

NT Survey – Titus
Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School
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Introduction

Titus, along with 1 and 2 Timothy, are called the “Pastoral Epistles” because they are written by Paul to young elders (pastors) detailing the organization, function, and ministry of the local church.

Paul was most likely released from his first Roman imprisonment under house arrest in AD 62, shortly after Acts was written (Acts 28:30). He then traveled to a number of cities in which he had ministered including Ephesus where he left Timothy. Paul then traveled through Macedonia (northern Greece) from where he wrote 1 Timothy (1 Tim 1:3). He then traveled to Crete where he left Titus (Titus 1:5) and then to Nicopolis in Achaia (southern Greece) from where he wrote Titus (Titus 3:12).

Crete

Crete is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean. Its location made it a prominent seaport and trade center and, even in ancient times, it boasted of highly developed civilization and large population. Cretans were great sailors who had a notorious reputation for immorality. We have no definitive information on the founding of the church, but we do know that Cretans were present in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2:11) so it is logical to think that converts brought the gospel home. Paul first visited Crete on his voyage to Rome to appear before Caesar (Acts 27).

The churches on the island of Crete were unorganized, though there appear to have been Christians in many of its cities (1:5). Titus' task of setting the churches in order included appointing church leadership (1:5-9); dealing with false teachers (1:10-11), idle and corrupt Cretans (1:12), and internal factions (3:10-11); and the need for lifestyle evangelism (1:16; 3:1-8). Paul's main thrust is equipping the saints for effective evangelism. He points out that the ideal church is one that is orderly in its organization, sound in its doctrine, pure in its living, and "ready for every good work."

Titus

Titus was a Greek Gentile convert (Gal 2:3) and probably heard the Gospel from Paul (Titus 1:4) during Paul's first missionary journey (some say Derbe). He is only mentioned in 12 passages from Paul's epistles (2 Cor 2:13; 7:6; 7:13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23, 12:18; Gal 2:1, 3; 2 Tim 4:10; Titus 1:4) and is never mentioned in Acts. Historically, the first time Titus is introduced is the account of the Jerusalem Council in Galatians 2:3 (cf Acts 15) ~AD 50. The next time Titus is mentioned is in 2 Corinthians which was written ~AD 56. Paul describes Titus as “my partner and fellow worker among you” (2 Cor 8:23). Titus carried the "severe letter" from Ephesus (2 Cor 12:18; cf. 2 Cor 2:3-4; 7:8-12) to Corinth and met Paul in Macedonia on his return to Ephesus (2 Cor 7:6-16). He was also the leader of the group of men Paul sent to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia to pick up the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:6, 16, 23).

Church tradition records that he returned to Crete and ministered there until he died.

"Tradition has it that Titus, having become first bishop of Crete, died there in advanced years. His successor, Andreas Cretensis, eulogized him in the following terms: 'The first foundation-stone of the Cretan church; the pillar of the truth; the stay of the faith; the never silent trumpet of the evangelical message; the exalted echo of Paul's own voice.'" Philip E. Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 76.

Several themes are possible when studying Titus. Since Titus is one of the pastoral epistles, one possible theme is “The Responsibilities of an Elder”. Another possibility is “Zealous for Good Deeds” (2:14). Still another and is “The Mature(ing) Believer”.

Outline

- I. Greeting (1:1-4)
- II. Character of the Mature Believer (1:5-9)
- III. Conflict of the Mature Believer (1:10-16)
- IV. Godly Living of the Mature Believer (2:1-10)
- V. Motivation for Godly Living of the Mature Believer (2:11-15)
- VI. Lifestyle Witness of the Mature Believer (3:1-8)
- VII. Relationships of the Mature Believer (3:9-15)

Summary

Greeting (1:1-4)

1:1-4 – Paul’s one, long, truth-packed greeting to his spiritual son, Titus, gives us insight into what he was committed to as a bond-servant of God. As a bond-servant and apostle, he was committed to God’s mastery.

²³And He was saying to *them* all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, **he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.** ²⁴For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. Luke 9:23-24

²⁵Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, ²⁶“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ... ³³So then, **none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.** Luke 14:25-27, 33

❖ What are some things that I have not (or have difficulty) surrendered to God’s mastery?

Paul was also committed to God’s mission of making disciples. He lived a Great Commission life-style (Matt 28:18-20). Paul endured all things for the sake of the chosen (2 Tim 2:10).

The duty of evangelization can be summarized as preaching the gospel clearly, because of which the Holy Spirit will sovereignly and miraculously cause the elect to believe and be saved.

MacArthur NT Commentary – Titus

❖ Does my life show that I am committed to God’s mission?

Paul was committed to an accurate view of God’s character, specifically here mentioning His faithfulness. God’s faithfulness is: God will always do what He has promised to do. He is steadfast, unchanging, perfectly reliable, and utterly dependable. He is 100% reliable, 100% of the time. Because God is faithful, He can be completely trusted. Long ages ago literally means before eternal times.

⁹who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to **His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,** 2 Tim 1:9

⁴just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,** that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love Eph 1:4

³⁴“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

Before I was born, before any ancestor was born, before my ultimate grandparents and the universe were created, God loved me and planned to save me from my sin. Amazing!

❖ What of God’s attributes do I know with knowledge, but not with your heart?

Paul was also committed to God's Word and Biblical ministry. Proclamation carries with it the idea of the bold and uncompromised presentation of God's Word, particularly the Gospel message. Paul was not interested in PR campaigns or gimmicks to get people to respond to the Gospel. We too have been entrusted with the gospel (Matt 28:19-20).

❖ Do I believe the resources God has given me are sufficient to solve all of life's issues? What do I do with the gospel trust?

Paul is writing to Titus, his true child in a common faith. Titus was ministering with the authority of Paul. Without a word of thanksgiving, Paul moves directly to business. This is not exactly a personal letter to Titus; no doubt the church would read this aloud.

Character of the Mature Believer (1:5-9)

1:5 – Duties in Crete – Titus was left in Crete for a purpose – to set in order what remained. Those from Pentecost returned to Crete where the gospel had been shared and people had responded. Groups of believers were gathering in various cities and these groups needed shepherds. Titus' job was to appoint elders (the most mature among us) in every city. A couple of points:

1. The local church has order – to have order it must have organization.
2. Titus was directed to do this – the appointment of the elders had apostolic authority behind it.
3. Observations concerning “elders”.
 - Elders were appointed not elected.
 - Elders is plural, city is singular. There were a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 15:1-5; 20:17-35; 1 Tim 5:17; James 5:16; 1 Pet 5:1-2).

Reminder from 1 Timothy: Elders are men (1Tim 2:12-14) who aspire to the office of overseer (1 Tim 3:1) and are set apart and qualified by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) for prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4). They must be qualified (1Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). They are the caretakers of the church (1 Tim 3:5). They rule and exercise oversight (1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Pet 5:2). They shepherd the flock of God (Acts 20:28) to: feed (1 Tim 3:2); lead (Heb 13:7; 1 Pet 5:2); protect and watch over (Heb 13:17); care for (1 Thess 2:7); and equip (Eph 4:11-12). They preach and teach the word (1 Tim 5:17). The body is responsible to: appreciate and esteem them very highly (1 Thess 5:12-13); obey and submit to them (Heb 13:17); and be subject to them (1 Pet 5:5).

❖ What duties has God given me?

1:6-9 – Mature Character – Elders are the most mature within the body of Christ. They are exemplified by the character detailed here in Titus 1 and in 1 Tim 3.

¹⁴But solid food is for the **mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.** Heb 5:14

❖ Have I practiced? Are my senses trained to discern good and evil?

1. Public Reputation (v6) – Mature believers are “above reproach” (blameless). This is the overarching principle in Paul's description of the character of elders (mature believers). To live in such a way that no charge of guilt can be proved against one. Not free from accusation, but accusations that can be rightly proven (cf. 1 Tim 5:19-20).

❖ Am I above reproach?

The qualities that follow then describe blameless: sexual purity, family, stewardship, negative character qualities, positive character qualities, and devotion to the word.

2. Sexual Purity (v6) – “The husband of one wife” literally means “a one woman man”. A one-spouse spouse is devoted to and faithful physically, emotionally, and mentally to the one person God has given as their mate. It implies inner as well as outward sexual purity. The cost of any sin is high – it causes the name of God to be blasphemed (Rom 2:17-24; 2 Pet 2:2). Sexual sin has the added consequences of destroying marriages, families, ministries, churches, etc.
 - ❖ Am I pure?
3. Family (v6) – This elder qualification could mean that: 1) elders’ children must be faithful to the leadership and authority of their father; or 2) an elder is only qualified if their children are believers whose profession matches their practice. VBC teaches number one. Mature believers live a life that is consistent with their profession of faith in Jesus and are able to do their part in bringing others (including their children) to a saving knowledge of Christ by sharing the gospel.
 - ❖ Am I a hypocrite?
4. General Negatives (v7)
 - a. Above Reproach as God’s steward (1:7a) – Mature believers recognize that everything in their life is God’s (salvation, spiritual gifts, money/possessions, relationships, our very life, etc.). They strive to honor God’s priorities and be faithful with all that God has given them.
 - ❖ Does my account statement reflect God’s priorities?
 - b. Not self-willed (1:7b) – A self-willed person wants his own way regardless of others. They are stubborn; arrogant; inconsiderate of others’ opinions, feelings, and desires; headstrong; independent; self-assertive; and ungracious toward those of different opinion. Mature believers are NOT characterized this way. They are striving to be humble and yielded to God and to have a sacrificial love, service, and preferential attitude toward others.
 - ❖ Whom do I put first?
 - c. Not quick-tempered (1:7c) means not being prone to anger or easily angered. Mature believers strive to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.
 - ❖ Am I slow to anger?
 - d. Not addicted to wine (1:7d) literally means “to be continually alongside, or in the presence of, wine.” Mature believers do not make alcohol their companion. They exercise wisdom when deciding to partake of alcohol in moderation.
 - ❖ Is alcohol my companion?
 - e. Not pugnacious (1:7e) – Pugnacious means a “bruiser”, one who is “ready with a blow”; a contentious, quarrelsome person; anger out of control – not just verbally, but physically. In contrast, mature believers do not respond to provocation with harsh words or fists.
 - ❖ How do I respond to people?
 - f. Not fond of sordid gain (1:7f) refers to someone who, without honesty or integrity, seeks wealth and financial prosperity at any cost. In contrast, mature believers have a proper steward-attitude concerning money.
 - ❖ Do I have integrity with money?
5. General Positives (v8)
 - a. Hospitable (1:8a) literally means “to love strangers.” Mature believers pursue wise opportunities (Rom 12:9-13) to love strangers without complaint (1 Pet 4:8-9).
 - ❖ Do I love strangers or only friends?

- b. Loving what is good (1:8b) means having a strong affection for what is intrinsically good, helpful, beneficial, and worthwhile. Mature believers strive to love the things that God loves.
 - ❖ Do I love the things that God loves?
 - c. Sensible (1:8c) means having sound or healthy mind and the ability to curb desires and impulses so as to produce a measured and orderly life.
 - ❖ Is my life under control?
 - d. Just (1:8d) means to be upright, honest, fair, and impartial in one's dealing with people. Mature believers are able to make proper judgments in relationships with others – they know when to judge and when not to judge.
 - ❖ Am I impartial?
 - e. Devout (1:8e) means to be pleasing to God, holy. Mature believers strive moment-by-moment to be pleasing to the Lord.
 - ❖ Am I striving to be pleasing to God?
 - f. Self-controlled (1:8c) describes exercising restraint over impulses, emotions, appetites, and desires. Mature believers exercise self-control and discipline for the purpose of godliness.
 - ❖ Do I have self-control?
6. Devotion to the Word (1:9) – Mature believers have an unwavering commitment to the word of God and be able to encourage believers and refute scoffers with it.
- ❖ Am I a doer of the Word?

Conflict of the Mature Believer (1:10-16)

1:10-13a – Description of those who Contradict– Verse 9 serves as a transition verse from the character qualifications of elders to the character of those that “contradict”.

1. There are “many”. In the Cretan church there are many who contradict (many false teachers). Not just at Crete, but in general there are many who contradict.
2. These men are “rebellious”. They are unwilling to submit to authority (neither God’s word nor His under-shepherds).
3. These men are “empty talkers”. Their speech is eloquent, but lacks substance. They couch their ideas in biblical language, but it is decidedly non-biblical (e.g. “Christian” psychology). Their words are only human opinion rather than God's Word cut straight.
4. These men are “deceivers”. Their listeners expected that they were teaching the truth; they were not. They lead the immature away from purity of devotion to Christ (Rom 16:17-19; 2 Cor 11:3).
5. These men are Judaizer-like. They take the truth and mix it with error. They add to the purity of devotion to Christ (in salvation and/or sanctification).
6. These men “must be silenced”. “Must” has the connotation of a moral imperative. “Silenced” means to close the mouth by muzzle or gag. Often times we see these rebellious, empty talkers influencing individual families or small groups of believers who are at risk (2 Tim 3:6). Silence is NOT golden – these individuals must be addressed. The way they are silenced is verse 9.
7. These men are motivated by greed. They desire to anxiously get wealthy at the expense of destroying others. Not so with true shepherds (1 Pet 5:2).
8. These men are typified by Cretan stereotypes. Paul quotes Epimenides (c600 BC). Cretans are liars and deceivers; rude, cruel, and brutal; and idle sensualists, lazily gobbling up fleshly desires. This evaluation of one of their own was observed and found to be true by Paul.
 - ❖ Do I see any of these traits in myself?

1:13b-14 – Response to those who Contradict – “Reprove” (cf “refute” in 1:9) has the idea of convict; to show error in teaching and practice and summon to repent. Severely means sternly, seriously, vigorously. The picture is a surgeon expertly and precisely cutting out a cancer. The temptation is to err with “love”, but this puts the false teachers and the victims at continued risk.

“That they may be sound in faith” is the result of the reproof in the life of those who contradict, but also in the life of the church. “Sound” carries the idea of healthy in the faith. The result of doctrinal health is the ability to avoid and not pay attention to false teaching.

❖ What do I pay attention to?

1:15-16 – Comparison – On the inside the Judaizers believed that certain foods could make a person impure. The truth is that the heart is what makes a person pure or impure (Matt 15:17-20). These false teachers are defiled and unbelieving. On the outside our behavior testifies to our faith. These who contradict are: 1) detestable – loathsome because of hypocrisy, 2) disobedient – insubordinate to God’s Word, 3) worthless – disqualified because of impurity. Those who contradict can in no way glorify God.

❖ Do I glorify God?

Godly Living of the Mature Believer (2:1-10)

2:1 – Fitting Things – The pronoun “you” is intensive making a contrast between those who contradict and Titus (mature believers). The mature believer talks about and displays that which is “fitting” (prominent, conspicuous). Titus’ (and our) distinguishing characteristic should be a lifestyle that is consistent with sound doctrine. The thoughts/ideas that we express should be those which are fitting for sound doctrine. Healthy doctrine promotes, expects, and actually causes healthy behavior.

❖ What is my distinguishing characteristic?

The focus now turns to how “the things which are fitting” is lived out in groups of people: older men (2:2), older women (2:3), young women (2:4-5), young men (2:6-8), and bondslaves (2:9-10).

2:2 – Older Men – “Older men” means an aged man older in years. So, how old is old? Paul uses the same word to describe himself in Philemon 9 when he was most likely in his 60’s (born ~0AD and having written Philemon ~60-63 AD during his first Roman imprisonment). In ancient Greek literature, the word is used for those as young as 50. Paul uses “older women” in Titus 2:3, which simply means a woman advanced in years. Typically childbearing ends ~40-45 years old and child raising ends ~60. In 1 Tim 5:9, Paul uses 60 years old as the age when widows may be put on the support list. Most likely, this is a man in his late 50s or older; past the age of normal child rearing.

Q: When you think of the character of old people, what may come to mind?

1. Temperate means having a clear-headed proper focus – someone with sober judgment and action. It describes a man who is watchful to be free from the intoxicating effects of the world, flesh, and devil and thus remains circumspect, sober, and vigilant. A temperate man avoids excess, extravagance, and over-indulgence of appetites and passions.
2. Dignified means honorable, reverent or behaving with reverent propriety. It refers to character that evokes special respect. This describes a man worthy of respect; a man who is serious minded and serious about life and the things that are Christ’s, but not a killjoy.
3. Sensible refers to curbing one’s desires and impulses and so describes the man who is self-controlled, self restrained, and discreet. This man's mind has everything under control. He is self-disciplined in all of his freedoms; self-restrained in all of his passions and desires. This is also an elder qualification in Titus 1:8. This man understands that to be **in** control he must be **under** the control of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18; Col 3:16; Gal 5:25).
4. Sound in faith, in love, in perseverance – Older men are healthy, wholesome, robust in the faith, love, and perseverance.

❖ How do I stack up?

2:3-4a – Older Women – “Likewise” denotes that the things which are fitting for sound doctrine apply to all people – older women as well as older men. Here Paul lists out those things that are of special importance related to the temptations and ministry of older women.

1. Reverent in their behavior – Older women are to display personal holiness, inside and out.
2. Not malicious gossips – Older women should refuse to listen to, much less propagate, slanderous and demeaning stories about others. This sin is a particular temptation to those who may have idle time on their hands (1 Tim 5:9-13). Our speech is important as it displays what is in the heart (Matt 13:24-37). Speech to avoid is: flattery (Jude 16), lies (Prov 12:22), slander and gossip (Rom 1:28-32), hurtful talk (Col 3:8), quarreling and arguing (Prov 17:19a), and complaining (Phil 2:14-15). Speech to strive for is wholesome, edifying words (Prov 16:24; Col 4:5-6; Eph 4:29). A gauge of God-honoring speech is the impact on the hearers (Eph 4:29; Rom 14:19; Col 4:6).
3. Nor enslaved to much wine – Older women are to not turn to drink to dull the pains and loneliness of old age, but instead to turn to the Lord.
4. teaching what is good so that they may encourage the young women to ... – Older women who have built their families; raised their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and been comforted by God through it all are to pass that on to those who are beginning their families. They are to be an impact on younger generations by example (word and deed) and instruction. They are to be a teacher of good, beautiful, and beneficial things. They are to be treasures in discipling young women in godly living.

❖ How do I stack up?

2:4b-5 – Young Women – It is clear from the context that the younger women Paul is addressing are married and have or will have children (natural or adopted). Not all men and women need marry (1 Cor 7:7-9), but if they do, they are responsible for the God ordained roles within marriage.

1. “love their husbands” means to be “fond of husband”. The young women were to continually be fond of their husbands. This is a willing determined love that is not based on a husband’s worthiness, but on God’s instructions for order in the home. Another way to say this is to be “devoted” to their husband. Their goal is their husband’s benefit, not their own; putting their husband’s welfare before their own.

¹⁰An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. ¹¹The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. ¹²**She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.** Prov 31:10-12

2. “To love their children” – The Scriptures are clear that children are a gift from God (Psa 127:3-5) and parents should view their children this way. Young women are commanded to be fond (devoted) of their children. All views that exalt the woman’s choice to love a life that is independent from their children is against what God declares here in Titus (and elsewhere). Mothers are exhorted to put the needs of their children above their own.
3. “To be sensible” describes a woman who is self-controlled, self-restrained, and discreet; having a sense of what is appropriate and avoiding extremes. She is in command of her mind. She is self-disciplined in all of her freedoms; self-restrained in all of her passions and desires.
4. “Pure” refers primarily to moral purity, and, especially in this context, to sexual purity and marital faithfulness. Men are more prone to lust, but women must also guard against romantic fantasies and emotional ties to someone who is not their spouse. As with elders, these young women are to be one-spouse spouses – devoted to and faithful to the one person God has given as her mate. She must be inwardly as well as outwardly sexually pure.

5. “Workers at home” means to be devoted to home duties, preoccupied with domestic affairs. The idea is that she is “caring for the home” and a producer of orderliness in the home. Managing the home with the resources provided. Unfortunately, many in evangelicalism are distorting the meaning here to fit their own stereotypes. The Scriptures are clear that a wife is to be a “worker at home” or to “keep house”. This does not mean that they cannot work outside the home. It simply means that their primary responsibility is to the family.
6. “Kind” refers to that which is "good" in its character or constitution, beneficial in its effect. So these young women are to be gentle, considerate, amiable, congenial, and sympathetic, even with those who are undeserving and unkind to them. The temptation for a woman who works so long and hard is to not be kind in her dealings with her children and husband. She should add to her work a gentle, considerate, and sympathetic spirit.
7. “Being subject to their own husbands” – Subject does not mean obedient. It means literally to set something in place up under something else. Here it refers to two who are equal before Christ, but one places themselves in subjection to the other. The wife is to subject herself continually (present tense) to her "own husband". The wife makes a choice to place herself as an equal underneath another equal, her husband, in order that there can be order in the family. The purpose is to obey God and function in the design that He has ordered. The wife’s submission to the husband is not based on the husband’s worthiness, but on God’s design (1 Pet 3:1-7; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19).
8. “So that the word of God will not be dishonored” – “So that” refers back to the previous seven commands. The primary reason for obedience to God’s word is that it brings Him glory. By living against the Scripture’s commands, the gospel message is dishonored (maligned, criticized, or discredited) by non-believers.

❖ How do I stack up?

2:6-8 – Young Men – “Likewise” refers back to older men and women who do not get passes that allow sin and the ignoring of righteousness because they are “mature”. Likewise, young people do not get passes for being young. The things which are fitting for sound doctrine apply to all people.

1. “Likewise urge the young men to be sensible [in all things]” – Young men who are impulsive, passionate, ambitious, volatile, and sometimes arrogant, are to be of a sound mind, sane, in one’s senses; or curbing one’s desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate.
2. “In all things show yourself to be an example” – The young man’s lifestyle should continually be a model to which some other person is conformed.
 - a. “of good deeds” – Titus was not only to “urge” young men, but also to preach with his life. His practice was to match his profession.
 - b. “with purity in doctrine” – Titus’ teaching is to be free from error and characterized by soundness and integrity.
 - c. “dignified” – Young men are to be worthy of respect; serious minded as opposed to being a clown; a man who is serious about life and the things that are Christ’s. It implies that one should be able to distinguish between that which is **important** and that which is **trivial**.
 - d. “sound in speech which is beyond reproach” – A young man’s speech should be uncorrupt, healthy and wholesome, robust.
3. “So that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.” – A life of integrity/character does not leave a person open to justifiable accusation. Better yet, a life of Spirit-empowered obedience to God leaves no opportunity for the God, Jesus, God’s word, nor the Gospel to be rightly accused. In addition, there is no argument for the truth of the Gospel as powerful as a changed, holy life! These are consistent themes throughout the NT (1 Pet 2:11-12, 15; 3:15-17)

❖ How do I stack up?

2:9-10 – Bondslaves – God gives five character qualities that should mark every Christian employee. This slave/master relationship is analogous to the employee/employer relationship.

1. “Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything” – The first character quality for the believing employee is to voluntarily place themselves under the authority of their employer in everything; no matter how intolerable. This should be a continual (present tense) action that will permeate the other character qualities listed.
2. “To be well-pleasing” – Believing employees are to be well-pleasing to their employers since they are serving the Lord.
3. “Not argumentative” – Talking back, being contrary, speaking under one’s breath about the employer is not God’s will for Christian employees.
4. “Not pilfering” – Believing employees should not steal from their employers in time or material.
5. “But showing all good faith” – Believing employees are trustworthy, reliable, and utterly dependable. They never give a reason for their loyalty to be doubted. They are continually proving themselves to be faithful servants in everything they are entrusted with.
6. “So that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect” – Adorn means to put in order; decorate; embellish (to make beautiful with ornamentation; to heighten the attractiveness of by adding decorative details). Believing employees are to live out the truth with no exceptions (“in every respect”) before a watching world who is skeptical about the transforming power of the Gospel.

❖ How do I stack up?

Motivation for Godly Living of the Mature Believer (2:11-15)

2:11 – Saved by Grace from Sin – Sin is our problem; salvation from the penalty, power, and one day the presence of sin is the solution. The way of grace has appeared in the person of Jesus. Jesus came the first time as a sacrifice for sin. He humbled himself to become a man, died on the cross, then presented Himself to many to prove the resurrection. Not that “all” men are saved, but the way of salvation is now brought before the entire world!

When an individual recognizes their sin, repents (turning away from dead works, Heb 6:1), and trusts alone in Jesus Christ as LORD and SAVIOR for salvation from SIN: the penalty of SIN is forgiven, the power of SIN over their life is broken, they are given eternal life away from the presence of SIN, and they are made a new person.

❖ How grateful am I?

2:12 – Saved to Deny – The grace of God, Christ Himself, instructs “us for the purpose of” denying ungodliness and worldly desires and to living sensibly, righteously, and godly. Deny literally means “to say no”. It calls for a definite, effective refusal, renunciation; a purposeful action of the will.

1. Deny Ungodliness – Ungodliness is living as if God is irrelevant; living without regard for God and in a way that denies His existence and right as Supreme Ruler. It is a non-responsive attitude toward God that is displayed in a life that gives little or no thought to God and shows a meager desire to know him. “Ungodliness may be defined as living one’s everyday life with little or no thought of: God; God’s will; God’s glory; dependence on God; or desire to know God.” (Jerry Bridges in “Respectable Sins”)

When our focus is off God in any way, then we are operating in an ungodly manner. For many people, ungodliness is consistent with living a good life: having high morals, being a thoughtful husband/wife, being a diligent worker, lending a helping hand, being a loving/involved father/mother, or being a good friend and neighbor. We can be all these things and still be living in an ungodly way. We do not blaspheme God or willfully deny Him, but neither do we care about Him or what He wants us to do. We live as though God does not matter.

❖ Am I ungodly?

2. Deny worldly desires – Desires describes a drive or passion and most often refers to the depraved cravings and inner vile unrestrained desires that arise from our flesh. Worldly desires are passions that are promoted by Satan’s world system – pleasures and pursuits of this present passing world. These desires are given free rein by an ungodly mind-set. If I live my life with little or no thought of God, God’s will, God’s glory, dependence on God, or desire to know God, then there is no war against sin. Denying, saying no is described as a WAR against fleshly lusts!

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to **abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.** 1 Pet 2:11

War is not pleasant nor easy. We cannot go into war half heartedly. We must bring all resources to bear to destroy the enemy! The same should be here too when we deny worldly desires.

❖ Am I in the battle or have I deserted?

Not only is the believer to deny a life that ignores God and indulges worldly desires; they are to put on a life that has Him at the center. In contrast to ungodliness and worldly desires, believers are to live sensibly, righteously, and godly. This is the natural outflow of a life given over to God; of having the life of Christ flowing through us; of being filled with the Spirit.

- 2:13 – Saved Unto Blessed Hope – Jesus appeared the first time as a sacrifice for sin. Believers look forward expectantly for the blessed hope and appearing – Jesus’ second appearing will be in glory. One day sin will be totally eradicated from our bodies – either at death or at our blessed hope.

❖ Am I excited about the future?

- 2:14 – Saved Unto Good Works – Jesus gave himself to redeem us from slavery to sin. Salvation is a once for all transaction. It is a done deal, but it does not end with salvation from sin – we are saved unto good works. We are not just to “do” good deeds, but are to be zealous (totally committed; sold out; fervently devoted; passionate; or having single minded allegiance) for good deeds.

❖ Am I zealous for good deeds?

- 2:15 – Speak, Exhort, Reprove – “These things” refers back to the previous teaching in chapter 2 about groups of people. Titus is commanded to:

1. keep on speaking – the elder (mature believer) is to continually have the word of God on their mind and voice. They are to be continually announcing, revealing, and disclosing God’s truth.
2. exhort means literally to call one alongside to enable a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with gallantry. To beseech, entreat, and plead to persuade and encourage the hearer to believe God’s truth.
3. reprove means to bring to the light (to reveal hidden things); to expose, to convict, to shame or disgrace and thus to rebuke another in such a way that they are compelled to see and to admit the error of their ways. To show someone that they have done something wrong and summon them to repent. To turn the hearer away from sin.

Titus is to speak, exhort, and reprove with “all authority”. The elder’s authority comes from the Word of God. He does not declare his own ideas or secular, worldly wisdom. His only weapons are those that God provides through His word and His Spirit. Titus was to let no one disregard him. This is similar to Paul’s command to Timothy (1 Tim 4:11-12).

Titus, like Timothy, is to command the respect of the believers on Crete by his exemplary life (speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity) which matches his profession. A leader who has unwavering integrity commands the respect of those he leads.

❖ Is the Word of God continually on my mind and voice? Am I an example?

Lifestyle Witness of the Mature Believer (3:1-8)

Paul's focus now turns to the lifestyle witness of the mature believer – how we live among pagans.

3:1-2 – Lifestyle Witness Among Pagans – Titus was to continually and persistently keep on reminding the church of the following duties. These duties are for “them” – the believer. This is how the Christian is to conduct themselves among non-believers. The non-believer has no obligation to these things. Yet even non-believers recognize these things as good for individuals and society.

1. “Be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient” – Paul commands Titus to remind the Cretan believer to submit to governing authorities from the top on down. This is a voluntary submission initiated by the believer. The only exception is when the government commands disobedience to God (Acts 4:18-20; 5:40-42). The doctrinal reason for subjection to government is not stated here in Titus. Probably because Titus already knew the reason and could relay that clearly to the Cretan believers. Paul provides the answer to “why” in Romans (Rom 13:1-7).

v1 – God has established government – it is His institution – He is sovereign

v2 – Opposing God's ordained government means you are opposing God's word and will receive condemnation

v3-4 – Government's purpose is to restrain evil. We should not be in fear unless doing evil

v5 – It is necessary to be in subjection because of discipline, but also because it is right

v6-7 – Even support with money as required by the government

❖ What kinds of things might I have to disobey the government for in order to obey God?

2. “Be ready for every good deed” – Ready means to be continually prepared, in a state of readiness. The interesting thing about “good deeds” is that God has already prepared them for us. Our responsibility is to “walk in them”, but we have to be prepared (Eph 2:8-10). Being prepared means we are living continually filled with the Holy Spirit. When we are filled with the Spirit, we will be set apart, useful to Christ, and prepared for every good work (2 Tim 2:20-21). Good works are vital to lifestyle evangelism (1 Pet 2:11-12). Think of where good deeds fall in the progressiveness of witnessing: 1) Presence, 2) Deeds of mercy, 3) Christian deeds, 4) Value statements, 5) Statements on spiritual things, 6) Testimony, and 7) Gospel presentation

❖ What has to be true for me to be ready for every good deed?

3. “Malign no one” – Malign means to slander, defame, speak evil of, or treat with contempt. The idea of maliciousness is included. Maligning no one does not mean that we never expose sin within the body of Christ since we are commanded to do so (1 Thess 5:14; Matt 18:15-17). Maligning no one means we are not to expose sin with a malicious intent to injure other's reputation. Even while contending against the worst of sins committed by the worst of sinners, we must never stoop to maligning those whose sin we detest.

❖ How is my speech?

4. “Be peaceable” – This could be restated as “be continually refusing to engage in quarrels and conflicts”. People who are described as contentious or always quarrelsome make very bad neighbors and in-fact arouse the hostility of unbelievers. Believers who are characterized this way tarnish God's reputation among unbelievers (Rom 12:18).

❖ Does my behavior tarnish God's reputation?

5. “Be gentle” – This can be thought of as yielding – not demanding our rights but acting in a courteous and forbearing manner; not hold grudges but always giving others the benefit of any doubt. A quality like this is possible only in the man or woman in whose heart Christ reigns as Lord. This is only possible when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit.

❖ Do I harbor sin in my heart (grudges)?

6. “Showing every consideration for all men” – This is displaying gentle friendliness or gentleness, meekness. A believer's attitude toward unbelievers should always reflect a spirit of gentleness.

❖ Do I consider others before myself?

3:3-8 – Motivation for a Lifestyle Witness – “For” connects 3:1-2 with what is coming next. A lifestyle witness among pagans is possible and motivated by what comes next.

1. Motive from our own pre-saved past (3:3) – The Scriptures repeatedly show us that we were once one thing – enslaved to sin and alienated from God. Now we are His children. We have been saved from eternal damnation and a life of no significance.

“We were” indicating over and over, again and again we were foolish. Foolish pictures the unsaved as without spiritual understanding, ignorant of God and continually manifesting an unwillingness to use their mental faculties to understand the truth about God.

Disobedient pictures willfully disregarding God’s standards. It pictures a stubborn, stiff-necked attitude and speaks of disbelief manifesting itself in disobedience.

Deceived means to continually be led astray. The unbeliever is led astray by a sinful nature and blinded by Satan and his world system.

Enslaved means to be willfully and continually in bondage to various lusts and pleasures. This is enslavement to the sin nature which is the corruption of our whole nature and is that which inclines us to sin. The result of the sin nature is “total depravity” – where the corruption of sin extends to every aspect of our being (Rom 1:18–3:20) including intellect (2 Cor 4:4), conscience (1 Tim 4:2), will (Rom 1:28), and heart (Eph 4:18).

Spending our life meaning to continually/habitually pass the time or live. Malice denotes a vicious disposition, evilness, ill-will, spitefulness. It describes a vicious intention and expresses the desire to hurt another and rejoices in it. In reference to behavior it conveys the idea of a mean-spirited or vicious attitude or disposition as indicated by words such as malice, ill-will, hatefulness, and dislike. It is an attitude of wickedness as an evil habit of one's mind.

Envy describes pain felt and desire for evil conceived at the sight of excellence or happiness. It is not just wanting what another has, but also resenting another for having it.

Hating means to have a strong aversion or to dislike strongly, with the implication of hostility. It is in the present tense indicating that it is a way of life. It is the absence of agape or phileo love.

❖ Do I fully understand how bad I was/am?

2. Motive from our own salvation (3:4-8a) – “But” turns the emphasis to salvation from our pre-saved past as the motivation for a lifestyle witness. The Holy Spirit through Paul has just showed us how evil we were. Now He lays out a sweeping description of our salvation: kindness, love, saved, mercy, washing of regeneration and renewing, poured the Holy Spirit out upon us richly, justified by grace, made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

❖ Does this great salvation motivate me to love?

“Trustworthy statement” is a common marker for five of Paul’s theological affirmations in the Pastoral Letters (cf. 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11); here referring back to the gospel message laid out in v4-7. Titus is to speak them confidently. The gospel message is not to be watered down for the sake of acceptance. It is a trustworthy statement; a truth that cannot be changed.

❖ Do I ever water down the gospel?

3. Motive from the new life (3:8b) – “Have believed” is a past act with continuing consequences. There is a necessary connection between salvation and conduct. True salvation brings about a change in life which will be evidenced by fruits in keeping with repentance. The believer should give attention to ensuring that they are engaging in good deeds; not to get something, but out of gratitude. The saved sinner loves Jesus and seeks to keep his commands. “Good and profitable for men” because the demonstration of the changed life is a powerful witness.

❖ Do I have a powerful witness?

Relationships of the Mature Believer (3:9-15)

“But” contrasts that which is good and profitable (v8) to that which is unprofitable and worthless.

3:9 – The Bad – Avoid Unprofitable Conversation – The charge is to shun these things, deliberately and habitually avoiding them. Paul lists four things Titus (and every believer) is to avoid. Each of these nouns lacks the definite article in the Greek which stresses the quality of these things (as opposed to a specific controversy that may have arisen). These four things (foolish controversies, genealogies, strife, and disputes about the Law) are unprofitable and worthless. Because they are unprofitable and worthless, we are commanded to avoid them.

1. “... foolish controversies and ...” Foolish is always used as term of reproach meaning mentally dull, sluggish, stupid, or moronic. Controversies indicates philosophical inquiry. The most common meaning refers to the exchange of words for the purpose of disputing or engaging in contentious, controversial questions. It denotes the preoccupation with pseudo-intellectual theorizing. It pictures one engaging in debates rather than the carrying out of a genuine search for information.

What the Bible teaches is true and that ends the discussion. What the Bible does not teach should not be speculated on.

❖ What foolishness do I believe?

2. “... genealogies and ...” Genealogies literally refers to accounts of an ancestry. These genealogies were probably more than a family's genealogical record. Some commentators suggest that they were subjected to a highly symbolic interpretive scheme. Names, dates, and places supposedly contained hidden meanings which became the basis for esoteric doctrines. Paul may be referring to the many fanciful interpretations of genealogies which could easily degenerate into controversial speculation and strife.
3. “... strife and ...” It is a general term that carries the idea of all kinds of self-centered rivalry and contentiousness about the truth. It refers to persistent contention, bickering, petty disagreement, and enmity. It is produced by a deep desire to prevail over others, to gain the highest prestige, prominence, and recognition possible. Strife is the consequence of foolish controversies and disputes over words.

❖ Do I desire to prevail over others?

4. “... disputes about the Law ...” Disputes refers to battles fought with words not weapons. These word fights are over the Law of Moses, presumably as it relates to Christians. Christians are not under the Law because Christ is the end of the Law to everyone who believes (Rom 10:4). Christians are not under the Law because they have died to the Law (Rom 7:6). Christians are not under the Law because of the New Covenant (2 Cor 3:4-6). Christians are not under the Law because Paul taught that he was not under the Law (1 Cor 9:20).

❖ Do I live as if I were under the Law?

3:10-11 – The Bad – Avoid Factious People – Factious describes a person who causes schisms, contentious or divisive. It is “known” that this man is perverted and sinning. Factiousness is a sin. This is not just taking a position against God’s word and His undershepherds, but it is moving others in the same direction. Factious individuals (those who do not submit to the Word or church leaders) should be confronted. This is a common theme throughout the NT and is a specific application of the practice of church discipline (Rom 16:17-18; 2 Thess 3:6, 14-15; 1 Cor 5:9-11). The factious person is to be church disciplined – rejected.

❖ Do I act factiously?

3:12-15 – The Good – The focus of these four verses is on faithful fellow believers. Paul had decided to spend the winter at Nicopolis and wanted Titus to meet him there, but Paul could not leave a local church without a qualified elder, under-shepherd.

Artemas – Nothing is know about him, except that he must have been a mature, fellow servant.

Tychicus – He is mentioned several times in the NT (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7).

Zenas the lawyer – Nothing is know about him, however, to travel with the Apostle Paul means that he was also mature, fellow servant who was sold out for the sake of the gospel

Apollos – He was a bold proclaimer of the truth (Acts 18:24-28).

Titus was directed to “diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them”. These men were ministers of the gospel who needed the help of fellow believers to continue their work. Titus was to help them.

Titus also had an opportunity to bring the church on Crete together to serve the universal body of Christ by meeting pressing needs. God did not design His church for the elders to do everything. The Pareto principle (80-20 rule) should not apply to the body of Christ. Failure to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs is unfruitfulness.

❖ Am I fruitful?

Homework

Read Philemon.