure, and we don't want to be those who are simply going to throw our hands in the air and give up.
3. **But Chris calls a young man to consider a second point, which is the need for an unbreakable commitment to Christ.** Chris says, "The ultimate test in the Christian life is not simply your entrance into the race, but your endurance throughout the race. And the godly young man starts early by developing an unswerving commitment to Jesus Christ no matter what challenges lie before him. His goal is to become a faithful, no-excuses, dependable young man."
4. **Our example of true perseverance and commitment is the Lord Jesus Christ and the spiritual agony of the cross he endured for our sakes.** He still cries out, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." (Luke 23:34).

**==Q: Same as earlier, looking at these further three traits, sound in Faith, sound in Love, and sound in Perseverance, do any stand out to you as a particular struggle to you in your Christian life?

MORE IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUNG MEN

Relationships between older and younger men

1. **One thing that our young men in churches need more than ever is older men showing an interest in them outside of routine interactions on Sundays.** To achieve this, it will require establishing some form of interaction beyond the confines of the congregation, allowing the younger men to gain insight into the life of a godly, older, and spiritually mature man. When an older Christian man invites a young Christian man into his home, the young man can observe how the man treats his wife, interacts with his own children, and incorporates Christ into everyday conversations. Perhaps there is an opportunity for the young man to accompany the older man in his work, allowing him to observe his work ethic and the various ways he incorporates God into his work life.
2. **Both young and old Christians need to realise the great need we have for these relationships in the church.** Chris says, "Discipleship can be defined as intentional relationships for the purpose of growth in Christ, and young men need to seek this out from older men, just as Titus learned from Paul. The qualities mentioned in Titus 2:2 are not only required of older men, but they are also desperately

needed in the rest of the church, especially in young men. The church needs the example of older men to show younger men the way, and young men must also pursue close relationships with older godly men in order to learn from them and model their behavior."

3. **By doing this, the church can reclaim back what the secular culture has attempted to steal.** We need to show greater respect for the age, wisdom, experience, and spiritual maturity of older men. However, there is also a challenge faced by older men. Are you among those men who truly set a godly example?

Q: What are some practical ways we could facilitate this our churches from the perspectives of?

Making the most of your time

1. **Chris signs off this chapter with a call to consider spiritual maturity in light of making the most of our time.** We want to run the race well. We want Christ to be preeminent always, and we want to mature in him. Chris says, "Whether you are young or old, if you have lived your life up to this point for yourself, the time is now to correct your ways and begin investing yourself into the lives of others, including those from a different generation. If you are already an older man, you should pursue these qualities because failing to do so will result in a poor witness, loss of blessing, and missed opportunity to give glory to God. If you are a younger man, know that you will grow old faster than you realize, so set the qualities listed in Titus 2:2 as a clear target to aim at while you are still young."
2. **Remember the well-known scripture,** "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them." (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Time is fleeting; the key to spiritual maturity for a young man is to start living today what their scripture expects you to be as an older man.