

# TITUS

A Day-By-Day Study Guide

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# WEEK 1, DAY 1

## APART FROM GOD, NOTHING MATTERS

When God made mankind, He intended them to be His children. In fact, Luke refers to Adam as the son of God (Luke 3:38). God is holy and righteous, and He wants His children to conduct themselves in a godly manner (1 Pet 1:14-16).

But unfortunately, sin entered the world and caused the separation of mankind from God. The result has been catastrophic as we can see from human history: diseases, aging and death, fighting between nations, cultures, even fighting among family members oftentimes resulting in divorce. The end result is loneliness and suffering that God never intended. One of the greatest losses that occurred in humankind was the loss of purpose. Over the millennia, people have wondered why they exist and what meaning life holds. We have tried to find meaning by becoming something that will earn the respect of others. We hear the news report almost daily the results of public opinion polls of the president's current acceptability ratings. We know of musicians and movie stars that have worked hard to gain fame and respect from other people, only to end their lives in despair. We read of corporate executives driven to make more and more money, while their personal lives are falling apart. We ourselves may try to earn the respect and favor of others by what we have accomplished only to find that 'public opinion' can change with one mistake. The opinion of others – which we may so often seek – is temporary at best.

Others try to fill their emptiness and loneliness by finding their true soulmate, that one person who will love and accept them for who they are. Today, internet dating services abound. Advertisements promise complete happiness to those who try their dating service. 'Even if you have had a failed relationship in the past, this time it will be successful.' But after the newness of that relationship wears off, will that person have the resources needed to continue to love and accept you? Do you have the resources within you to love and accept your mate for the rest of your life?

We all need to be loved and accepted. We seem to be made that way. But what person will love and accept us completely, perfectly, even when we fail? What human being has gotten past their own inner loneliness and need for respect so that they can now give their love and respect to you whenever you have the need? The truth is no human being can do this by their own means. We all fail each other. We all fail ourselves. It is not humanly possible to meet all the needs of another, even if your love and commitment is deeper than any mere mortal has ever demonstrated before.

The truth is we have been made by God. In Him is Life. In Him is love – He is Love. Apart from God we cannot have life, or love, or true worth and acceptance. Apart from God we have no meaning, no purpose. But in a true relationship with God we are His! We are accepted and loved! We become part of His family, we become His children – a relationship He intended for us from the beginning. We have been purchased by the very blood of Jesus Christ. The price He paid was the most expensive price possible. But He did it willingly at His Father's command. And for those of us who acknowledge the price He had to pay and bow to His Lordship, we have been born again into the family of God.

As part of His family we can have relationships in which we can trust each other. We can have a marriage where both husband and wife can draw from the power of God to be faithful and committed to each other through all of life's challenges. It will never be perfect, but it is possible to have a fulfilling marriage, a loving family, and true friends in the context of God's family.

But as His children, how are we to conduct ourselves? It obviously does not come naturally. Look at the problems of the church members as recorded in the two letters to the Corinthians. We need instructions on how to conduct ourselves as God's children. That is the purpose of the letter to Titus. Titus was a young pastor on the island of Crete, an island in the Mediterranean, southeast of Greece. Paul's letter to Titus contains specific instructions to teach his church members on how they were to conduct themselves. He included instructions on what qualifications were needed for church elders, how the men (old and young – including Titus himself) were to conduct themselves, and how women were to conduct themselves. It is an 'instruction manual' on how to please the one Person that we really need to be concerned about: God.

Therefore, let us read and learn from the letter to Titus. Let us live life the way God wants us to. His opinion of us is the only 'opinion poll' that matters.

## WEEK 1, DAY 2

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### TITUS IN CRETE

Crete is a Greek island in the Mediterranean Sea situated approximately 60 miles south of the southern peninsula of mainland Greece. It is approximately 120 miles south of Athens. The island is about 150 miles long (east to west) and about 35 miles across at its greatest width. A mountain range extends across the middle of Crete. In almost the center of Crete is Mount Ida, elevation 8,058 feet. Its current population exceeds a half a million people. Agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism are its main economies.



In ancient times, Crete was under Roman rule from about 67 B.C. to 395 A.D. The Cretans were known as having good sailors and men skilled in archery. But they also earned a reputation for their low moral character. Ancient literature refers to them frequently in regard to their lack of honesty. The term “to act the Cretan” was a synonym to *play the liar*” (Unger, 1971).

The only recorded instance of Paul being at the island of Crete is in Acts 27:7-8. Bruce (1983) and Morgan (1924) estimate Paul's journey to Rome to be between 59 and 60 A.D. The text in Acts does not indicate that Titus was with Paul, Luke, and the Roman Centurion, Julius. Nor is there mention of any contact with any believers while harbored at Crete. Luke ends his account of Acts with Paul in Rome. Church tradition says that Paul was released from Roman confinement and carried on his ministry until his re-arrest and execution in 67 A.D.

Subsequent to Paul's release from Rome, it is conjectured (BKC, 1983) that Paul revisited Crete with Titus around 63-64 A.D. Paul began the work of putting the churches in order, but left Titus behind to continue the work (Titus 1:5). There is no specific mention in Scriptures as to how the churches in Crete began. It is probable that travelers, who had visited Jerusalem on the great day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11), returned to Crete with the Good News that they heard from the Apostle Peter (Acts 2:14-41; especially vs 39).

Titus was a convert of Paul (Titus 1:4) and was apparently greatly trusted by him. On his third missionary journey, Paul sent Titus as an emissary to the church at Corinth more than once. Titus brought the good news of the Corinthian church's acceptance of Paul's disciplinary message to them (2 Cor 7:6-9, 13-14). He was charged with urging the Corinthians to complete their intention of giving financially to the aid of the Christians in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:6). Paul viewed Titus as “my partner and

fellow worker” (2 Cor 8:23) and considered his conduct above reproach (2 Cor 12:18). These tasks assigned to Titus, including dealing with the difficult people of Crete under difficult circumstances (Titus 1:5, 10-13), illustrates the trust Paul had in him. After a period of time, Paul would send someone to relieve him at Crete so that Titus could visit Paul in Nicopolis. There were several cities of that name, but it is assumed by several scholars to be the city in the southwest portion of mainland Greece (Guthrie, 1990; Hendricksen, 1979). Church tradition says that Titus returned to Crete where he served out the rest of his earthly life.

*Resources: World Book Encyclopedia (1988); Unger (1971); Halley (1965); Bruce (1983); Morgan (1924).*

## WEEK 1, DAY 3

### INTRODUCTION, PART ONE (TITUS 1:1-4)

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Paul begins his letter to Titus with many words, which is not unlike some of his other letters. In 21<sup>st</sup> century America we might tend to begin our letters with: 'Hi Titus, Paul here. Listen, I hear you are having some trouble down there in Crete. Here is what I suggest you do . . . ' This kind of greeting is not out of line with the letter James wrote: “James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings” (James 1:1) – a very compact greeting, and then he gets right to his message. Paul, however, is more creative, more eloquent, in his greeting to Titus. He uses the greeting to set the tone of his letter to him. 'I am a bond-servant, or slave, of God. I am at His disposal. I am also an apostle, a messenger, for Jesus Christ. What He tells me, I pass on to you.' In other words, Paul's ministry and the letter he is writing to Titus is not on a whim of Paul. It has the stamp of God's approval and it is written with a very specific purpose in mind. Paul's life was not happenstance. His purpose in living his life was to please God Almighty, who is a holy and righteous God. And since God is holy, Paul wanted to live as holy a life as he could by God's help. And that is the central theme of this letter: God's people are to conduct their lives in a holy and pleasing manner before God. That was one of God's original intents when He created mankind and that is one of His purposes in redeeming those who will turn from their wickedness (Titus 2:14). God's main purpose in creating us was so that He could love His children and that His children would love Him. That exchange of love is blocked by sin. God wants to love His children with as much love as we can receive. But a marred vessel cannot contain all that God wants to give us. The vessel must be intact, of quality material, and of purposeful design. God paid the ultimate price in redeeming us and forgiving us of our sins. He is severely grieved when we go on living lives that remain stained with the filth of this world.

Paul says that he is a servant of God and a messenger for Jesus *for* the faith of those who believe in God (vs 1). The word 'for' (Greek: *kata*) is literally “according to.” But it has been translated by many Bible versions as “for” (NASB, NIV), or “to foster” (MLB), or “to further” (RSV) the faith of God's people. If this is the meaning Paul had in mind, then his apostleship, i.e. his message, was to encourage and to foster the growth of the faith of God's believers. This would give Titus an example of how his own teaching to the church at Crete should be. The believers at Crete needed to be encouraged in their faith, since they were not living lives that could be categorized as godly.

If, however, Paul meant that his apostleship was “according to” the faith of God's people, then his meaning was that his teachings were according to sound doctrine, in line with God's holiness. It does not mean that his apostleship was in accordance with the believers at Crete – that would be unacceptable. But rather, his teachings were in accordance with the True Faith, the Biblical doctrines that God's elect put their faith in. This would present to Titus, and the recipients of his teaching, that it is of vital importance to live one's life according to the Word of God. The standard by which we live our life is not open to conjecture. It is clearly spelled out in God's Word. That is the message that Paul writes to Titus: specific instructions for his congregation on how to live their lives. This view seems to fit the context of Paul's letter to Titus very well.

A third possibility of Paul's 'tone' in his introduction might have to do with the attitude of Titus at the time of this writing. Titus had been a faithful servant to Paul, helping him carry messages to the church at Corinth and even volunteering for the difficult task of collecting money from the Corinthians (2

Cor 8:16-17) to help the believers in Jerusalem. But now, what does Paul do but leave him in Crete (Titus 1:5) with the difficult task of trying to “reign in” the unruly Cretans (Titus 1:12-13)? Titus may have felt he was dealt a low blow. But Paul, in his introduction, states that he was an apostle of God – which was not by chance. It only comes by the appointment of God (1 Cor 1:1). The people in Crete who put their faith in God were not believers by chance, but 'chosen' by God. Therefore, Titus must realize that he was not left in Crete by chance, but is there by the appointment of God Almighty. He was not to take his ministry lightly, as if the decision was an afterthought or just something to do until a 'meaningful' assignment was to come along for him. Paul was chosen by God (vs 1), the people of Crete were chosen by God (vs 1), and Titus, 'you were chosen by God for this assignment.' There was a specific, God-ordained reason for Titus being there.

Because the Word of God is alive and active, it is not unreasonable to think that the Holy Spirit had at least these three reasons for orchestrating Paul's introductory greetings the way he did.

## WEEK 1, DAY 4

### INTRODUCTION, PART TWO (TITUS 1:1-4)

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In Paul's introductory greetings, he refers to believers as the “chosen of God” (NASB) or “God's elect” (NIV). This choice of words here, and in other passages of Scripture, have created questions within the church for many years. It raises the question of whether the individual has any decision in whether he or she is saved or whether the person has been selected by God from before the beginning of the world to be saved. One view (the strict Calvinist view – named after John Calvin, French-born Swiss theologian, lived 1509-1564) says that man has no choice in the matter. Because of his moral depravity, he is not even able to choose for himself. God in His wisdom chose who would be saved and who would suffer damnation. This view has not had a large following in recent church history. The other view (the Arminian view – named after Jacobus Arminius, Dutch theologian, lived 1560-1609) is that God has graced mankind with the ability to choose his eternal destination by putting his or her faith in Jesus Christ. This view has much broader acceptance in the church today. The reason there is any discussion on the matter is because Scripture can be found to support both views (e.g. Eph 1:4; 2:8 versus John 3:16; 7:37-38).

A possible scenario that might (repeat *might*) meld the two views lies in the foreknowledge of God. God knows the end from the beginning (Isa 46:10). He can view the past, present, and future as 'now' without influencing anyone's decision because He is outside of time. He is the author of time and is not bound to its limitations as we are. It is like seeing a 'mural of time' without being in the mural itself. With God's foreknowledge of us and the decisions we have made and will make (Rom 8:29), He has planned our lives in a way that will help us conform to the qualities and character of His Son (Rom 8:29). He has also planned a work for us to accomplish in our earthly journey (Eph 2:10), each of us having a specific role in the 'body' of Christ (Eph 4:11-12, 15). Also, since “many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt 22:14), there appears to be a human-response element even in His choosing of us: “those who are with Him are the called, the chosen, and the faithful” (Rev 17:14).

No amount of reasoning with our finite wisdom can enable us to fully understand the infinite wisdom of God, but it does seem clear from Scripture that the individual is held responsible to make the decision to either submit to the Lordship of Christ or suffer eternal damnation, for God offers us the choice. Since we can only understand what has been laid upon us as our responsibility, let us look at those verses of Scripture that demand our attention.

Scripture declares that God invites all people to come to Him (John 7:37). His grace has appeared offering salvation to all men (Titus 2:11). He came that we might not perish (2 Pet 3:9), but that we would be saved (2 Tim 2:4) from the coming judgment on earth (1 Thes 1:10) and from personal judgment as well (John 5:24). Our responsibility is that we believe in Jesus Christ: “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent” (John 6:29). The word believe is in the continuous tense; it is not a one-time occurrence. And that is the important point with regards to the message Titus was to deliver to the believers at Crete. It is not enough to believe Christ as our Savior, but we must continually trust Him everyday and in all things. Daily we are to follow Him (Luke 9:23). It is a lifetime

commitment (Luke 9:62). Our lives are to be wholly dedicated to God and to be a blessing to others by our conduct of life (Matt 5:16; 12:29-31). That is the responsibility we have set before us.

Paul lived his life in accordance with the True Faith that God's people have put their trust in. He wanted others to follow his example of conduct toward others.

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” (1 Cor 10:31 – 11:1)

Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to live pure and holy lives.

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.” (Eph 5:1-4).

His message, as we will read, is the same for the Cretans. It is the same for us as well.

## WEEK 1, DAY 5

### INTRODUCTION, PART THREE (TITUS 1:1-4)

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A literal translation, by Alfred Marshall, of verses 1-3 reads:

“Paul, a slave of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of the chosen ones of God and the full knowledge of truth according to piety – in hope of eternal life, which the unlying God promised before times eternal, but in its own times manifested the word of Him in a proclamation which I was entrusted with according to the command of God the Savior of us all.” (Marshall, 1986)

In writing to Titus, Paul says that he was totally surrendered to God (a willing slave of God) and was chosen by Jesus Christ (Gal 1:1) to be a messenger to the people chosen by God. His appointment as apostle was in accordance with the True Faith which presents God's Word in its full truth. This faith requires godliness from His followers. Accordingly, Paul's purpose in his ministry was to bring the message of Jesus Christ to the believers of God for the purpose of strengthening their faith and leading them to live a godly life. In other words, His work was for both salvation and sanctification (BKC, 1983) of God's people – whom God foreknew before the creation of the world. In accordance with His foreknowledge of both the fall of mankind and the required remedy, God promised to His Son (Hendricksen, 1957), before creation (vs 2), that the fore-planned work of Christ's death on the cross would provide eternal life to many. This sure hope of eternal life, of which we have not been deceived – for God cannot lie, is an anchor to our souls (Heb 6:19-20) during difficult times. This promise of the gift of eternal life was made known to mankind in part through God's prophets of old (Rom 1:1-2) and made fully known in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Col 1:25-27). Paul was entrusted by God the great privilege of proclaiming to many the hope of eternal life through the work of Jesus Christ.

This was the lengthy introductory greeting Paul had for Titus. Contrast the short greetings Paul had for Timothy (1 Tim 1:1-2; 2 Tim 1:1-2). Titus was in need of Paul's life example and the reminder of the hope we have in the promise of eternal life. He is going to be exhorted by Paul to proclaim not only the hope of eternal life, but the necessity of God's people to live godly lives. Titus would have to preach this message to a less than receptive congregation as the nature of the Cretans tended toward lying, laziness and gluttony (Titus 1:12-13). Paul, therefore adds this greeting to Titus in verse 4:

“Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.”

In other words, Titus had a tough assignment ahead of him. Paul's injunction: 'Rely on God, you are really going to need it!'

## WEEK 2, DAY 1

### PAUL'S DIRECTIVE TO TITUS (TITUS 1:5-16)

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Most scholars agree that Paul's trip to Rome – in order to defend himself against the charges of the Jews, allowed no opportunity for Paul (a prisoner of Rome) to visit with the churches at Crete, even though the ship harbored there (Acts 27:7-8). The general view is that Paul and Titus later visited Crete when Paul was released from Roman confinement according to church tradition. After a short visit, Paul left Titus behind with the charge to continue the work of setting the churches in order (Titus 1:5). It is possible that when Paul says that he “left” Titus to handle the situation at Crete, he said this in terms of 'I did not change my mind to have you stay in Crete, but my decision was to leave you there to fix the situation.' This view allows for the position that Paul never personally visited Crete, which coincides with the lack of mention of Paul's visit in the book of Acts. The overwhelming view of commentators, however, is that Paul and Titus did visit Crete after his release from imprisonment in Rome, at which time Paul then physically “left” Titus behind.

The reason Paul left Titus behind was so that he would continue to set in order, “straighten out” (NIV), the work that remained unfinished in Crete and to appoint elders in all the cities in Crete that had churches. The setting in order consisted of teaching the congregations how to properly conduct themselves as Christians. This is the message of chapters 2 and 3 of Titus. The remainder of chapter 1 consists mostly of the character qualities that Titus needed to look for in men in order to appoint them as elders, i.e. overseers. Hendriksen (1957) views the appointment of elders as the work remaining to be done in order to straighten out the churches: “that you might straighten out the things that remain to be done, namely, that you might appoint elders in each city in such a manner as I gave you instructions” (Hendriksen's own translation of the text, 1957). To be sure, the appointment of qualified men as elders was a major work of setting the things in order. But the extensive amount instructions to Titus on what he should teach the congregations are also extremely important in this process of straightening out the problems.

Here, then, are the qualifications of men eligible to be appointed elders:

#### NASB

men who are . . .

above reproach (in family life)

- 1 the husband of one wife
- 2 having children who believe
- 3 not accused of dissipation or rebellion

as God's steward, above reproach

- 4 not self-willed
- 5 not quick-tempered

#### NIV

men who are . . .

without blame (in family life)

- 1 the husband of but one wife
- 2 whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient

as entrusted with God's work, blameless

- 3 not overbearing
- 4 not quick-tempered

6	not addicted to wine	5	not given to drunkenness
7	not pugnacious (i.e. not belligerent)	6	not violent
8	not fond of sordid gain	7	not pursuing dishonest gain
9	hospitable	8	hospitable
10	loving what is good	9	loves what is good
11	sensible	10	self-controlled
12	just	11	upright
13	devout	12	holy
14	self-controlled	13	disciplined
15	holds fast the faithful word	14	hold firmly to the trustworthy message
16	able to exhort in sound doctrine	15	encourage others by sound doctrine
17	able to refute those who contradict	16	refute those who oppose it

## WEEK 2, DAY 2

### THE QUALIFICATION OF ELDERS EXAMINED, PART ONE (TITUS 1:5-16)

The first two (or three) qualities that a man must possess in order to qualify for being an elder relate to the man's home life. A good indication of whether a man can effectively oversee a church is whether the man can oversee his own household. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim 3:5). This is essentially the same thing that Paul is saying to Titus, 'Begin your search for elders by observing how they did in ordering their own households.' Paul's directive to Titus is to set in order the churches at Crete (vs 5). Titus is to begin doing this by gathering men around him that know how to set in order their own homes. If the man is 'blameless,' literally, *unreprovable* (Marshall, 1986), in the area of managing his home, there will be fewer distractions, both from within the home and from accusations from without (vs. 10-11), for the man to do the work of overseer.

The first condition Paul imposes on the office of elder, is that he be the husband of one wife. Polygamy, of course, is unacceptable, both as a church member and as an overseer. Paul does not say the man whose first wife died cannot remarry. Paul used death and remarriage in Romans 7 to illustrate the point of the believer's freedom from the Mosaic Law in order to be joined to the newness in life of the Holy Spirit. But in that passage, Paul makes it clear that remarriage after one's spouse has died is perfectly acceptable (Rom 7:3). This is not an issue for the qualifications of being an elder. What is an issue is whether a man is qualified to be an elder if he has divorced and remarried. Is he then consider the husband of one wife? Too many views exist to be considered in detail here. But a general guideline exists in our own conversion. Before we were saved we were not qualified to be considered part of the church body, much less overseer of a church. But we all had to repent of our sins, be forgiven by God, and accepted into the assembly as part of God's family. Everyone of us has a past that was unacceptable to God before we came to Him. But after His forgiveness, we are part of His family and it is in this realm that the man can be judged for fitness to the office of overseer. There are many individual and special circumstances to be sure, but generally, if a man has divorced and remarried after he has been a Christian, then his ability to oversee the affairs of a church body is in question.

The second evaluation point that Paul indicates in the area of a man's home life for the qualification of a man to be elder is whether his children behave or not. The NASB's translation leaves in

question whether the qualities of “not accused of dissipation or rebellion” (vs 6) applies to the man's children or to himself. All other translations consulted tie these qualities to the children. The conditions imposed on the elder's personal life (vs 7-9) cover these areas and so it seems best that the condition of “[not] being wild or disobedient” (NIV) apply to the elder's children. Do the children have to be Christians in order for the man to be qualified for the office of elder? Many translations indicate this, but the meaning of the word translated “believe” carries with it more the idea of being faithful to the family or that the children can be trusted to behave themselves. Greek sources (e.g. NASBEC, 1981; Ryrie, 1995; Zodhiates, 1992) indicate that the word means “faithful” or “trustworthy.” In other words, even though we cannot truly know the spiritual state of another individual, especially that of children still living at home, we can observe in their conduct whether the father is able to guide, train, and discipline his children to behave rationally and respectfully to others. If he can do this with his children – who have individual minds of their own, there is a good chance this man can help teach, counsel, and take disciplinary actions as needed in the body of believers he will be responsible for.

## WEEK 2, DAY 3

### THE QUALIFICATION OF ELDERS EXAMINED, PART TWO (TITUS 1:5-16)

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The next 12 qualities of an elder listed by Paul refer to the man's individual character itself. Since he is to be “entrusted with God's work,” it is necessary that the man himself must be irreproachable. Otherwise he, and the church body he represents, will become easy prey for those who seek to disrupt the church. This was occurring in Crete (vs 10-11) and occurs today. The Christian church is under attack, even by some individuals who attend a church. The church is also under attack by those of the media who look for opportunities to discredit God's church and thereby bring disdain on anyone who believes in God. Satan is in an all-out war against God. And we are the ones he attacks as he seeks to hurt God.

The elder's first quality is that he is not self-willed (vs 7); that is, he seeks the best for the body he oversees, not his own interest. He models his conduct after the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) and not that of the former leaders of Israel (Ezek 34:1-4). The elder, as the NIV puts it, “is not overbearing.” He gently leads the people, primarily by example.

The next characteristic of an elder is that he not be quick-tempered. As God is slow to anger (Ex 34:6; Joel 2:13), so should we be. A quick-tempered man is quick to judge. Fairness in overseeing a body of believers requires one who is a good listener, accepts counsel, and prays before making a decision. In matters of the church, the leadership needs to wait upon the Lord's direction (e.g. Acts 13:2-4). The quick problem solver is not necessarily an asset in church decision making. To wait upon the Lord requires patience. God is not obligated to our time schedule. God is not obligated to us for anything. We are obligated to God for everything. The quick-tempered, impatient man is not God's choice for an elder.

The next three negative characteristics that a man must not possess in order to be an elder of God's choosing might seem a bit obvious to us. But considering the makeup of many of the Cretans (vs 10-13), it needed to be stated. The man must “not [be] given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain” (vs 7). Who would be willing to follow a drunk, belligerent, and dishonest man? It hardly seems necessary to state this; and yet, some elected officials could be describe by these words. Maybe the 21<sup>st</sup> century man is not so far removed from the character of the Cretans as we would wish.

Fortunately, Paul now list some positive qualities that an elder of God's choosing possesses. Hospitality characterizes someone who loves people. They open their home and their hearts to God's people. They may not have been a people-person by nature – some unregenerate people naturally love people – but after their conversion and growth in the Lord, they see in people the object of God's affection. This doesn't necessarily express itself in warm, fuzzy feelings of emotion, but it should express itself with a deep concern and respect for all people, wanting to do them good (Gal 6:10). The elder of God's choosing wants to do good to others. He loves what is good, he demonstrates love (1 Cor 13:4-8). He is sensible and self-controlled. Slowness to anger and wisdom in the choices he makes will be evident. He is just; he is fair, sound, and steady. The elder of God's choosing is wholly dedicated to the Lord. He is a man after God's heart. His life-conduct demonstrates self-control and discipline.

We haven't even gotten to the end of Paul's list, but we might be wondering: does such a person

exist? No one fulfills these characteristics all the time, not even poorly. But the general character of a person controlled by the Holy Spirit does demonstrate these qualities on a fairly regular basis. It is their norm, not their exception. Stress will come, inexplicable hurt may be thrust upon us – sometimes by people we dearly love, and we will react. But the man or woman of God will ask for forgiveness, both from God and the person they have hurt. It is the man who is truly seeking after God's kingdom who is qualified for the office of elder. This is what Titus was to look for in his appointed elders. This is what every body of believers should seek and expect in their elders.

## **WEEK 2, DAY 4**

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### **THE QUALIFICATION OF ELDERS EXAMINED, PART THREE (TITUS 1:5-16)**

The last three qualities that Paul lists for the man being considered for the office of elder have to do with his relationship to the Word of God. First of all, does he hold firmly, i.e. rely completely on, the Word of God as the foundation of truth for his life? Is the Word his standard by which all else is judged? An affirmative answer is required for these two questions, for his convictions in this area will be tested (vs 10-11). In fact, the elder will be called upon to defend the Word against false teachers to guard the members of his congregation from being harmed. Church elders must have a solid grasp of God's Word so that they can “exhort in sound doctrine” and “refute those who contradict” the Word (vs 9). The pastors, the full-time, paid elders, are not the only people in the church body who are to know the Scriptures. All the leaders are to have a grasp of God's Word. It is in the understanding of Scripture that God speaks to the leadership of a church. The wisdom necessary and the sensitivity to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit comes from a good, foundational knowledge of what God has written down. All human advice, all human decisions must be weighed against the written Word. We all have our own opinions. We all can 'hear' the still, soft voice of God (1 Kings 19:11b-13). But to separate the thoughts of our own from the thoughts of God requires us to judge that thought by making sure it aligns with the Word of God. To discern the leading of the Holy Spirit for the church, the elders need to judge that leading in view of God's nature as revealed in His Word. God had His Word written down by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in order for us to know what is absolute truth. Absolute truth is not derived by great minds or thinking people. Some of the most absurd theories come from highly educated people. A thinking mind devoid of the Spirit of God can lead to absolute foolishness (Rom 1:22).

When the elders of a church 'know' the Word, then false teachings are easily detected and confronted. The Word of Truth slays the onslaughts of the enemy (Matt 4:1-11). The Word of Truth gives hope to the people of God because it teaches them about the finished work of Jesus Christ and His entrance into God's presence, having secured our salvation:

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Heb 10:19-23)

It is these truths that provides an anchor for our souls (Heb 6:19-20). Pity the congregation that never hears the truth of God's Word. When the people of God hear His Word they become interested in it themselves. Then they study it on their own and become grounded in His Truth. They are not tossed with every wave of doctrine that comes from “empty talkers and deceivers” (Titus 1:10). The Word of God is to be taught by the elders that God has chosen.

## WEEK 2, DAY 5

### THE REBELLIOUS DECEIVERS (TITUS 1:5-16)

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The Word of God is to be defended by the elders that He has chosen,

“for there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers . . . *who must be silenced* because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach.” (vs 10-11)

Paul knew the tactics of the devil. He was also aware of the disreputable character of the Cretans. They were infamous for their lying, their cheating, and their laziness (vs 12-13). Not only was there this saying (vs 12) by one of their own people, but their reputation was described by others down through the years. The next three quotes are taken from Hendriksen (1957) in order to show that Paul was not making a sweeping and unjust generalization:

“So much in fact do love of shameful profit and greed prevail among them that among all men Cretans are the only ones in whose estimation no profit is ever disgraceful.” (Polybius, Greek historian, 203-120 B.C.; *The Histories* VI. 46).

“Indeed, (men’s) moral principles are so divergent that the Cretans . . . consider highway-robbery to be honorable.” (Cicero, Roman orator, statesman, and philosopher, 106-43 B.C.; *Republic* III. ix. 15).

“Of his soldiers (only) the Cretans followed him, not through being favorably disposed (toward him), but because they were as devoted to his riches as are bees to their honeycombs.” (Plutarch, Greek essayist and biographer, 46-120 A.D.; *Aemilius Paulus* XXIII. 4).

Within the churches were deceivers that had such low moral standards, they were willing to ruin entire households for their own dishonest profit (vs 11), Paul writes Titus that these men needed to be silenced (vs 11) and reprovved severely (rebuked sharply, NIV) in order to protect the families from being ruined and to correct, if possible, these deceivers into a path of sound faith (vs 13). They needed to be firmly warned to turn away from Jewish myths and the commandments of men who turn away from the truth (vs 14). The Jewish myths and commands of men are probably from the Christians who came out of Judaism (vs 10), and probably Gnosticism (Ryrie, 1995). These men would corrupt the people by teaching that matters of the material world (including our bodies) had no connection to the spiritual so that physical restraint was unimportant and even impossible. All material things were evil to them, therefore nothing could be done about it: “to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure” (vs 15). You can imagine what havoc this wreaked in the families who bought into these lies. These lies must be silenced and those teaching them must be severely rebuked (vs 13). It was the only means by which the attention of such disreputable men could be garnered.

This is not the means by which pastors and elders are to talk to their congregations who are truly seeking to follow Christ. In these cases, a spirit of gentleness is to prevail (Gal 6:1-2). Anyone who desires to follow Christ knows they are a sinner. Anyone (pastor or layman) can evoke conviction and sorrow from a person who truly desires to follow Christ by telling them how bad they are. They already know this. Burdening them with guilt serves no godly purpose. Christ came to free us of sin and all condemnation (Rom 8:1-2). Those truly seeking Christ need encouragement to do good and to help others do good (Heb 10:24).

The severe rebuke is reserved only for those who try to sway the sincere in heart from following Christ. That is why Jesus was so severe with the Jewish leaders of his time (e.g. Matt 15:1-9). Paul describes such men as professing to know God, but their deeds deny their claims (vs 16). These men are detestable, disobedient and worthless for any good deed. Severe reproving is their only hope.

# WEEK 3, DAY 1

## TITUS: TEACH THESE THINGS (TITUS 2:1-10)

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Having described the type of men needed for the elders that were to be appointed in the various cities in Crete, Paul now lists what Titus needed to preach to the various congregations in order to “set in order” what remained to be done (Titus 1:5). In verse 1, Paul describes what he is about to list as “fitting” (NASB) or “in accord” with sound doctrine or “healthy teaching” (Marshall, 1986). This list is directed at five particular groups of people within each congregation. Paul ends this list (vs 15) by exhorting Titus to teach (repeatedly) these things “with all authority,” i.e., “with the authority of Christ whom he represents” (Hendriksen, 1957). In other words, “Titus, this is important! Keep preaching on these themes so that they will live godly lives.’

Although these five groups (older men, older women, young married women, younger men, and slaves) needed to be taught these godly principles for their own benefit, they also were the ‘makeup’ of the “households” of those times. Paul may be directly combatting the disastrous work of the “rebellious men” who were “ruining whole households” by what they were teaching (Titus 1:10-11).

Here are the principles of conduct that Titus was to urge his congregations to embrace:

### NASB

#### Older men

- 1 temperate
- 2 dignified
- 3 sensible
- 4 sound in faith, love, perseverance

#### Older women

- 1 reverent in their behavior
- 2 not malicious gossips
- 3 not enslaved to wine
- 4 teaching what is good; encouraging young women

#### Young women

- 1 love their husbands
- 2 love their children
- 3 sensible
- 4 pure
- 5 workers at home

### NIV

#### Older men

- 1 temperate
- 2 worthy of respect
- 3 self-controlled
- 4 sound in faith, love, endurance

#### Older women

- 1 reverent in the way they live
- 2 not to be slanderers
- 3 not addicted to wine
- 4 teach what is good; train the younger women

#### Young women

- 1 love their husbands
- 2 love their children
- 3 self-controlled
- 4 pure
- 5 busy at home

- 6 kind
- 7 subject to their husbands

Young men  
Titus was to be an example to young men

- 1 sensible
- 2 in all things show yourself:
  - a an example of good deeds
  - b purity in doctrine
  - c dignified
  - d sound in speech

Servants

- 1 subject to masters in everything
- 2 well-pleasing
- 3 not argumentative
- 4 not pilfering
- 5 showing good faith

- 6 kind
- 7 subject to their husbands

Young men  
Titus was to be an example to young men

- 1 self-controlled
- 2 in everything, be an example of: doing good
- 3 in teaching, show:
  - a integrity
  - b seriousness
  - c soundness of speech

Servants

- 1 subject to masters in everything
- 2 trying to please their masters
- 3 not to talk back
- 4 not to steal
- 5 show that they can be trusted

This is a long list that we will look at over the next four days. But one general theme seems to prevail: to be self-controlled and dignified. Self-control comes from the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:23). The word dignify comes from the Latin word *dignus* which means worthy, deserving, fitting (American Heritage Dictionary, 1992). Paul has written elsewhere that the conduct of one's life should be in such a manner that it makes one worthy of being called a child of God (Eph 4:1). These are very high standards, but we serve the God Most High who deserves this kind of behavior. In our conduct we are not to dishonor the Word of God (Titus 2:5), but rather we are to make the teachings of Jesus Christ appealing and attractive to everyone (Titus 2:10).

## WEEK 3, DAY 2

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE OLDER MEN AND WOMEN (TITUS 2:1-10)

Titus is to teach in his sermons that older men are to be temperate (vs 2); that is, exercising moderation and restraint in one's appetite and behavior. It is not just the consumption of wine that one must not give into, but any vice that, if yielded to, would consume us. It is the idea of *being in control*, as opposed to *being controlled* by wine, or anger, or greed. The only thing that should have control over us, is the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). Older men are also to be dignified and sensible. These two qualities go hand-in-hand. One who acts sensibly in all matters will earn the respect of others, both in the Christian and secular communities. Even at an advanced age, people can act immature and coarse. They have never

really 'grown up' – they are consumed with themselves. This behavior is bad enough in the young, but in the older generation it is shameful. To be sound in faith, in love, and in perseverance is just the opposite of being childish and vain. These qualities demonstrate growth in the Christian walk. Years of studying the Bible and believing in and acting upon what one has read, will express itself in a steady, dependable person that predominately shows love to others and to God. This is a model that was badly needed in the Cretan society.

Paul also instructed Titus to teach older women that they must be “reverent in their behavior” (vs 3). The Greek word used means “suited to a sacred character, reverent” (Vine, 1940). Reverent in today's connotation almost sounds monastic. But in no way does this mean we are not to enjoy life and have fun. To be reverent is to show respect for others (American Heritage Dictionary, 1992). It is another way of regarding others as more important than oneself (Phil 2:3). As with the older men, Titus was to remind the older women not to be consumed with oneself. If one matures in their Christian faith, then they will “live outside of themselves” and not be tempted by malicious gossip, nor enslaved to much wine. Gossip degrades others in order to elevate oneself. When this fails to 'medicate' the pain of the world's constant derision, we sometimes escape the world by overindulging in wine. This course of action provides no solution for our pain. Instead of seeking the role of a societal woman, Titus was to teach older women to find their worth in being a child of God, seeking to live holy before Him. Older women were to be useful in helping younger women find their worth in truly becoming children of God.

Older Christian men and women are called upon to model the Christian life to the younger generation. This can never be realized perfectly. We are all sinners, redeemed by Christ. But the Lord is gracious and kind, always willing to forgive (Ex 34:6; Joel 2:13) and always desires to help us with the power of His Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; Eph 3:16; 2 Tim 1:7). We will fail, but He is there to forgive us (1 John 1:9). We just need to get back up and fight the good fight of faith.

## WEEK 3, DAY 3

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### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE YOUNGER WOMEN (TITUS 2:1-10)

The older women were to encourage the younger women in seven areas: to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, to be workers at home, kind, and subject to their husbands (vs 4-5). The root word for loving their husbands and children is *phileō* (i.e. brotherly love) and not *agapaō* (i.e. self-sacrificing love). A person can give sacrificial love out of a sense of duty without really liking the person. But what God wants in a Christian marriage is true and deep companionship. Before the fall, Adam was alone; he needed companionship (Gen 2:18); someone to be his best friend. What blesses God, and what really blesses a married couple, is when the husband and wife are the deepest and best of friends. No one comes even close to meeting the needs of an individual as does their spouse. Someone with whom you can be truly yourself, someone in whom you can confide your deepest thoughts that you wouldn't tell anyone else. That is the best of companions. Your best friend is also someone with whom you have the most fun. This kind of marriage relationship is the best of human relationships that we will encounter in this world. It is to be prized and cherished and guarded. Imagine growing old together with the one you want to be with the most. This is true enjoyment.

Young mothers are also to enjoy their children. It is a well-worn saying that you only have a few years to spend with your children. We may think it is an overused saying – but it is not. It is so true. Even if you don't believe it while they are trying and irritable, you will believe the saying when they have left the home. Don't lose the opportunity to be there when they need you. Don't wake up one day regretting what you could have done. Lowering your financial expectations will raise the wealth you will carry in your heart today and forever. God has ordered the family so that Christ leads and provides for the husband (1 Cor 11:3), the husband leads and provides for his wife (Eph 5:22-25, 28), and the wife is to stay at home to lead and nurture their children (Titus 2:4-5). Obviously, special circumstances, like ill health of the husband, will prevent this and no one should feel any shame. But generally speaking, God wants the mothers to stay at home to love, discipline, and 'befriend' their children. After all, they need a special companion as they are growing up in which they can confide their deepest feelings that they won't tell anyone else. Mom, you have a beautiful and special place in their little, but very important lives.

Don't give this up if at all possible. Paul is advising you to stay at home and be their best friends.

The older women are also to teach the younger women to be sensible, pure, and kind. These attributes are a blessing for husband, children, and the women themselves. The home where the tone of the household is sensible, pure, and kind, is a wonderful place to come home to, both after work and after school. Husband and children want to come home to such a haven of rest. And a woman who lives in this kind of home has deep satisfaction, greater than anything that the world has to offer.

Lastly, women are to be subject to their husbands. This is how God has ordered the marriage relationship (1 Pet 3:1-6). Do not be timid in this. God has a special injunction to husbands to treat you with the highest regard, otherwise, their lives will be hindered (1 Pet 3:7). A submissive attitude helps in having an orderly household and demonstrates to the children love and trust in those who lead us.

These instructions are many and weighty. The role of a woman as wife and mother are extremely important. That role necessitates these weighty instructions. The older women are to teach the younger women what is good and to be there for their encouragement (vs 3-4).

## WEEK 3, DAY 4

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR TITUS AND THE YOUNGER MEN (TITUS 2:1-10)

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Paul next instructs Titus to urge, or encourage, the younger men to be sensible (vs 6). He is to encourage the young men personally by word and by example, as we shall see. The Greek word for encourage is a familiar one: *Parakaléo*, which literally means “to call to one's side” (Zodhiates, 1991). The word Jesus used for the Holy Spirit, i.e. Helper or Counselor (John 14:16), is *Paráklētos*, which is derived from *Parakaléo*. The same personal attention that the Holy Spirit gives to us is to be duplicated by Titus – as much as is humanly possible – with the young men of his congregations. Titus was not of an age to do this to the older men. And, it is extremely inappropriate for a pastor to come alongside the women of the church for special help and training; that is why the older women are called to this role. But Titus is in the age category of the younger men (vs 7) and is therefore charged by Paul to get personally involved in their lives by word and example. The first item of business was to teach the young men to be sensible, or self-controlled (vs 6). This advice for young men is sorely needed today. We often hear the question: “What kind of person are you when you are alone?” Do you avoid temptation or seek it out? Do you resist the temptations that do come your way? Do you act becomingly when you are away from family or work? Or is your behavior coarse or childish? We are not to give those opposed to Christianity grounds for accusations (vs 8). Our conduct at all times must be sensible and self-controlled. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having fun. But a public display of uncontrolled silliness dishonors the Lord.

Paul's next instruction to Titus exhorts him to be an example of good deeds in all things, i.e. “in every respect” (Hendriksen, 1957). Good deeds are the fruit of what we have become in the Lord. It is one reason why God redeemed us from our sinful state (Titus 2:14). God provides the sun and rain to both the good and the bad (Matt 5:44-45); that is His character, to do good. That is what He wants of His people. Titus was to demonstrate this impartial benevolence to the young men he was to disciple.

Next, Paul instructed Titus to demonstrate in his teaching: integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech. The NASB and Amplified New Testament translations do not group these qualities under the heading of his teaching. Rather, Titus was to show himself in all circumstances to be an example of good deeds, to be true to God's Word, to be dignified, and to be sound in speech. In his preaching, and in all his activity, Titus was to demonstrate the qualities of personal integrity, taking seriously God's calling on his life, and being wise in his speech.

These qualities 'transferred' to the young men he was discipling would transform their personal lives and their families. Unfortunately, integrity was typically lacking in the Cretan society (Titus 1:12). Personal integrity in the husband and father is absolutely essential for the family's success. A wife can easily follow a man who is honest and seeking after God with his whole heart. Children will emulate a father who is honestly trying to follow God. Children 'absorb' what they see demonstrated in their parents' lives, not in what the parents say. A wife is also proud of her husband who can maintain his dignity and his manner of speech in all circumstances. A marriage in which the husband deeply cares for his wife (as Christ cares for His church; Eph 5:25) and the wife and husband are best friends (vs 4), is a

marriage as solid and enjoyable as you will ever see. These are soulmates in the truest sense of the word. A strong, loving, inseparable relationship between husband and wife is God's plan for marriage (Matt 19:4-6). His plan for marriage includes romance (Song of Solomon). That should also be a strong element in the Christian marriage.

## **WEEK 3, DAY 5**

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### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SERVANTS (EMPLOYEES) (TITUS 2:1-10)**

The last unit in the family of those times that Paul discusses are the servants (vs 9-10). Most of us cannot afford house servants today. But in those times the servants were slaves, costing very little to their owners. The Bible does not condone slavery. Paul advises those who were slaves to seek freedom if it is possible (1 Cor 7:21). He also strongly urges Philemon to give Onesimus his freedom (Philem vs 10-17, 21). But Paul also understands that many slave owners (especially non-Christians) will not be compelled to give their slaves their freedom. Therefore he counsels the Christian slaves to accept this and to find their freedom in Christ (1 Cor 7:19-24). This may seem like harsh advice, but our true freedom is to be in Christ.

As unlikely as it may first seem, those of us who work for others to earn our living, can learn a great deal from Paul's advice to the house servants of that time. While we are at work under the paid services of our employer, we are under moral obligation to do that job to the best of our abilities. As we shall see, we are never under obligation to do anything that is against the law or against our Christian principles. But in the context of honest work, we must do an honest day's labor each day. And we must never cheat on our employer, whether by petty larceny (vs 10) or not working the hours paid for, which is another form of stealing. We are to be subject to our employer's requests and try to be well-pleasing (vs 9). This may be trying, as some employers are very difficult to work for. But that does not eliminate our obligation to do what we are asked, for ultimately we are working for God (Col 3:22-24). Even unreasonable employers are to be respected and submitted to (1 Pet 2:18). This does not mean God wants us to be verbally abused by our employers. We are not to equate the employer-employee relationship with the master-slave relationship of which Paul is writing; we are gaining insight from Paul's teaching. We can ask the employer to treat us with respect and dignity, but we must do so with respect and dignity toward even the harshest of employers. We are not to be argumentative (vs 9). But, if the employer does not treat us with respect, we can give notice of our resignation. We are not obligated to work in situations where we are abused or the employer is doing something illegal. God may call us to expose such activity to the authorities (Eph 5:11).

The goal of our good work is not only to make a living and not be a burden to others (1 Thes 4:11-12), but also to "adorn" or "make attractive" the teachings of Jesus Christ (vs 10). A good work ethic may catch the attention of unsaved employers, who see a difference in our lives and wonder why. An opportunity for their salvation may be at stake. In everything we do, let us do all for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31-33).

## **WEEK 4, DAY 1**

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### **THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR GODLY LIVING (TITUS 2:11-15)**

In verses 2 through 10, Paul has directed Titus to teach the men, women, and servants of the family unit how to conduct themselves in a godly manner. In a negative sense, they were to avoid drunkenness, gossip, and uncontrolled behavior. In a positive sense, they were to be sensible, controlled, strong in faith, sound in doctrine, a best friend to their spouse and children, subjecting themselves to the authority structure that God has ordained for the family. These instructions were probably in direct opposition to the destructive teachings of the rebellious men who were upsetting or ruining whole households (Titus 1:9-10). Paul now gives the theological basis for what he had written (BKC, 1983). The

word “for” in Titus 2:11 connects all his instructions with why they must live their lives this way.

The phrase “to all men” in verse 11 has been associated differently by the various translations and commentators. The NIV associates “to all men” with the word “appeared” – thus, God's grace has been made known to each person, or alternatively, to each class of people (i.e. male or female, young or old, free or slave). The NASB associates “to all men” with the word “salvation” – thus, God's grace has finally appeared in the course of human history, “bringing salvation [i.e. making it now available] to all men.” God has manifested His glory to all men via “nature” (Ps 19:1-6). God also makes no distinction between people types (Gal 3:28). But the verb tense of “appeared” would indicated the moment in history when Christ came to earth, i.e. his first appearing (Ryrie, 1995). This appearing took place at a point of time, in the past, and we are the beneficiaries of that appearing. Another use of this word “appeared” (Greek: *Epiphainō*, “to shine upon”) occurs in Luke 1:79: “to shine upon those living in darkness.” It is in the context of Zacharias' prophetic words, father of John the Baptizer, that the meaning of Titus 2:11 makes sense:

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,  
and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of David His servant . . .

to grant us *that we . . .*  
*might serve Him without fear,*  
*in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.*

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways;  
to give to His people the knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of their sins,  
because of the tender mercy of our God,  
with which *the Sunrise from on high will visit us,*  
*to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,*  
*to guide our feet into the way of peace.”* (excerpts from Luke 1:67-79)

God sent His Son to rescue us from eternal damnation and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, so that we would be free to live godly lives before Him. His appearing was like a bright light, shining in the darkness of this world. It is an awakening of our minds to the fact that we were not meant for living our lives on such a 'low plane.' God has an infinitely greater 'level' (Eph 2:6) on which we are to live our lives: above the depravity of Satan, freed to become the adopted children of God, inheriting His nature, living our lives to please Him. It is God's intent that we become “a people for His own possession,” that we would be eager to do good (Titus 2:14). With this in mind, Paul writes to Titus: 'Tell them how to live!' The very purpose of God's salvation is to have children who will become part of His family and live in accordance with His nature (2 Pet 1:4). This is the idea that the Apostle Peter conveys in his second letter:

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him* who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, *so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature,* having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

“*Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.* For if these

qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet 1:2-8)

In the same way, Paul does not want the lives of the Cretans to be useless nor unfruitful. Titus is directed by Paul to exhort them (vs 15) to live their lives in a way that would be honoring to God.

*References: BKC, 1983; Guthrie, 1990; Hendriksen, 1957; Ryrie, 1995; Vine, 1940; Zodhiates, 1991.*

## **WEEK 4, DAY 2**

### **DENYING UNGODLINESS – LIVING SELF-CONTROLLED (TITUS 2:11-15)**

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When, by God's grace, salvation is bestowed upon the repentant sinner, an awakening occurs in our minds. The Holy Spirit begins to transform our way of thinking (Rom 12:2). The Holy Spirit helps us understand the truth of God's Word (John 14:26; 16:13). He enables us to turn from the idols of this world to serve the Living God (1 Thes 1:9). But it requires our cooperation (Phil 2:12-13). Without our surrendered hearts, the work of the Holy Spirit is frustrated (1 Thes 5:19). When Paul writes to Titus that God's grace instructs “us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:12), how are we to respond? How are we to accomplish this? As we read in 2 Pet 1:3, “His divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness.” It's a great promise, but we don't always feel very powerful when temptation comes. How do we draw from the resources God has given us? The answer is three-fold.

First, we must believe in God's Word as absolute truth. Through His Word we become knowledgeable of “His precious and magnificent promises” (2 Pet 1:4). These promises include help from His Holy Spirit (Zech 4:6; Acts 1:8; Gal 5:16, 22-23). By the power of the Holy Spirit we can deny the desires of our flesh and the temptation of the world. But, believe it or not, the power of God's Spirit is subject to our decision to yield to Him. Just because we are believers, that does not mean we are mindless robots, automatically following God against our will. We are still required to decide whom we will serve. Paul instructed the church at Colossae to “put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Col 3:12). Those qualities are obviously not part of our own nature, so how do we do this? The phrase “put on” (“clothe yourselves”, NIV) is a command requiring our attentive observance; in other words, we must actively choose to obey the command. When we choose to do what's right, the Holy Spirit is there to empower us. In a negative sense, it may be that God will direct us to leave the situation immediately: flee immorality (1 Cor 6:18); flee from idolatry (1 Cor 10:14); flee from youthful lusts (2 Tim 2:22). This idea includes avoiding the temptation, when possible, in the first place (Prov 4:14-15). But when the enemy does attack, we must decide to do what is right. Keep in mind who we live for: “How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?” (Gen 39:9). We must resist based on what we believe and the promises of God (Eph 6:14-17) and pray for help from the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:18). Making that first decision to deny the flesh will cause us to grow in the spirit and in our ability to deny our flesh the next time (Gal 6:7-8). Unfortunately, choosing the path of sin weakens us for the next temptation. In a positive sense, the Holy Spirit is there to help us do acts of kindness. The many kind things Paul lists in Col 3:12-14 are possible by the power of the Holy Spirit, for all these things require the level of love that only comes from God, for God is love (1 John 4:7-8). Whether in doing good or denying our flesh, the process begins with our choice.

The second way we draw from the resources God has given us is in understanding and believing in Christ's first and second coming. Probably the two greatest incentives we have to choose to follow God are realizing how much he suffered to redeem us – His first coming (vs 14), and the promise of His second coming (vs 13). We will concentrate on these two points in tomorrow's study. When we realize how much He loves us, we willingly respond to that love (1 John 4:10-11; 19). When we realize that He is coming again, and we desire His return, we understand how temporary this world is and we desire to prepare ourselves for His return (2 Pet 3:10-13; 1 John 2:15, 17; 3:2-3).

The third resource we have in being faithful to God is in our assembling together in a local

church. Our brothers and sisters in Christ can provide great strength in our times of weakness. This is especially true of those of our own household – this is one of the reasons Paul commands Titus and the elders to silence the destructive teachings of the rebellious men in Crete (Titus 1:10-11). The household can be an incredible stronghold against the forces of this world and the devil. In addition to the family members in our own household, our brothers and sisters in Christ can be there to help:

“Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ . . . So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (Gal 6:2, 10).

“We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.” (1 Thes 5:14).

“And let us consider to how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking the assembling together . . . but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” (Heb 10:24-25)

## WEEK 4, DAY 3

### CHRIST – OUR SAVIOR, OUR HOPE (TITUS 2:11-15)

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Paul writes to Titus that one of the reasons that believers are to live godly lives is because Christ is returning (vs 13). He died on the cross so that He could redeem (literally, ransom) us and release us from the bondage of sin (Zodhiates, 1991). He did this in order to have a people of His own possession that are zealous to do good works (vs 14). This is what He died for and this is what He expects of us when He returns. Is that what we are doing? What is our heart attitude? Are we eager to do good for others or are we only concerned about what will be good for ourselves? Paul's instruction to Titus to teach the Cretans how to conduct their lives (Titus 2:2-10) is in alignment with what God's grace (through the Holy Spirit) instructs us to do in our awakened conscience (vs 11-12). God created mankind without sin. But because man sinned, He sent His Son to rectify the marring of His original plan. The Bible instructs us to conduct ourselves in a godly manner, our conscience tells us to live in a godly manner, and our pastors preach to us to live godly lives. There seems to be a recurring theme here. By the grace of God through His Holy Spirit, we can bear fruit that is pleasing to God (Gal 5:22-23).

Another motivation to live godly lives is the price it cost for God to ransom us. The pain and agony of the mock trial, the 39 lashes on His back, the carrying of his cross while He had the strength, and the long and painful hanging on the cross for those many hours creates in us an appreciation of what He did for us that we can never, ever repay. And beyond the physical suffering was the spiritual warfare that waged violently in Jesus as He had to chose to willingly take on the pain of separation from His Father; something He never had experienced before. This was literally a 'war within His mind and soul' in the Garden of Gethsemane. When the author of Hebrews wrote that Jesus had to learn obedience from the things that He suffered, he mentions the torment in His soul:

“In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications *with loud crying and tears* to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.” (Heb 5:7-9)

Matthew tells us that Christ prayed to His Father three times that if it was possible, “to let this cup pass” (Matt 26:36-44), and that His soul was deeply grieved and distressed (Matt 26:37-38). Luke writes that Jesus prayed so fervently and in such great anguish that His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22:44). This was the most critical point in all of history. Have you ever thought how vulnerable God made Himself on our behalf? What if Jesus had said 'no'? It must have been a possibility or He wouldn't have suffered so in making the decision. What would have happened to the

Godhead if Jesus had refused to obey His Father? This is probably impossible for us to answer. But doesn't it reveal the extreme depths that God was willing to go to in order to save us from our sins? In view of this, is it too much to ask that we obey His commandment in conducting our lives according to His desire? Obviously it is not. Out of gratitude for a debt we cannot even come close to repaying, let us cooperate with God and allow His correcting and sanctifying process in our lives to go on with as little grievance to Him as possible.

We have one more reason to conduct our lives in a godly manner: the blessed hope that awaits us (vs 13). This hope is our eternal existence with God, for which Christ has prepared the way (Heb 6:19-20). It is when we will see God face to face and He will speak to us:

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” (Matt 25:34).

For the world that God will soon make will have no sorrow nor pain, but rather it will be full of the glorious presence of our loving God in the company of our friends and family that have put their trust in Him. And we shall live with Him forever (Rev 21:3-7). This is what we should live for.

## WEEK 4, DAY 4

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TEACHING (TITUS 2:11-15)

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Speak, exhort, reprove . . . these are strong words to Titus (vs 15). “Do not let anyone despise you” (NIV). These are some more strong words. According to Zodhiates (1992), the word 'despise' (Greek: *periphronéō*) comes from two words that means “to think around.” In other words, to pay no attention to, to disregard, to think beyond what the person is saying so that you can apply your own understanding to the situation. Paul is saying to Timothy, 'Don't let them miss your point. Speak to them, exhort them, rebuke them if you have to! These teachings on proper conduct in the Christian life are too important for them not to listen to you.' Let us recap what Paul has taught us.

The elderly are not to cause burdens on their families who might have the responsibility of taking care of them. But even if they live on their own, teach them to be an example of faith and stability for the younger members of the home and Christian assemblies. The older women are to help the younger women to find their calling in being the unifying influence and source of encouragement for their husbands and children. Younger men are to act sensibly, to be an example in all they do. They are to prove themselves to be honest and trustworthy at home and in their business. Husbands and wives are to find their greatest human friend in each other. Children will find incredible security and encouragement in a home where mother and father truly love each other and just can't seem to spend enough time together. They will also become secure in knowing their mom and dad are their two best friends while they are growing up. They will naturally want to grow up to be like them.

Whether we are married or single, widowed or divorced, young or old, we should be able to draw great strength from our church family. Possibly the weakest link in 21<sup>st</sup> century Christianity is the church home. The affluence experienced in many developed countries, has caused an isolation of people that wasn't know in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We have many means of transportation at our disposal to take us to almost wherever we wish. We have televisions with likable people on them who have become our electronic friends. Our sense of need for others has diminished. We have become calloused. Neighbors are often strangers. Husbands and wives hardly know each other. Children grow up in incomplete families and often carry the pain and insecurity of this uncertain foundation with them for much of their lives. The word 'family' is being redefined by the secular progressives to mean whatever they or anyone else want it to mean. Absolute truth is relative to many modern, 'scientific' minds. What it means to 'love' someone is even being redefined to the level of animalistic behavior. Never has the need to accept God's Word as Absolute Truth been more evident.

When God clearly describes the behavior and cohesiveness He desires for the family and church as He did in Titus 2:2-10, what will we do? Will we “think around” what has been spoken to us by the Word or His appointed pastors? Or will we accept what is said and act in accordance with God's

teachings? Godly living isn't being offered as one of our options to choose from. We either obey His commands or we despise God. That is the reality of the decision laid before us. What will we do as a church? What will you do as God's child?

## WEEK 4, DAY 5

### OUR CONDUCT TOWARD SOCIETY (TITUS 3:1-2)

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In addition to teaching the Cretan Christians on how to conduct themselves within the home and church, Paul instructs Titus to remind them of the instructions they have already been given – possibly by Paul himself. Titus was to remind them to be subject to their civil rulers and authorities and to be obedient to them (vs 1; Rom 13:1-2). One would think that to be subject to someone means to be obedient to them, and indeed this is the case. But to be subject to someone also includes the idea of a 'positional' mindset of being in submission to them. It requires us to be subordinate and loyal to the government (Guthrie, 1990). This may be a difficult idea to accept for some and one that is quite contrary to modern, 'independent' thinking. Paul is not saying to do anything that goes against our conscience or the teachings of Scripture (Acts 5:28-29), but if the government requires us to pay taxes, for example, then we pay those taxes (Rom 13:7) – and we must be 'ready' to do so without trying to cheat the government. Being subject to the laws of the land is really for our own good (Rom 13:3-5).

#### Other principles of conduct

##### NASB

##### NIV

Toward the government:

- 1 subject to rulers
- 2 to authorities, to be obedient
- 3 to be ready for every good deed

- 1 subject to rulers and authorities
- 2 to be obedient
- 3 to be ready to do whatever is good

Toward non-believers:

- 1 to malign no one
- 2 to be peaceable
- 3 gentle
- 4 showing every consideration for all men

- 1 to slander no one
- 2 to be peaceable
- 3 considerate
- 4 to show true humility toward all men

Going even beyond the requirements of the laws of the land, Paul tells to not speak evil of anyone, but to be peaceable, and patient, showing “all mildness to all people” (Hendriksen, 1957). This is a tall order to show 'all' kindness to 'all' people. It is definitely beyond our own abilities. But, by God's grace, we can start today. We can actively decide and pray for God's help to not speak poorly of others and to be patient and kind to them. After all, this is what God demonstrated perfectly toward us (vs 3-4). We won't be perfect in this, but we must begin yielding to the Holy Spirit's power to transform our minds to genuinely live this kind of life. It is this kindness to others that is a sweet aroma to the unsaved:

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and *manifests through us the*

*sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.* For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, *but as from sincerity*, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.” (2 Cor 2:14-17)

God desires our lives to 'entice' people to Him by our genuine love and concern for them. God drew us to Him by His great love:

“the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:5-8)

God's unmerited love for sinners – the reason for our being kind to others – is the topic of verses 3-7, which we will study next week.

## WEEK 5, DAY 1

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### OUR INDEBTEDNESS TO GOD, PART ONE (TITUS 3:3-8)

In verse 2, Paul said that in regards to the unsaved, we should “malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.” In verses 3-7, he gives two very powerful reasons why we must conduct ourselves in this manner. The first reason is that before our being saved, we were absolutely no different than they are.

We once were:

- a) foolish
- b) disobedient
- c) deceived
- d) enslaved to various lusts and pleasures
- e) spending our lives in malice and envy,
- f) hateful, hating one another

When we list Paul's description of what our behavior was like, it is not a pretty picture. But it is accurate. As Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, we “formerly walked according to the course of this world . . . we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging in the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath” (Eph 2:2-3). Paul's list of our former nature (the deeds of the flesh) is even more detailed in his letter to the church at Galatia: immorality, outbursts of anger, dissensions, drunkenness and carousing to name just a few (Gal 5:19-21). To put it mildly, we were not good people. In fact, in ourselves, we are still not good people. If we consider our own present abilities and our own character apart from God, we can only conclude with Paul, that “nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not” (Rom 7:18).

If then, we were once like this, and apart from God's help we would still be like this, how can we not show “every consideration” to others? How can we dare be harsh and unforgiving to others? We should not be. But when we are harsh and unforgiving toward others, we must seek God's forgiveness, for God has forgiven us so much. Because God has forgiven us, He expects us to forgive others (Matt 18:32-33). When we realize how much He has forgiven us, we will be humbled and grateful to God and not be harsh toward others (Luke 7:39-47).

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all

malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” (Eph 4:30-32).

We are to have this attitude toward non-believers and toward our brothers and sisters in Christ as well. We are all made from the same stock. No one is better than the other. We are all in need of God's mercy and grace. Therefore, as Paul writes in verse 2, let us show every consideration and kindness to others, for God was so kind to us.

## WEEK 5, DAY 2

### OUR INDEBTEDNESS TO GOD, PART TWO (TITUS 3:3-8)

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The first reason we are to malign no one and show all consideration to others is because apart from God we are no different than those we are maligning (vs 3). We, and they, are both guilty before God. We, and they, are both sinful and deserving of eternal death. We dare not malign nor mistreat others because we cannot point the finger at anyone; we are the same in our own natures.

The second reason Paul gives us for showing every consideration for others is the absolute indebtedness we have to the incomprehensible compassion and mercy shown to *all* humanity by Christ's death on the cross. Verse 4 and 5, as translated by Marshall (1986), literally reads: “But when the kindness and *the love to man* of the Savior our God appeared . . . He saved us.” The Apostle John wrote: “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not ours only, but *also for those of the whole world*” (1 John 2:2). All humanity, each and everyone of us, are the objects of His great act of love on the cross. Christ died for the people we sometimes malign! How can we do this? Is not Christ's blood good enough to save them? Of course it is. It is true that many refuse and deny Him as their Savior, but their sins were paid for as surely as ours were (2 Pet 2:1). The gift of salvation has not been received by them, and we will certainly not aid their realization of God's unfathomable love for them if we mistreat them. Therefore, we must show every consideration and love for them as God has shown to us. We are both the objects of God's love. Let our actions toward them be in such a manner as to help them see the Light, not drive them away.

Since we have come to the realization of God's love for us, they might also come to this realization. For we did not, by any means of our own, save ourselves. Nor was His work of salvation on the cross based on our merits (vs 5). We have no righteous deeds to our credit (Rom 3:9-18): “There is none righteous, not even one . . . there is none who understands, there is no one who seeks God . . . together they have become useless.” Rather, it was all God's doing. While we were helpless, Christ died for us (Rom 5:6). It was all because of His mercy (vs 5). It is because of His mercy, and His mercy alone, that we are eternally indebted to Him. In verses 5-7, Paul describes the unfathomable mercy of God.

First, by His mercy in going to the cross, He saved us by “the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (NASB). The NIV says it this way: “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” As Jesus said to Nicodemus: “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Paul will allude to propitiation and justification later (vs 7), but Christ's purpose in coming was to cleanse the temples of God, that is, us (1 Cor 6:19-20), in order to make houses suitable for the transforming power of His Holy Spirit (Rom 12:1-2). No longer are we all together worthless (Rom 3:12), but by His work He has purified “for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:14, NIV). We are now “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). He has given us the privilege of working with Him in spreading the excellencies (literally, virtues) of Christ. Our success in spreading the virtues of Christ will not be good if *our* virtues are lacking. Maligning others robs us of our 'representative voice' for Christ. These are sobering words. Most of us fail in “showing every consideration for all men” (vs 2).

We must confess our sins and be restored and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, make a new start, being peaceable, gentle, and taking every opportunity to be merciful to others.

## WEEK 5, DAY 3

### OUR INDEBTEDNESS TO GOD, PART THREE (TITUS 3:3-8)

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Having cleansed us by the washing of rebirth (vs5), He poured out His Holy Spirit upon us *richly* (vs 6). Again, this was based upon the work of Jesus Christ. The gift was not given stingingly, but abundantly. God is a generous giver; He wants us to have life in its fullness (John 10:10). The gift of the Holy Spirit is the best of all gifts in helping us live for Christ. And He wants to fill us lavishly with His Spirit. For it is the Holy Spirit that empowers us to live as God commands (Eph 3:16), and to understand the greatness of His love. He gifts us with abilities to help each other grow into mature sons and daughters of God (1 Cor 12:7), no longer to be tossed here and there with every “wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14). He enables us to encourage each other and to ‘fit together’ with our brothers and sisters in Christ “according to the proper working of each individual part, causing the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Eph 4:16). So, with the gifting and empowering of the Holy Spirit, we are no longer individual families and a corporate church body that can be ruined by rebellious, false teachers (Titus 1:10-11). Rather, we can stand against the enemy and let Christ have the victory in a unified local body. This requires us to be yielded to God’s Holy Spirit and to utilize the gifts He has given us. If we do not fulfill the part God has given us in the body of Christ, the body suffers (1 Cor 12:26). With the gifts we are given, we are to seek the building up of each other.

The work that Christ did: the washing away of our sins and the ‘setting in order’ of our standing before God the Father was all done at the cross. When Christ hung on the cross, the Father placed all the sins of the world on Him:

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor 5:21)

This was typified in the Old Testament Mosaic Law. On the great Day of Atonement, two male goats were taken from the sons of Israel; one for the Lord and one as the scapegoat (Lev 16:5, 8). The one goat would be sacrificed before the Lord as the sin offering (Lev 16:15), its blood being carried inside the most Holy Place of the Tabernacle and sprinkled upon the mercy seat, that is, the top of the ark (Lev 16:15). The other goat would have the sins of the people of Israel confessed over it and would then be released into the wilderness, “to a solitary land” (Lev 16:21-22). This demonstrated the separating of our sins far from us:

“As far as the east is from the west, so has He removed our transgressions from us.” (Ps 103:12)

But because it is impossible for the blood of goats to take away our sins (Heb 10:4), Christ appeared (Titus 3:4) to take on human form (Heb 10:5-10) in order to be the true Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29; Heb 10:10, 12, 14).

The result of Christ’s work was manifold:

**Propitiation.** By Christ’s death on the cross, the holy demands of God’s righteousness in requiring the judgment of sins were satisfied. (Rom 3:25).

**Justification.** Because of Christ’s death on the cross, our sins have been removed from our account: “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” (Heb 10:17). Justification means we have been acquitted of the crimes charged against us. But, of course, this is all due to God’s grace (Titus 3:7).

**Giver of Himself** – in the person of the Holy Spirit. Because we have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, He sent His Holy Spirit to live inside us (John 14:17; Col 1:27). This is a fulfillment of God’s promise through the prophet Jeremiah: “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days . . . I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jer 31:33; Heb 10:16).

Christ came to “set us in order,” that is, to save us, to cleanse us, and to make us a people that would fulfill His Law. To say it as Paul does:

“He gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14).

That is God's intent for us. Paul intended Titus to convey this truth to the Cretans (Titus 1:5). And that should be our intent: to be a people that do good and proclaim the virtues (*praises*, NIV; *excellencies*, NASB) of Christ to all those we live and work with (1 Pet 2:9). This proclamation will only be acceptable to non-believers if it comes from believers who exemplify the virtues of Christ in themselves (Matt 7:16-17; James 1:22).

## WEEK 5, DAY 4

### HEIRS, DOING THE WORK OF CHRIST (TITUS 3:3-8)

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A preeminent reason for Christ's work of salvation must not be overlooked. It has been alluded to, but must be stated clearly. Christ did not save us primarily to be coworkers with Him in saving others. Christ's work was primarily to save us individually in order to have a relationship with us. Fellowship between mankind and God through the reconciliatory work of Christ is His primary goal. Yes, He wants us to be holy, as He is Holy. Yes, He wants us to participate in the drawing of souls to Him. But, we should never overlook His primary object in dying on the cross: you! He wants fellowship with you! And because He also wants fellowship with others, He invites us to work with Him to restore the unbelieving to Him. A personal relationship with God is primary. The opportunity to work with Him becomes our privilege. The hope God has, and the hope we share with Him, is that we will live with God forever. Therefore, Paul says:

“So that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (vs 7)

This hope of eternal life should be our primary focus in life. It will cause us to look for His coming (1 John 3:1-3; Rev 22:20). Speaking on the hope of resurrection, Paul says: “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men” (1 Cor 15:19, NIV). It is for eternal life that we should have hope. The fact that we are “heirs” (vs 7) indicates that we do not currently possess that for which we should be hoping for. This life will pass away. And yet, how much time and money we invest in this life. Paul writes to Titus:

“Concerning these things I want you to speak confidently [to your congregations], so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are profitable for men” (vs 8).

Our efforts should be focused on living according to God's commandments and thereby interesting others in a relationship with Christ. God wants us to grow in Him and bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23; John 15:5, 8, 12). “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

At the end of verse 8 Paul says: “These things are good and profitable for men.” God is not trying to make us miserable by arbitrarily devising harsh and difficult rules for us to follow. Rather, they are given to make our lives as good as possible in this present, turbulent world.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matt 11:29-30)

## WEEK 5, DAY 5

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### AVOID FOOLISH CONTROVERSIES, REJECT FACTIOUS PEOPLE (TITUS 3:9-11)

In verse 8 Paul wanted believers to be “engaged in good deeds,” for that is “good and profitable” for all. In sharp contrast, he writes Titus to “avoid foolish controversies” about the Law for they are “unprofitable and worthless” (vs 9). One way to “silence” the rebellious deceivers of the circumcision (Titus 1:10-11) was to avoid getting caught up in disputes and arguments regarding genealogies and matters of the Mosaic Law (vs 9). The word for “avoid” (Greek: *periistēmi*) in verse 9 means literally “to turn oneself about so as to face the other way” (Guthrie, 1990). Confronting them with the real issue of Jesus' work on the cross and the demand to live a holy life is worth talking about. But wrangling over matters bear no consequence (e.g. genealogies) is unprofitable and worthless. The aim of those who promote such 'discussions' is to divert attention away from the simple truths of the gospel. The teaching of trivial matters weigh down the people with burdens – Jesus is opposed to this (Luke 11:46). What God really wants us to be concerned with is the essential message of the law: justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matt 23:23). Love fulfills the law:

“For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Gal 5:14; cf Rom 13:8, 10; James 2:8)

Other people in the body who try to divide believers by their views (factious men), are to be warned a first and second time (vs 10). If they refuse correction, they are to be rejected from further associations with the church (Matt 18:15-17; Rom 16:17). Division within the body of Christ is a serious matter (James 3:16) and must be prevented. A man that promotes division is “perverted (warped, NIV; corrupted, AmpNT) and is sinning, being self-condemned” (vs 11). The word “perverted” is rendered by Hendriksen (1957) as “distorted . . . morally twisted or turned.” The verb tense indicates an action that took place in the past (verb tense taken from Zodhiates, 1991). The implication being that this type of person cannot be straightened or “set in order” (Titus 1:5). This person is “self-condemned,” that is, “he goes on sinning [though] he is convinced of guilt” (AmpNT, 1958). But several commentators point out that the purpose in removing such a person from the assembly is their ultimate restoration to faith (BKC, 1983; Hendriksen, 1957). Whether a person can be restored to faith by reproofing them (Titus 1:13) or not (Titus 1:15-16), the unity of the body must be preserved, for worldly and empty chatter leads to ungodliness and spreads like gangrene (2 Tim 2:16-18). This must be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately, for it is very dangerous.

## WEEK 6, DAY 1

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### PERSONAL MESSAGES: COME TO NICOPOLIS (TITUS 3:12-15)

After making clear to Titus what needed to be done for the churches in Crete, Paul now turns his attentions to the needs of Titus. Verse 12 indicates that either Paul had need of Titus or, more likely, Titus had need of Paul's company. It is not unreasonable to think that Paul's letter was in response to Titus' plea for instruction and help. He was probably weary of his difficult assignment. Therefore, Paul writes to Titus that after his temporary replacement arrives – either Artemas or Tychius, he is to “hasten to come to me in Nicopolis” (literal translation by Marshall, 1986). If the above suggested scenario is true, Paul realizes that Titus needed refreshment and encouragement. But look how Paul accomplished this – he wanted to meet with Titus himself, one-on-one. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Christianity, we have many 'retreats' and 'conferences' available to both pastor and layman. These are good, but they cannot substitute for the one-on-one mentoring between a mature pastor and his undershepherd. Conferences meet the general needs of scores, maybe hundreds of pastors in encouraging them to continue to 'fight the good fight.' But there is seldom a real opportunity to discuss and deal with the personal needs and questions that can only be asked in the confidence of a close, mature mentor. 'Economy of scale' is one

thing, but the quality of 'one-on-one mentoring' cannot be matched. Considering the distressing challenges the Cretans caused, Titus probably needed a vacation with Paul. Isn't it heart-warming that although the needs of the Cretans were many and severe, Paul puts the priority on Titus' needs? The Gospel of Mark records that when Jesus saw that His disciples were weary, He called them away to rest (Mark 6:31). The congregation's needs cannot be met by the pastor who is so weary that he loses his perspective.

Paul directs Titus to meet him in Nicopolis – which means “City of Victory” (Guthrie, 1990). The name of the location itself would be encouraging to Titus. Paul was not there when he wrote this letter to Titus, for he said that he had “decided to spend the winter *there*” (vs 12). Had he already been in Nicopolis, he would have wrote that he decided to spend the winter *here*. Hendriksen (1957) speculates that Paul was probably north of Greece in Macedonia. The city he planned to winter at was Nicopolis. There were several cities by that name, but most commentators believe the Nicopolis referred to was in the Greek region of Epirus, which was on the western coast. The winter would be warmer there and was probably a more pleasant location than in the northern regions of Macedonia. These factors and its proximity to Crete, would make Titus' trip easier and something to look forward to.

In addition to this, Paul was sending someone to 'hold the fort' while Titus was away. We know nothing of Artemas and little of Tychius, but undoubtedly they were up to the task of relieving Titus for a short vacation. Church tradition has it that Titus returned to Crete and spent the rest of his earthly days there. This would indicate that Titus was greatly encouraged by his visit with Paul and remained faithfully committed to the work among the people of Crete.



## WEEK 6, DAY 2

### PERSONAL MESSAGES: ELDER HELP (TITUS 3:12-15)

In verse 13, Paul writes that Titus should “diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way way so that nothing is lacking for them.” Though it is not mentioned, Zenas and Apollos were probably the ones who delivered Paul's letter to Titus. Apollos had a great reputation for being a man of

God with an eloquent ability to preach (Acts 18:24-25). Such a man would be a great encouragement to Titus. With Apollos was a lawyer named Zenas. This could mean that he was a man of the Mosaic Law or a Roman lawyer of civic law (Guthrie, 1990; Hendriksen, 1957). If he was an expert in the Mosaic Law he could help squelch the troublemakers of the circumcision (Titus 1:10). If he was an expert of Roman law, he may have been en route to help Christians who were being persecuted by the government for their faith. Whatever their purpose and wherever their final destination, Paul instructs Titus to see to it that they are not lacking in any need (vs 13). But Paul does not want Titus to do this himself. He sees an opportunity for those at Crete to learn how to meet pressing needs (vs 14).

The more recent translations of the NIV and the NASB (Updated) versions do not do justice to verse 14. In fact, when one looks at the literal translation of verse 14, they seem to be misleading. The NASB, original version, does a better job of translating verse 14. But the translation that seems truest to the original is the King James version:

“And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they not be unfruitful.”

Green's (1986) literal translation of verse 14 reads:

“And also let learn our (own) of good works to maintain for necessary uses, that they not be without fruit.”

The first thing to note in these translations is that the word 'people' is missing. It does not exist in the Greek. The word 'our' (Greek: *hēméteros*) can be translated as 'our own' (Zhodiatas, 1992), implying in this context 'our own type,' i.e. elders. Paul had already instructed the congregation in how to conduct their lives (Titus 2:1-3:8). In Titus 3:9-11 are words directed at Titus. Here, in verses 13-14, are instructions to Titus to involve the elders in this work of helping Apollos and Zenas with their needs. Paul says to 'let them learn to manage the affairs related to pressing needs.' Titus is not to do everything himself. The selected elders had to meet high standards (Titus 1:6-9). These quality men now need to learn how to manage needs so that they will fulfill their position and “not be unfruitful.” Let them learn this, Paul is saying.

In support of this view that Paul is referring to elders is the word translated 'engage' (NASB) or 'devote' (NIV) in verse 14. It is the Greek word *proistēmi*, which means 'to put before,' 'to set over,' or 'to rule' (NASBEC, 1981). It has the idea of managing. Elders and deacons need to be able to manage their own households – used three times in 1 Tim 3:4, 5, and 12. In 1 Thes 5:12, it describes the elders as 'having charge over' us. In Romans 12:8, the word is used of those who 'lead' (NASB) or have 'leadership' (NIV). The final two uses of the word are here in Titus (3:8, 12). In Titus 3:8, the people are encouraged to be careful to 'maintain' (KJV) themselves in good works, implying that we need to 'manage' ourselves in order to be able to continue doing good for others. And finally in Titus 3:14, the word indicates that Paul is instructing Titus to let the elders 'have charge over' this matter of helping Apollos and Zenas with their needs (vs 13) so that they will not be lacking in anything. The elders are capable of doing this; Titus needs to let them handle it. That is why we have an elder team. They are to handle the affairs of managing a church.

## WEEK 6, DAY 3

### PERSONAL MESSAGES: FINAL GREETINGS (TITUS 3:12-15)

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Paul concludes his letter to Titus by forwarding the greetings of those who are with him to Titus (vs 15). Paul was not alone in his hope for Titus' success in Crete. In addition, Paul sends his own greetings to “those who love us in the faith” (NASB). Guthrie (1990) suggests an alternative: 'Greet those who love us faithfully.' Liftin (BKC, 1983) observes that Paul is excluding greetings to those at Crete who are false teachers and causing the Cretans' current disturbances (Titus 1:10-11). This is a form of 'turning his back' (Titus 3:9-11) on those who prove to be divisive. The strong desire of Paul is that the church at Crete will faithfully represent Jesus Christ. His words of instruction to Titus will help them to that end.

Paul then ends his letter as he does all of his letters by remembering God's grace: "Grace be with you all." (The only possible letter in which he might not end by referring to God's grace would be in Romans; some manuscripts do not contain Rom 16:24.) Grace, God's unmerited favor toward us, is the 'under-girding' of our lives. If anything is to go favorably for us, it is because God is for us (Rom 8:31). For Titus and the Christians at Crete, God's grace is what will see them through this period of needed growth.

It is His grace that causes everything good to come our way. God's favor toward us led to our forgiveness, salvation and justification through the work of Christ (Acts 15:11; Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7). We are called to faith by His grace (Gal 1:6). We are comforted, encouraged, and sustained by His favor toward us (2 Thes 2:16; Heb 4:16). God's favor toward us depends on Christ's work at the cross. Any attempt to stand before God apart from our complete dependence on Christ's death on the cross receives God's severe disfavor (Gal 5:4). Instead of any attempt to walk in our own strength, we are "to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 3:18). Part and parcel with Christian maturity is an experiential knowledge that we are totally dependent upon God's favor toward us. That appears to be the essence of Paul's prayer in this last statement to Titus and the Cretans, and to all of us as well: 'Acknowledge the need of God's grace in your lives. Apart from God you can do nothing' (John 15:5). Maturity in Christ means growing in our dependence on God.

## WEEK 6, DAY 4

### AN OUTLINED REVIEW OF THE LETTER TO TITUS (TITUS 3:12-15)

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- I. Greetings. (1:1-4)

Paul is God's servant  Paul was entrusted with the proclamation of God's Word  Implied: Titus ("my true child in a common faith"), so are you. You are His servant; you are entrusted with His Word; you are where God has placed you.
- II. Titus' assignment: Set in order the church at Crete. (1:5)
  - A. Appoint elders. (1:6-16)
    - i. The qualifications of elders. (1:6-9)

has one wife  children behave themselves  not self-willed  not quick-tempered  not addicted to wine  not belligerent  honest  hospitable  loves what is good  sensible  just  devout  self-controlled  believes and obeys the Word  can teach the Word  can defend the Word.
    - ii. The reason elders are needed. (1:19-16)

rebellious men were teaching false doctrines  families were being ruined by their false doctrines.
  - B. Teach sound doctrine. (2:1-3:8)
    - i. Older men. (2:2)

be temperate  dignified  sensible  sound in faith, love, and perseverance.
    - ii. Older women. (2:3-4)

be reverent in their behavior  not malicious gossips  not enslaved to wine  encouraging young women, teaching what is good.
    - iii. Young women. (2:4-5)

love your husbands  love your children  sensible  pure  workers at home  kind  subject to husband.
    - iv. Young men and Titus. (2:6-8)

be sensible  an example of good deeds  purity in doctrine  dignified  sound in speech.
    - v. Servants. (2:9-10)

be subject to masters (employers)  well-pleasing (doing quality work)  not argumentative  not pilfering  trustworthy.
    - vi. A reason for our salvation: holy conduct. (2:11-14)

God created man without sin  after man's sin, He redeemed us from sin  He wants us to

- live holy lives □ He is returning for us, who have prepared ourselves for His coming.
- ▶ Exhortation to Titus: Teach these things boldly. (2:15)
  - vii. To the entire congregation. (3:1-8)
    - a) Submit to authority; civil & spiritual. (3:1)
    - b) Respect others. (3:2-3)
      - Be patient and merciful to others.
      - For God was merciful to us. (3:4-7)
        - we once were disobedient and enslaved to sin □ He saved us on the basis of His mercy
        - He cleansed us from sin based on Christ's work □ He gifted us with His Holy Spirit to empower us to live godly lives □ He wants to do this for unbelievers as well.
  - C. Instructions for Titus and personal greetings. (3:8-15)
    - i. Teach these things boldly so that your congregation will 'manage' themselves to do good deeds.
    - ii. Avoid the 'side' issues; teach only the true doctrine of the Word. (3:9)
    - iii. Avoid factious men. (3:10-11)
    - iv. Come away for some rest. (3:12)
    - v. Let the elders learn to manage some matters of the church, such as taking care of the needs of your two visitors (Zenas and Apollos). (3:13-14)
    - vi. Grow in dependence on God's grace. (3:15)

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