

Faithfulness in Singleness Week #2 – Singleness and Sensibility, January 22nd, 2023

1. Intro

2. Sensibility¹

a. Titus 2:1-8

“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. **2** Older men are to be temperate, dignified, **sensible**, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. **3** Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, **4** so that they may instruct the young women in **sensibility**: to love their husbands, to love their children, **5** *to be sensible*, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be slandered. **6** Likewise urge the younger men to be **sensible**; **7** in all things show yourself to be a model of good works, *with* purity in doctrine, dignified, **8** sound *in* word which is irreproachable, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.”

b. It is interesting that Paul tells Titus to encourage the young men (who were presumably single) to be one thing: Sensible.

c. We see that for all categories of people, older men, young men, older women, and young women, they were all to be either examples in being sensible or to teach others how to be sensible.

d. Definition of Sensible

i. “to being in control of oneself, *prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled*”²

¹ Adapted from “Let Men be Men” by Christ Muller, 100-106.

² Arndt, William et al. [*A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*](#) 2000: 987. Print.

- ii. It has the idea of not allowing yourself to be given over to extremes. This same counsel needs to be given today, doesn't it?
- iii. The word was also used to mean being rational and thoughtful. Again, there is a sense in which being sensible means having a purpose or a goal in view for how you are living.

e. Goal-Oriented

- i. Eph 5:15-16 – “Therefore look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”
- ii. Time in the Word
- iii. Time in Prayer
- iv. Church Ministry and Service
- v. Serving and Loving Family
- vi. Faithful at Work
- vii. The question was asked: “How should believers, single or married alike, think about and set tangible plans/goals that provide direction over a lifetime when they don't necessarily seem called to obvious ministries like pastoring, church-planting, or overseas missions?
- viii. What are some biblical goals that anyone or everyone should have?
 - 1. Making disciples – Matt 28:18
 - 2. Reading the Bible, praying, memorizing Scripture – Ps 119:105; Heb 4:12
 - 3. Working hard to bless and serve others – Rom 12:11 – “not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”
 - 4. Using gifts to bless and build up the church – Eph 4:12-16

5. Whatever job you take should not merely be taken based on the amount of money you will make but: will this job take me away from the local church (i.e. moving away or making me work on Sundays); will this job prevent me from serving; will this job take away time with family? - Eph 6:5-8; Rom 12; 1 Cor 12-14
6. How can I grow in sanctification each year? – Phil 1:6

f. A Life Directed by the Bible

- i. Ps 105:105 – “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”
- ii. Ps 32:8 – “I will give you insight and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.”
- iii. Making decisions based not on feelings or culture but on the Word of God.
- iv. Don’t make decisions based on your heart, circumstances, “having a peace about it,” or a “still small voice.”
- v. Chris Muller, “If you are walking in obedience to what you know is right from Scripture, but still are not sure about which way to go in a particular decision, seek wisdom from the general principles of God's Word to help you.”

g. Seek Godly Wisdom

- i. If there is not direct command or verse in the Bible about what you should do, seek out general principles to help you make a faithfully, wise, biblical decision.
 1. Will this benefit me spiritually? – Eph 4:29
 2. Will this assist my witness to others? – Col 4:5-6
 3. Will this set a good example for others? – 1 Cor 11:1
 4. Do I have right motives? – Phil 1:21

5. Is my conscience clear? – Rom 14:23
6. Will this bring glory to God? – 1 Cor 10:31
 - ii. If you cannot answer these questions with a clear conscience, then you might need to reconsider what you were planning to do.
 - iii. Prov 3:5-7 – “Trust in Yahweh with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight.

Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear Yahweh and turn away from evil.
 - iv. Seek out a trusted friend to help you - Prov 15:22 – “Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.”
- h. Repent Often
 - i. 2 Tim 2:22 – “Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”
 - ii. Any sin that we become aware of, repent of it quickly. Don’t wait or excuse the sin away.
3. Sensibility and Time – how should a single person spend their time?
 - a. Church Membership/Service
 - b. Discipleship – being discipled and discipling others
 - c. Being Equipped - not just being entertained
 - d. Family
 - e. Job
 - f. Recreation/Entertainment – also would include things like traveling

- g. Evaluate how much time you are spending with each of these categories.
Is there one you are spending way more time on than the others? Does recreation or entertainment take up more time than church activities?
4. Examining Idleness Biblically – Is it really that bad?³
- a. Scripture strongly condemns idleness
 - i. 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 11, 14 – “For even when we were with you, we used to command this to you: if anyone is not willing to work, neither let him eat. 11 For we hear that some among you are walking in an unruly manner, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies... And if anyone does not obey our word in this letter, take special note of that person to not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.”
 - ii. Proverbs 18:9 - He also who is slack in his work, Is brother to him who destroys.
 - iii. Proverbs 26:16 - The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes, Than seven men who can respond with a discreet answer.
 - b. An idle person’s life is necessarily full of sin
 - i. James 4:17 – “Therefore, to one who knows to do *the* right thing and does not do it, to him it is sin.”
 - ii. Galatians 6:10 – So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.
5. Idleness is a Breeding Ground for Other Sins
- i. Prov 7 – the simple man wandering the streets
 - ii. 2 Sam 11 – David and Bathsheba
- b. Idleness and common “root” sins
 - i. Pride – Proverbs 12:15 – “The way of an ignorant fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.”
 - ii. Covetousness, greed, which is idolatry

³ Adapted from Keith Christensen, “Counseling Idleness,” 2022 ACBC Conference.

1. Prov 21:25-26 – “The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work; All day long he is insatiably craving, While the righteous gives and does not hold back.
 2. Eph 5:1-5 - Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. 3 But sexual immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 *nor* filthiness and foolish talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no one sexually immoral or impure or greedy, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”
- c. Idleness and other specific sins / struggles
- i. Depression and discontentment
 1. Proverbs 13:4 – “The soul of the sluggard craves and *gets* nothing, But the soul of the diligent is enriched.”
 2. 20:4 – “The sluggard does not plow from winter *on*, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing.”
 - ii. Fear and Anxiety – Matthew 6:34, James 4:13-17, Matthew 25:24, 26, Proverbs 21:26, 21:25, 22:13, 26:13,
 - iii. Gossip and other relational problems – 1 Timothy 5:13
 - iv. Sexual Immorality – see 2 Samuel 11:1
- d. Helpful Texts for Battling Idleness – (In addition to those cited above!)
- i. Genesis 1-3 – Biblical Foundations for Understanding Work
 - ii. Ecclesiastes – Learning to Enjoy Work in a Fallen World (2:18-25, 3:9-15, 22,4:4-9, 5:18-20, 8:15, 9:7-10, 10:18, 11:4-6, 12:13-14)
 - iii. Proverbs: The Sluggard - 6:6-11, 10:4-5, 10:26, 12:11, 12:24, 12:27, 13:4, 14:23,15:19, 18:9, 19:15, 19:24, 20:4, 20:13, 21:25-26, 22:13, 24:30-34, 26:13-16, 28:19-20

- iv. 1-2 Thessalonians – A Failure to Love; Admonish the Idle - 1 Thess. 4:9-12, 5:14, 2 Thess. 3:6-15
- v. Colossians 3:22-24 – Put on Whole-hearted, Fervent Work for Christ
- vi. Titus – The Gospel Changes Lazy People – 1:12, 2:11-14, 3:1, 8, 14, 2:5, 7

e. Some Practical Suggestions for Battling Idleness

- i. Learn to respond to idleness in repentance toward God (cultivating godly sorrow) and faith in Christ for forgiving and transforming grace (gospel centeredness). Learn to walk in daily repentance even for sins of omission (James 4:17, Gal. 6:10).
- ii. Learn to repent toward (seek forgiveness from) those they've sinned against by your laziness (Luke 17:3). Set up some accountability for yourself.
 - 1. Schedule: Write out an hourly schedule of how you will use your time each day.
 - 2. To-do lists: Make a list of daily responsibilities before God. Each evening, make a to-do list for the next day, putting it in order of what needs to get done first.
 - 3. Make a list of the things you typically do instead of being busy with work (“busybody” list). Set up appropriate boundaries to “make no provision” for idleness (Rom. 13:14). Practice “radical amputation” (Mt. 5:29-30) as needed.
 - 4. Understand God’s purposes for work (Genesis 1-3) and the Christian ideal for work (Colossians 3). Idleness falls short of these (Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, 1-2 Thessalonians, Titus, etc.)
 - 5. Choose pertinent verses from these sections to memorize, pray through, and meditate on throughout each day.

- iii. Suggestions for a path of growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord.
1. Establish a plan for daily prayer and time in the Word.
 2. Weekly church attendance, and participation in a Bible study/small group and/or one-on-one discipleship.
 3. Readings that set your eyes on the glory of God, not only material focused on a specific issues (Ex: Trusting God by Jerry Bridges; The Blessed and Boundless God by George Swinnoock; any Puritan Paperback from Banner of Truth Trust).
 4. Do at least one loving thing for another person each day (above and beyond the “normal” responsibilities of each day).
 5. Become involved in at least 1 ministry at their church through which they can serve the body regularly.
 6. Examine what heart idols may be at play.
 7. Answer heart-probing questions like these about the times you choose idleness: What was I wanting most in that situation? What outcome did I most want to avoid? Whose opinion mattered most to me at that time? What was I thinking I “needed” or “deserved”? What rationalizations or anxieties led to my decision to be idle or procrastinate? What lies and/or desires were driving those rationalizations or anxieties? How did I use my time instead of devoting it to my work?
 8. Deal with any other issues that are associated with the idleness (responding to trials biblically, sins that have taken root in the soil of idleness, other sources of fear, worry, or depression, etc.).
 9. Those who feel fatigued, tired, and weak all the time (or become so uncommonly easily) should visit their doctor to discover and address any potential physical problems that may be contributing factors.