

**“Older Women on Mission”**

*Sermon Notes*

- **Older women are critical to the health of our spiritual family - for older women are our church’s mothers**

*\*Brothers and sisters, for the sake of our mission and vision we are wise to...*

1. ...\_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of older women (v.2a; Ruth 2:20; 3:1-5; 4:14-17; Luke 1:18, 36-37, 39-45; 2:36-38; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15)

2. ...\_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of older women (v.2b; 1 Timothy 5:1-2)

**Next Week: Titus 2:4b-5 - “Younger Women on Mission”**

## **MEFC Community Group Study Guide**

For the Week of April 19th - 25th

### **Getting Started**

1. What sort of an influence have older Christian women had on your walk with the Lord? Begin your group time with each of you sharing the name of and a story about an older woman in the church who's made a difference in your Christian life (in the present day or at some point in the past).

### **Digging Deeper**

2. In 1 Timothy 5:1-2, Paul says to Timothy (a younger man himself): "Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father...older women as mothers...". What does it mean to encourage older women in the church as mothers? What vital roles do mothers have in the home? By extension, what vital roles do older women have in the local fellowship as the church's "mothers"?

### **Open Your Bible to Titus 2:3...**

3. It is interesting to note on the outset how Paul encourages Titus to approach these different segments of the church. For instance, he is told to instruct older men (v.2), older women (vv.3-4a), and younger men (v.6) directly. Notice, though, it is the older women who are given the specific instruction to teach the younger women (vv.4b-5). Why do you think this is the case? Though we wouldn't want to say that pastors and elders ought never to seek to directly teach younger women, what do you suppose is behind Paul's discipleship strategy here? Why?

4. Furthermore, the very fact that Paul commands Titus to take responsibility for the character and ministry competency of older women (vv.3-4a) is telling in and of itself. What do Paul's words to Titus imply about the value of what we frequently refer to as "women's ministry" in the church? Do you think many pastors today in 21st century America give much thought toward or careful guidance to the older women in their churches? If not, why not? What might be the benefit of church leaders taking these verses seriously?

5. Some believers (though relatively few) throughout church history have taken Paul's reference to "older women" (vv.3-4) here as an indication that he intends for them to serve as elders (i.e. 'women who are elders'). Why does the immediate context of this letter (1:1-2:2) as well as the pastoral epistles more generally (1 Timothy 2:8-3:13) rule this out? Why does Scripture teach an all-male eldership? Lots of folks outside (often inside) the church ask this question. What's the big deal? Why not have female elders?

*(Note: This is a devil's advocate question as we at MEFC happily and whole-heartedly embrace the Bible's clear teaching concerning male elders)*

6. The Bible says that "Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior..." (v.3). The word for "reverent" here in v.3 is an unusual compound word in the original language that could be literally translated "temple-worthy". The idea is that a sort of universal holiness ought to pervade the life of an older Christian woman. To use the words of an old book by Brother Lawrence, older women are to be serious Christ-followers who "practice the presence of God". Making application with Psalm 1:1-3 and 1 Thessalonians 5:17, sketch the life of an older Christian woman in the church. Why are women like

this such a gift in the midst of our Sunday gatherings, Sunday school classes, community groups, committees, and counseling ministries?

7. Verse 3 specifically calls older women to guard themselves in two particular areas of sin that can mar one's personal character. They are not to be "...slanderers or slaves to much wine." What do these prohibitions entail? Acknowledging that men or women of any age can fall into ungodly patterns like these, why does God's Word raise these two matters especially for older women? How does the gospel address these two issues (if you get stuck, take a look at Titus 2:11-14 as well as 3:2-7)?

8. Titus 2 is well-known for its emphasis on older women mentoring younger women (2:3-5). While we'll look in greater detail next week at the content of such discipleship, let's close our time by considering the verses that set the conditions for it. In Titus 2:3b-4a, Paul writes that: "They are to teach what is good and so train the young women...". What does this look like in our fellowship? Do you see evidence of these sorts of relationships at MEFC? What sorts of pathways have been created to help such discipleship to become a reality? As you close in prayer, be sure to pray by name for the older women in our church, and especially that these Titus 2-type ministries would flourish.