

“Keepers at Home”

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Titus 2:1-10, KJV

1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: **2** That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. **3** The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; **4** That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, **5** To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. **6** Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. **7** In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, **8** Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. **9** Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; **10** Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Introduction

- In **Titus 2:1-10**, five classes of people are identified to whom provisions are made for them to be taught: Aged men, aged women, young women, young men, and servants.
- The aged, or older, women are commanded to teach the younger women "***to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed***" (v.4-5, KJV).
- Much confusion has abounded over the years as to what the command to be "***keepers at home***" requires. As result, let us consider various points that hopefully will help us better understand God's expectations for those to whom this requirement is commanded.

What Does this Phrase Mean?

- **KJV** – “keepers at home.”
- **NKJV** – “keepers at home.”
- **GW** – “homemakers.”
- **ASV** – “workers at home.”
- **NASB** – “workers at home.”
- **CSB** – “workers at home.”
- **NRSV** – “good managers of the household.”
- **ESV** – “working at home.”
- **CEB** – “working at home.”
- **NIV** – “busy at home.”
- **NLT** – “work in their homes.”
- **GNT** – “good housewives.”
- **NET** – “fulfilling their duties at home.”
- **ISV** – “manage their households.”
- **LSV** – “keepers of [their own] homes.”
- **CEV** – “good homemaker.”

What Does this Phrase Mean?

- “Properly, ‘the (watch or) keeper of a house’ (Sophocles, Euripides, Aris-tophanes, Pausanias, Plutarch, others). Tropically, ‘keeping at home and taking care of household affairs, domestic’” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon).
- The Greek from which "keepers at home" is rendered is, *oikourgous*. The Greek *oikourgous* is a compound word, made up of first *oikos*, which means "house" and then *ergou*, "work" . . . Hence, “worker at home” . . . *Oikourous* is also a compound word, again, *oikos*, "house" and *ouros*, "keeper." Hence, the translation, "*keeper at home*." Neither *oikourgous* nor *oikourous* is found elsewhere in the Greek New Testament. *Oikourous* is, however, common in classical Greek and has the meaning of, "stayers at home." The commandment "keepers at home" is expressive of the godly woman’s career (Don Martin, "Keepers at Home").

What Does this Phrase Mean?

This is the Greek *oikouros*, which is a combination of *oikos* (home) and *ouros* (a keeper). It means "one who guards the house, one who stays at home, domestically inclined." "One who looks after domestic affairs with prudence and care" (Complete Word Study Bible). 1 Tim. 5:14 says the wife/mother is to "guide the house." This is the Greek *oikodespoteo*, which is a combination of *oiko* (house) and *despotes* (ruler). It is a strong word, meaning master of the house, governor, manager . . . The wife governs the household affairs under her husband's authority and oversight. This is the exalted biblical role of a wife. She is the household governor. She orders it. She "looketh well to the ways of her household" (Pr. 31:27) . . . The mother is not merely a worker at home; she is the guardian of the home under the husband's authority and supervision! What "keepers at home" means is that the chief responsibility of the Christian wife and mother is her home and she should focus her attention on this and not do anything that would cause her to neglect it (David Cloud, "Keepers at Home").

What Does this Phrase Mean?

The basic significance of *oikourous* is that of a "housekeeper," that is, one who watches over a household and family, seeing to it that all members are cared for, and all things maintained in good order. *Oikourous* is used only in the New Testament in Titus 2:5 . . . ***Oikourous* was primarily used in the positive sense to indicate both the nature and sphere of a married woman's work. The nature of her work is to manage the affairs of her household, and the sphere of her work is the home. It is important to note that *oikourous* and its cognates all included the idea of staying at home. Therefore, we believe that the "keepers at home" are those who stay at home for the purpose of managing their households.** Paul's admonition is definite: Let the older women teach the younger women to remain within the sphere of their own households so that they might properly attend to their duties of caring for their family and managing its everyday affairs (**William O. Einwechter, "Keepers at Home"**).

What Does this Phrase Mean?

- It is rather difficult to get around the simple meaning of “*keepers at home*,” isn't it?
- A mother's work is “*in*” (NLT) and “*at*” (KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, CSB, ESV, CEB, NIV, NET) her home.
 - We may disagree on what all is included in woman's work to be done, but there should be no disagreement that the work is to be done at home.
- Most non-believers know exactly what this command requires and scoff; yet, for some reason, believers have a hard time understanding what the phrase means.

Why?

To Whom Does this Command Apply?

- Titus 2:4 tells us to whom the command applies: “*young*” women with “*husbands*” and “*children*.”
- I believe the phrase “*young*” women points to the most common time in a woman's life when there would be children at home dependent on their parents, not some specific age-frame for the woman (e.g. early 20s, 18-35 years old, etc.).
 - Early adulthood (when a woman is a "young" person) through middle adulthood is the most common timeframe when a woman gets married and bears children; rarely does an “old” woman find herself in this circumstance, especially as it pertains to bearing children.
 - Therefore, it is a necessary assumption that this command does not apply to an aged woman with children who have left their parents' house, nor would it apply to an unmarried woman.
- However, the command must, as result, apply to every married woman with children in the home.

To Whom Does this Command Apply?

- To "*guide the house*" as keepers at home is a special and divine assignment given to young women (1 Tim. 5:14).
 - Is there a more important and more rewarding work than guiding, molding, and training children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord in hopes of them becoming the salt of the earth?
- The work of a good mother is so important that nothing should hinder or turn her aside from this glorious task.

Why is this Command Given?

- Younger women are to be taught and, in turn, obey everything listed in **Titus 2:4-5** so “*that the word of God be not blasphemed*” (v.5).
 - For younger women to not receive instruction to serve as keepers at home invites blasphemy toward God's Word.
 - Likewise, for young women to not obey this command also invites blasphemy toward God's Word.
 - Does any Christian want this consequence to be laid upon on their conscience?
- This is a rather plain command with an equally plain consequence; one has to wonder then why it is so neglected today.

This is a Command, Not a Suggestion

- This command is probably neglected by people today because most Christians see **Titus 2:4-5** as a suggestion rather than what it actually is – a God-given command.
- Nowhere in the chapter does Paul's language indicate that he is giving inspired recommendations like he would regarding the “*present distress*” in **1 Cor. 7:25-26**.
 - **Titus 2:1-10** is comprised entirely of direct commands.
- It seems most Christians compromise the truth of **Titus 2:4-5** and turn the passage into a mere suggestion by using situation ethics to disregard the necessity of obeying what is demanded.
 - **But no amount of situation ethics will affect the need to comply with this command.**

Making an Exception When God Has Not

- There are no exceptions listed in **Titus 2:4-5** that would exclude any young married mother from complying with the command to be a keeper at home.
- To illustrate, **Matt. 19:9a** reads, “*Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.*”
 - There is one exception to Christ's law of permanency regarding marriage – fornication.
 - When a spouse sexually cheats, the offended spouse has a right to divorce the spouse who cheated; this is the only exception to our Lord's "no divorce" law.
- Now, look again at **Titus 2:4-5**. Are there any exceptions God has provided when giving this law for married mothers to be keepers at home?

Making an Exception When God Has Not

- Does the text say young women with husbands and children are to be keepers at home, "except it be" when . . .
 - *The family is hurting for money?*
 - *The mother would rather do something else with her time than keep the house/home?*
 - *The husband says his wife does not have to keep the house/home?*
- Neither this passage nor any other New Testament verse states any exception to God's "keepers at home" law.
 - If we include an exception when God has not provided such, we add to His Word, which carries grave consequences for our souls (see **Rev. 22:18-19**).

A Clarification

- Just because a married mother is home all day, that does not mean she automatically meets the demands of being a keeper at home.
- To illustrate, a man can be "*constant in prayer*" by speaking to God 15 times a day (**Rom. 12:12**), but that does not necessarily mean he is "*earnest*" or diligent in his prayers (**Col. 4:2, NKJV**).
 - The word “earnest” implies devotion, urgency, intentionality, sincerity, serious conviction, and alertness in prayer.
 - A man can pray 15 times a day, but if he is mechanical, formulaic, insincere, lacks conviction, or doubts God's ability to answer, the person may be constant in prayer but he certainly is not earnest.

A Clarification

“There is no [inherent - DTS] virtue in the fact that a woman stays at home, that is, that she does not have a job outside the home. She may be home all day and be lazy, or she may be a busybody 'wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not' (1 Tim. 5:13) . . . Whatever a woman does outside the home, whether it be as a tentmaker like Priscilla, or as a servant in the gospel like Phoebe, she should not let that detract her from her duties in the home” (Keepers at Home [Titus 2:3-5], Larry R. Hafley, 2004).

A Clarification

- Not only must the married mother not let anything distract her from her duties in the home, but if she does allow something (a job, friendships, social media, etc.) to take her attention away from serving her house, she sins by doing so just like her husband would sin if he ignored his responsibilities to “*provide . . . for his own house*” (1 Tim. 5:8).
- God's law provides both mothers and fathers with crucial responsibilities toward their families. If either person neglects to perform their responsibilities, they sin - plain and simple (see James 4:17; 1 John 3:4).
- Certainly, it takes much more than just being at home to be a keeper at home.

Conclusion

Godly women have always been the source of strength in their homes and in the church. Godly women patterned after examples such as Lois and Eunice (see **2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15**) have been the source of godly teaching, training, and examples which help shape the next generation into the Lord's servants. Yet, present-day society causes young mothers who make the godly decision to take on the role of working at home to feel inadequate, unfulfilled, and unintelligent.

- Perhaps husbands have failed in making their wives feel appreciated for their godly work.
- Perhaps older women have failed to encourage the younger women to pursue this great work.
- And perhaps gospel preachers have compromised God's truth to the point they refuse to even discuss God's expectations for young women.

Conclusion

- Whatever the case, we ought to accept and obey the Lord's will on this matter.
- Just as a man desiring the office of bishop “*desireth a good work*” (1 Tim. 3:1), so too does a woman desire a good work when she seeks to be a keeper at home.
- Let us never devalue the importance of God's command found in Titus 2:4-5, nor let us ever under-appreciate the women who exemplify such godliness.