

DIGGING DEEPER
TITUS



Digging
Deeper
Titus

Study Guide

Acknowledgments

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Table of Contents

TITUS Verse By Verse

Chapter	Page
1	2
2	21
3	32

TITUS

Introduction

Paul, the great apostle and missionary of the church known for his extensive missionary travels, his powerful preaching and teaching, and his courageous witness for Christ authored this letter. Undoubtedly, most Christians today would characterize him as a hardline champion of the truth who rejected compromise and accepted no excuses. Certainly that describes Paul as we read his story in Acts and his epistles. Speaking to the Galatian believers about the false teachers among them, he stated: “*If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed*” (Galatians 1:9). He also confronted these same believers about their wavering faith: “*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?*” (Galatians 3:1).

Paul opposed Peter over the issue of associating with Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-14), and he wanted nothing to do with John Mark because John Mark had “deserted” Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13; 15:37-39). Paul stood strong for the gospel against all who would twist it or undermine his ministry. We must also remember, however, that Paul genuinely cared for people and built many solid relationships wherever he traveled. In fact, Paul concluded most of his letters with personal greetings to close friends and fellow ministers (Romans 16:1-16). The Pastoral Epistles, Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus testify to Paul’s tender, loving nature. He considered Timothy and Titus to be his “sons” in the faith, and he treated them as such, leading, mentoring, guiding, and counseling them in their ministry and personal lives.

TITUS

Chapter 1

Paul wrote this letter between his first and second imprisonments in Rome to guide Titus in working with the churches on the island of Crete. Paul had visited Crete with Titus and had left him there to minister (1:5). The island of Crete was a tough mission field for three reasons:

- Pagan influence was strong in Crete because it was a training center for Roman soldiers as well as a major stopping-off point for ships crossing the Mediterranean.
- A large population of Jews existed on the island, according to the ancient historians Philo and Josephus. The Judaizers (those who insisted that Gentiles must convert to Judaism before they could follow Jesus) were in this community and caused problems for the believers (1:10).
- The Cretans had a bad reputation. Certain character flaws developed in many Cretans; they were known as *“liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons”* (1:12).

Christian tradition suggests a missionary visit by Paul and Titus. Paul planted the church and left Titus to look after the early organizational phase and to oversee the new congregation. The church in Crete was in need of strong Christian leaders. Titus was responsible for choosing and preparing them.

A. Paul's Greetings

Read Titus 1:1.

- *“Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ.”* As at the beginning of **1 and 2 Timothy**, Paul identified himself by name as well as authority. Even though Paul was not one of the original twelve disciples

(later called apostles), he had been specially set apart by God to bring the good News to the Gentiles (**Acts 9:1-16**). Paul's twofold reference to himself as servant and apostle combines humility with authority—a servant-leader. One of the greatest hindrances to establishing the church are men who want to elevate themselves and be served rather than to serve. The unspoken attitude of a true servant-leader is, “I came to serve you, but you are not my master.”

- As a servant-apostle/servant-sent one, Paul focused on two main concerns: faith and knowledge, which go hand in hand. To the degree that we lack knowledge of God or truth, we will trust in other things.
- God chooses (elects) the believers who make up His church (definition for church is “called out ones”) and places them in the body where it pleases Him (**1 Corinthians 12:18**). God sent Paul to call many to faith, to strengthen/promote/stimulate their faith, and to further their knowledge of the truth of that faith. God's elect are those “chosen” or “called out” who respond in faith to the gospel (**2 Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:4**). The doctrine of election gives us tremendous insight into God's love and wisdom. Although our calling is based totally on God's wisdom and initiation, we who are called still must respond by faith. God is the author and provider of salvation; human response is in no way a work that earns salvation. Jesus spoke of the elect in **Matthew 22:14; 24:22, 24, 31; Luke 18:7; John 6:37-44; 10:27-29**. Paul taught about election in **Romans 8:28-39; 9:10-16; Ephesians 1:4-14; 2:4-10; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5**; as did Peter in **1 Peter 1:1-5; 2:9; 2 Peter 1:3, 10-11**.
- The word “election” is defined as a sovereign divine purpose that is totally independent of human merit. The word is used of Israel (**Isaiah 65:9, 22**) of the church (**Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Peter 5:13**) and of Christ (**Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 2:6**).

- The doctrine of election presents problems, which are actually unsolvable by the human mind. Divine selection is not limited only to God choosing who will receive eternal life because we see it everywhere in the universe. There is variety in everything God created. There are classifications among the angels. One star is bigger and brighter than another star. Men are not born of the same race with the same advantages, nor with the same abilities. Let's add this also—man's will has no part in any of this. Men do not choose their race or their life conditions, such as where they are born, rich or poor, healthy or sick, position of honor or dishonor.
- However, it is very important to remember that God's attitude toward every human being is one of compassion and love. Divine election and God's love cannot be reconciled within our human understanding, and furthermore, it is important that we give God the first consideration. Any system of religious thought which suggests that God is limited by the thoughts, prayers or actions of man is just plain foolishness. The order of truth is seen in the first phrase of the Bible: "***In the beginning God.***" It is God who planned, He executed, and it is He who will do His good pleasure (**Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 13:20, 21**).
- The true system of Biblical thought begins with God, and man is conformed to the plan and purpose of His Creator, not the other way around. God will never be obligated in the exercise of His grace; He chooses whomever He pleases (**Romans 9:20-21**). He sees absolutely no good in man, which might form a basis for His blessings (**Romans 3:10-18**).
- Scripture makes it clear that man has not chosen God. Jesus emphasized this in **John 15:16**. Even Adam, before the fall and totally free to choose, did not choose God. If that is true, then we can safely say that fallen man will not of himself choose God.

- ***“According to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness.”*** We could paraphrase in this way. “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to promote or stimulate the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which tends or leads to godliness/God-likeness.”
- Paul had a burning desire to teach the deeper truths of God’s word because he knew that faith in and knowledge of the truth have a worthwhile outcome. They lead to godliness/God-likeness and a God-honoring lifestyle. Paul’s view of ministry was always long-term. He was not content to aim at people merely responding to the gospel. His goal was to bring people to spiritual maturity in Christ (**Galatians 4:19**). As he told the Colossians, ***“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily”*** (Colossians 1:28-29).

Read Titus 1:2.

- The Greek text of verses 1-3 contains a long and complex sentence that does not repeat the words “faith” and “knowledge” as the NIV does for clarity. Although Paul described eternal life as a “hope,” he does not mean it is a “maybe” but rather a “confident expectation.” We “hope” for, or confidently expect what we already know will be ours. Our hope is based on the knowledge of and faith in the truth, that one day our salvation will be realized, final and complete when Christ returns for us. True Biblical “hope” depends on its source, God. Hoping that a house built on quicksand will remain standing would be false hope because there is no basis for such hope. We rest our hope of eternal life on a good foundation; we have dependable authority for our faith, for God Himself has promised it to us, and God does not lie (“cannot lie”).

- Apparently, lying was commonplace in Crete (1:12); therefore, Paul made it clear at the very beginning of this epistle that God does not lie. Trusting in God's character forms the foundation of our faith (**Hebrews 6:17-20**); God's unchanging nature reveals itself in his truthfulness. Because God is truth (**John 14:6**), He is the source of all truth, and He cannot lie. This puts Him in complete contrast to Satan, who is the father of lies (**John 8:44**).
- The eternal life God has promised will be ours because He keeps His promises. God made this promise before the beginning of time (**2 Timothy 1:9**). The promise did not come at a point when sin entered the world or even at the moment that God sent Christ to deal with the problem of sin; rather, Christ's coming and the promise of eternal life had been planned by God from the beginning (literally, "before eternal times"). God has been and always will be in supreme control of the universe, world events, and the future of His people (**Romans 16:25-26**).

Read Titus 1:3.

- The promise of eternal life came before time began. The manifestation or revelation of that promise came through God's word at His appointed season. That is, God sent His Son at the proper time, the time of His own choosing (**Romans 5:6; Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 1:9-12; 1 Timothy 2:6**) to bring the word of salvation to light. And Paul, at an opportune time in history, was called by God to proclaim this gospel to the Gentiles (**Ephesians 3:1-11**). Through Christ, God revealed His nature, will, plans, and promises to His people. This understanding spread across the world and down through the centuries through preaching—the faithful retelling of the gospel to all who would listen. Paul took his commission to preach the gospel seriously. No general could have a more important command; no

trustee could guard a more valuable estate. In **1 Timothy 1:1**, Paul wrote that he was “*an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior.*” God chose Paul for a special work: “*He is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel*” (**Acts 9:15**). Paul did not seek this missionary apostleship, nor was he asked if he wanted the job; rather, it was given to him by God’s command.

- Paul used the phrase “***God our Savior***” six times in the letters to Timothy and Titus (**1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4**). Jesus did the work of salvation by dying for our sins; therefore, He is our Savior. God the Father planned the work of salvation, and He forgives our sins; thus, He also is our Savior. The Holy Spirit does the work of convicting, convincing, and converting, therefore He also is our Savior. God in His fullness (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) authored salvation.

Read Titus 1:4.

- Titus, a Greek, was one of Paul’s most trusted and dependable coworkers. The fact that Paul calls Titus a “true son” could possibly refer to the fact that he was one of Paul’s converts. The term alludes both to their relationship and to the role Paul wanted the Cretans to accept from Titus. As Paul’s “son,” he represented what Paul would say if he had been there in person. Although not mentioned in Acts, other epistles point out that Paul had sent Titus to Corinth several times to help the church in its troubles and bring back reports to Paul. Then he was sent back to Corinth with news of Paul and to gather an offering for the Jerusalem church (**2 Corinthians 7:6-9, 13-15; 8:6, 16-17, 23**). Paul and Titus also traveled together to Jerusalem (**Galatians 2:3**) and Crete (1:5). Titus is last mentioned by Paul in **2 Timothy 4:10**, Paul’s final letter.

- Paul repeated his standard greeting with a slight change, adding the word “mercy” in this letter, as well as in the letters to Timothy. God’s grace is our greatest need. If we were to look at the thirteen epistles of Paul in the New Testament, we would see that he begins and ends each one with the same message. In each epistle, after the greeting, he makes this comment: **“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”** He ends each epistle with **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”** We see this is in:
 - Romans 1:7; Romans 16:24
 - 1 Corinthians 1:3; 1 Corinthians 16:23
 - 2 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14
 - Galatians 1:3; Galatians 6:18
 - Ephesians 1:2; Ephesians 6:24
 - Philippians 1:2; Philippians 4:23
 - Colossians 1:2; Colossians 4:18
 - 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:28
 - 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3:18
 - 1 Timothy 1:2; 1 Timothy 6:21
 - 2 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 4:22
 - Titus 1:4; Titus 3:15
 - Philemon 1:3; Philemon 1:25
- The last term “our Savior” repeats the thought of verse 3. Paul used the term Savior for both God the Father and Jesus Christ, thereby revealing his understanding of God’s nature and work in salvation (**Titus 1:3; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6**).

B. Qualifications for Church Leaders

Unlike the pressing matter of the false teachers that was on Paul’s mind when he wrote to Timothy in Ephesus, Paul’s letter to Titus focused on establishing healthy churches on Crete. In both cases, identifying good leaders was a priority. But in Ephesus, leaders were needed to get the church back on track, while on Crete effective leaders were needed to

begin moving the church in the right direction. Paul urged Timothy to be confrontational, while Titus was to be constructive. The new believers in Crete desperately needed the leadership of mature elders whom Titus was to appoint.

Read Titus 1:5.

- Crete is a long (150 miles), narrow island in the Mediterranean Sea, southeast of Greece. Among its population were many Jews. The earliest converts there were probably Cretan Jews who had been in Jerusalem at Pentecost (**Acts 2:11**) more than thirty years before Paul wrote this letter. As Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to provide leadership for the Ephesian church and to silence the false teachers, he left Titus on the island of Crete to provide leadership for the new churches there, and to prevent the rise of Crete's own brand of false teachers. Most likely, Paul and Titus visited Crete following Paul's release from his first Romans imprisonment. Paul traveled and ministered for two or three years before again being imprisoned and ultimately executed in AD 66 or 67.
- ***“So that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.”*** Apparently, Paul did not stay long in Crete, so he left his trusted co-worker Titus to finish what remained to be done regarding establishing the church, including the unfinished work of appointing elders. Paul had appointed elders in various churches during his journeys (**Acts 14:23**). The words “as I directed you” reveal Paul's authority and endorsement of Titus as the recognized leader. Four principles seem to emerge here regarding the nature of leadership roles in the local church. Leadership should be:
 - Local—the leaders are rooted within the church and therefore accountable to it.
 - Multiple—leadership responsibilities are to be shared by more than one.

- Qualified—the qualifications of leaders are visible to all.
- Protected by plurality. Paul could have said, go and exalt your authority and lay down the law. But instead we hear set up sound multi-leadership; collective wisdom, multi-giftedness, functioning as one body. Biblically all elders are shepherd-overseers, and God’s design is not only for plurality, but also equality among the leaders. It is not a power position but a servant position; it is not a benevolent-dictator but a crucified foot-washer (**1 Corinthians 9:19-23**)

Read Titus 1:6.

- Elders are to be radically different, self-less servants, who are excellent examples with Christ-like character, righteous reputations, healthy homes, and sound in the Scriptures. They are recognized by character not by giftedness.
- Paul briefly described some qualifications that the elders (also called overseers or bishops) should have. Paul had given Timothy a similar set of instructions for choosing leaders in the Ephesian church (**1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:22**). Notice that most of the qualifications involve character rather than knowledge or skill, and it’s interesting to consider that a person’s life-style as well as relationships provides a window into their character. It’s always good to consider these qualifications as you evaluate people for positions of leadership in the church.
- “***Blameless***” is the first qualification. Elders must have no conduct that would be grounds for accusations and be above reproach (**1 Timothy 3:2, 10**). The point here is not that leaders will not be blamed or accused, but rather when they are, their lives will prove the falsehood of the accusations.

- ***“The husband of one wife.”*** When Paul explained that elders were to be the husband of one wife, he was prohibiting promiscuity and promoting faithfulness in marriage. Literally, the phrase means a “one woman man”; not flirtatious, but rather one who is content with and faithful to his wife (**1 Timothy 3:2**).
- ***“Having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.”*** A man’s family may reveal his spiritual maturity or immaturity and ultimately his readiness to lead the church. An elder’s children should have received spiritual nurturing to the point of believing. Obviously those whose children are rebelling, running wild, and refusing to obey could be an indication that the man in question is not a fit leader for God’s people. We might consider the way in which children respond is often an indication as to the way Christianity is lived out at home. It’s significant that Paul added the note here, which is not found in **1 Timothy**, that a leader’s children should believe. In Crete, many had only recently converted from paganism to Christianity, so a family’s response to the Gospel could be a gauge for Titus as to a man’s maturity to lead. A leadership appointment would need to wait until that person had dealt effectively with his own family.

Read Titus 1:7.

- Men are looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. Paul used the word bishop instead of elder here, although he was clearly referring to the same role within the church. Local church leaders are identified in Scripture with two primary titles: The word “elder” is used to describe the leaders in the churches that were primarily populated with Jewish believers. This term “elder” comes from the Jewish community, going back as far as the time of Moses. The word “bishop” was used to describe spiritual leaders in churches that were

populated primarily with Gentile converts. This term “bishop” comes from the Greek and Roman world and was used to refer to a commissioner who oversaw a new colony of people. The apostle Paul used these two terms interchangeably, particularly in **Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:1, 19**.

- In Titus 1:7, Paul repeated the qualification of blamelessness, emphasizing that this is an essential characteristic of a godly leader. Church leaders who bring blame and reproach on themselves damage God’s work. Paul’s guidelines for leaders has even more significance in the Cretan setting, for Cretans were known as having disreputable character (1:12).
- **“He must not be arrogant”**—inflated with self-will or self-importance. A pitfall of leadership is arrogant pride; pride has no place in a Christian leader’s life. Pride and conceit were Lucifer’s downfall (**Isaiah 14:12-15**). His attitude was, “I want to be my own God, I want to be in control of my own life, and I don’t want anyone telling me what to do.” God forced him out of heaven; so he came to earth and entered into the Garden of Eden and into the serpent through which he tempted Eve with the same mindset (**Genesis 3:5** – **“God knows that in the day you eat of it, you will be like God.”**) Because we are all descended from Adam and Eve, what they got, we get—the “Lucifer Mindset.” “I want to be my own God, I want to be in control of my own life, and I don’t want anyone telling me what to do!”
- **“Not quick tempered.”** A person who is easily provoked will speak and act without thinking, often hurting people and damaging the church’s witness and reputation. James wrote: **“Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God’s righteousness”** (**James 1:19-20**). If this is important for “everyone” (all believers), how much more so for their leader!
- **“Not addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain.”**

These three prohibitions had particular significance as Titus searched for church leaders in first-century Crete. A church leader must not be addicted to wine (a drunkard) or to money (greedy for gain). He must not be violent (often the result of being quick-tempered or drunk or greedy for gain).

Read Titus 1:8.

- After listing negative characteristics that a church leader should not have, Paul now lists these positive qualities. Hospitality was of primary importance in the New Testament church. Believers were encouraged to be “*hospitable*” (3 John 1:4-8), so their leaders should exemplify this characteristic, revealing devotion and concern for the welfare of others.
- “*A lover of what is good.*” Paul insisted that the leaders be known for loving God, as well as loving good teaching/doctrine, good people, and good works.
- “*Sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled.*” Sober-mindedness is a rather interesting word to ponder. In **Galatians 5:15**, Paul writes, “*The flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit wars against the flesh.*” What are they fighting over? Influence and control of man’s soul (mind, will, and emotions). Let’s give some thought to the fact that the flesh has its root and origin in Satan, the master-deceiver. Therefore, if we are walking in the flesh, we are not sober-minded (**1 Timothy 3:2**). Christian leaders who are known for being lovers of what is good must also display the same goodness in life, being upright or holy (devout/reverent), as well as being temperate or self-controlled.

Read Titus 1:9.

- The Christian leader must stand firm in his understanding, conviction, and teaching of the deeper truths of God’s Word as the Holy Spirit had revealed it.

He must hold fast to it, without changing it or decreasing its importance as the false teachers were doing—standing firm in the faith and not giving in to persecution or opposition.

- ***“So that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it”***(NIV). Elders must fulfill a positive as well as a negative dual-role in handling the truth. They must encourage by preaching, supporting, and edifying people as they follow the truth. But also they must confront and oppose false ideas. Their teaching must often tear down to build up as the truth is shared in both a positive and negative light. Confident leaders with spiritual backbone, courage, and an irrefutable message would stand in stark contrast with Cretan life-styles, character traits, and false teachers which are described in the following verses.

C. Warning Against False Teachers

Titus may not have been under attack by false teachers within the church as Timothy was in Ephesus, but he was nevertheless ministering in a hostile environment. Paul expected Titus to guard against both the Judaizers and the pagans. Paul agreed with the general assessment that Cretans were con artists. It would be difficult to know when they were telling the truth and safest to assume that they weren't. Planting the gospel of truth in such soil required much discernment.

Read Titus 1:10.

- Titus was being sent into a difficult situation. The false teachers Titus faced were those of the circumcision, the Judaizers. These were Jews who taught that the Gentiles had to obey all the Jewish laws, rules, and rituals before they could become Christians (**Titus 1:14**). This

teaching confused new Christians and caused problems in many churches. Paul wrote letters to several churches to help them understand that Gentile believers did not have to become Jews first in order to be Christians; God accepts anyone who comes to Him in faith (**Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 3:2-7**). Although the Jerusalem Council had dealt with this issue (**Acts 15**), devout Jews who refused to believe only in Jesus were still trying to cause problems in the Christian churches. The ruling of the Jerusalem Council may have been received by those within the churches, but these outsiders did not recognize the apostles as having any authority.

- Here Paul identified three characteristics of this brand of false teacher:
 - They were rebellious, showing contempt for the authority of Paul and Titus.
 - As idle talkers, they spoke many words but said little or nothing.
 - Having been deceived themselves, they naturally became deceivers of others (**2 Peter 2:1-2**).

Read Titus 1:11.

- These false teachers must be silenced; the Greek word is *epistomizein*, and literally means “to muzzle.” The reason? They were leading people astray; whole households had been affected, causing great problems in the church. Paul told Titus to sharply rebuke the false teachers (1:13). What they taught was not the trustworthy message of grace by faith but their own opinions and ideas; their goal was not to glorify the Lord and establish His church but to obtain wealth (dishonest gain). It’s interesting to consider Peter’s words pertaining to false teachers in **2 Peter 2:3**: “*and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.*”

Read Titus 1:12.

- Paul quoted a line from a poem by Epimenides, a poet and philosopher who had lived in Crete 600 years earlier. Paul called him a prophet because other ancient writers (notably Aristotle and Cicero) did so, and because his own countrymen gave him that title. Paul was not saying he was a prophet in the biblical sense. The quotation reveals basic character flaws in the Cretans, giving them a bad reputation for lying, violence, and laziness. (It's interesting to compare these Cretan character flaws with Paul's list of qualifications for Cretan church leaders in 1:7-10). Their false teaching made them "liars"; their unrestrained brutality refers to their being "vicious brutes"; and their lives lacked control "lazy gluttons." The reputation of the Cretans was so bad that the verb form of their name (*kretizo*) was used by the Greeks to indicate lying.

Read Titus 1:13.

- The Cretans could not argue with one of their own honored prophets, so neither did Paul. Having been in Crete, Paul knew firsthand the type of people with whom Titus was dealing.
- ***"Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith."*** The New Testament teaching on confronting evil in the church has two purposes: to purge the church of wrong doing, and to bring the perpetrators to repentance. Of the two, the repentance purpose is given far more emphasis in the New Testament.
- In this situation, Paul's recommended remedy was to sharply rebuke the false teachers, hoping to awaken them to sound doctrine and true faith. A forceful, direct response early could prevent problems in the church later. If the first believers were to develop unhealthy

spiritual lives, they would carry their “disease” into the ongoing life of the church.

Read Titus 1:14.

- Apparently, the false teaching centered on two errors: first, Jewish myths—possibly some useless speculations on the Old Testament (**1 Timothy 1:4**). Titus may well have been facing a form of syncretism, in which diluted Judaism was being blended with paganism producing a deadly brand of godless religion.
- ***“Commandments of men who turn from the truth.”*** Second, these human “commandments” most likely focused on rules and rituals, especially Jewish laws regarding what was clean and unclean (as is evident from Paul’s words in verses 15-16). Titus faced the lethal combination of religion and falsehood. Such mixtures have always presented problems for God’s people. In the first temptation to deceive Eve, the serpent deliberately mixed a discussion about God’s requirement with an outright lie (**Galatians 3:1-4**). Extremely religious people who twisted the truth for personal benefit hounded Jesus. He asked, ***“Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?”*** (**Matthew 15:3**) Today the world applauds those who create their own personal religion with self-made rules and guidelines that come from human reasoning and not God.

Read Titus 1:15.

- The “pure” are those who have trusted Christ as Savior, and are appropriating their co-crucifixion with Christ, which will hold the flesh in the place of death and produce an abiding relationship with Christ—the ultimate goal being the Holy Spirit reproducing the life of Christ within, which is totally opposite of the “defiled” in the second part of this verse. The “pure”

do not need to worry about rules and rituals regarding what is clean or unclean because they are living the Christ-life (**Galatians 2:20**). Paul had written to the Romans: “***For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit***” (**Romans 14:17; Colossians 2:20-23; 1 Timothy 4:1-5**). Phrases like this one from Paul must be understood in their immediate context as well as within the context of Paul’s wider teaching. Paul was not teaching that “As long as I can call myself pure, whatever I choose to do is therefore pure,” but rather he was speaking against legalism. For example, dietary restrictions or food laws presented a form of religion that people thought provided spiritual substance but which proved to be empty of real spirituality. Jesus addressed the futility of substituting dietary regulations for a walk of faith (**Mark 7:14-23**). Even Peter struggled with the importance of Jewish food restrictions in God’s plan (**Acts 10:9-15, 28**). If we are walking in the Spirit, whatever we desire to do is pure because it is God’s desire (**Romans 14:14**).

- “***But to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure. Their very minds and consciences are corrupted (polluted/made foul).***” Strong words against the false teachers who taught that following rules and rituals were necessary in order to be clean and pure. However, because of their inner corruption (flesh), “nothing is pure”; nothing they do, say, give, or teach could be pure because they were corrupted from the inside (**Romans 7:18**). Echoing Jesus’ teaching in **Luke 11:38-39**, Paul explained that a person who is pure on the inside—dead to fleshly influence and alive to God (**Romans 6:11**)—cannot be corrupted by outside influences; but a person who is corrupt on the inside corrupts everything around him.

Read Titus 1:16.

- The “***defiled and unbelieving***” false teachers (1:15) claimed to know and follow God, but their actions

revealed their true nature. The false teachers professed knowledge of God and, with their Jewish background, may have been well versed in the Old Testament, but they based everything on their law keeping, not on the Lord Jesus Christ; thus they denied the God they claimed to know. Paul's charge here against the false teachers is similar but even more direct than his accusation in **2 Timothy**, "***Having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them***" (**2 Timothy 3:5**).

- "***They are abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.***" Paul again employed strong words. He called them detestable, revealing his disgust for their sin and hypocrisy; disobedient, because they acted against the God they claimed to know; unfit for any good work because people who live in rebellion and unbelief against God can do nothing to please him (**Hebrews 11:6**).

TITUS

Chapter 2

A. Right Living in the Church

Jesus encouraged His followers to be the salt of the earth and light to the world (**Matthew 5:13-16**). Salvation, which comes with an indwelling Holy Spirit, is meant to bring about moral and ethical change. Paul gave Titus counsel as to how the body should function to bring about this change: the older should teach the younger by words and by example, passing on Christian values from generation to generation.

Read Titus 2:1.

- Whereas the false teachers were deceivers (1:10), Titus was to teach truth, “*sound doctrine*,” the “trustworthy message” of God’s Word (1:9). Notice the emphasis on sound doctrine in Paul’s instructions to Timothy and Titus (**1 Timothy 1:10; 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:2**). If believers are grounded in truth, false teaching, tragic circumstances, or the pull of emotions will not sway them.
- Knowledge and true faith in “sound doctrine” will lead to right living. In the following verses, Paul gives Titus some examples of Christian conduct, which is a product of faith in the deeper truths of God’s Word.

Read Titus 2:2.

- The older men are the senior members of any community and should be examples of maturity. Paul identified four objectives for Titus as he taught the older men:

- Titus would teach the older men to be “temperate” exercising moderation and self-restraint with an absence of extravagance.
- He would also encourage these older men to live dignified and honorable lives (2:3, 7).
- Titus would teach these older Cretan men, who were actually young believers, to be self-controlled. Having lived for years in a heathen culture, they would now, by God’s grace, need to restrain their passions, anger, and words. Self-control could also be translated as “sensible.”
- Titus was also to emphasize “soundness” in the lives of the older men. Three key Christian virtues were to be manifested by the older men in the congregation: sound faith, which meant they were to be rooted and grounded in Christ and established in the faith (**Colossians 2:7**); sound love, which can only come from the life of Christ within (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**); sound patience could be defined as enduring steadfastness. It’s interesting to consider that “endurance” replaces “hope” in Paul’s list of three Christian virtues of “faith, hope, and love” in **1 Corinthians 13:13**. Other Scriptures to consider are **2 Timothy 4:7** and **James 5:7-8**.
- Titus would encourage the older men not to give in to idleness or declining activity, but rather to be even more involved in the lives of the young men in the Church.

Read Titus 2:3.

- Paul’s directive for the women in the Cretan Church was quite different from the (unequal) way women were usually treated in Cretan culture. Older women must be taught that their lifestyles are to be reverent, dignified, worthy of honor, and Christ-like; they should have a respectful attitude toward others, not slanderers or gossips, not addicted to much wine (literally, “slaves to drink”). Paul had much more in mind here than simply

to give honor to older women; younger women need their wisdom, and godly example.

Read Titus 2:4.

- In verses 4, 5, 8, and 10, Paul uses the phrase “so that” to show the purpose behind his directions to Titus; “so that” the older women teach and encourage the younger women by word and by example to love their husbands and children. If we were to ask the average Christian wife and mother if she loves her husband and children, she would probably be offended and answer “of course.” However, returning to the Garden of Eden after the fall, we find God giving out the consequences for sin. He speaks first to the serpent and then to Satan; next He speaks to the woman who is told that her “desire will be to her husband” (literally to rule over her husband). At the fall, woman’s willing submission was corrupted and she was left with the old “Lucifer mindset” (I want to be my own god, I want to be in control of my own life, and I don’t want any one telling me what to do). What outwardly looks like love for her husband or child is often nothing more than a self-motive to look good before others or be in control and feel good about herself. Thus there is this great need for the older woman to draw alongside and share with the younger what they have learned; and unfortunately quite often it is learned the hard way. Within the church today, older women rarely become active role models for the younger women. In fact, the honor and respect due our senior members is often absent in the church. Age groups are isolated from each other, causing people to feel that little can be learned from one another. It is unfortunate when patterns in society become patterns for the church. The church must encourage inter-generational caring and sharing. There are times when the kitchen provides an eloquent pulpit for the application of biblical truth!

Read Titus 2:5.

- As with the older men and women, younger women need self-control. Paul goes on explaining what kind of control is needed: controlling passions and desires, and living lives in submission to their husbands. Wives and mothers should manage their households in such a way as to show loving respect and kindness in their relationships with their husbands and children. (**Ephesians 5:22-24**). For marriage and family relationships to run smoothly, there must be one appointed leader; God has appointed the husband and father to be this leader. The wife should willingly follow her husband's leadership as he follows Christ, acknowledging that this is his God-given role (**1 Corinthians 11:3**). Maturity provides a key to understanding submission. To be "subject to" does not necessarily address obedience, but rather it points toward accepting the relationship that God has designed, voluntarily subjecting oneself to God's order of authority. To Paul, submission never meant inferiority (**Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1, 5**).
- Submission should not be a problem in families where both husband and wife are believers, for both should be primarily concerned with the well-being of the other. Real leadership involves serving, and a wise and Christ-honoring husband will not take advantage of his leadership role but will love and serve his wife as Christ loved and served His disciples (**John 13:1-17**).
- ***"So that the word of God may not be blasphemed."*** Paul's purpose in these instructions was to glorify God; if we live righteous and blameless lives, the enemies of the Gospel have no opportunity to condemn or discredit.

Read Titus 2:6.

- Now Paul turns the spotlight on the younger men, and urges Titus to teach them "sober-mindedness." This is

his single requirement for the younger men. It might be good if we were to take the time to explain this often unknown and confusing term “sober-minded.”

- We would do well to understand that “sober-mindedness” can never be obtained in the flesh, because the flesh has its root and origin in Satan, and Satan is the master-deceiver. In **Galatians 5:17**, Paul writes that the flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit wars against the flesh. What are they fighting over? Influence and control of the soul (mind, will, and emotions). If the flesh is winning the battle, then there can be no sober-mindedness. In both **Romans 12:2** and **Ephesians 4:23**, Paul writes of the “*renewing of the mind*” which could be seen as “sober-mindedness” and is the out-flow of “*putting off the old man*” in **Ephesians 4:22**. Young men today, as much as in ancient times, lack this quality of “sober-mindedness.” Thinking back to Paul’s exhortation for wives in verse 5 to be keepers at home and submissive to their husbands, all of the positive traits that a husband can contribute to a marriage, self-sacrifice, love, tenderness, compassion, listening, etc., all flow out of “sober-mindedness” which is a fruit of walking in the spirit. Husbands who lack “sober-mindedness” have little right to complain about their wives’ lack of submission.

Read Titus 2:7-8.

- Titus, qualifying as a “younger man” himself, was urged to set an example for the young men in the churches he led (**1 Timothy 4:12**). His authoritative words could have no impact if not backed by a blameless life. Titus’s teaching was to emphasize Christ-like conduct, while his life-style was to exemplify Christ-like living. Paul stressed the importance of “good works” often in the Pastoral Epistles:
 - **1 Timothy 2:10**—Women were to adorn themselves with good works.
 - **1 Timothy 5:10**—Widows were to be known for

- their good works.
- **1 Timothy 6:18**—Wealthy people were to be rich in good works.
 - **2 Timothy 2:21**—Christian workers who cleansed themselves from sin would be “*useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.*”
 - **2 Timothy 3:17**—Scripture thoroughly equips us for every good work.
 - **Titus 2:7**—The young men were to set an example by doing good works.
 - **Titus 3:1**—Christians in society were to be ready to do whatever is good.
 - **Titus 3:8, 14**—Paul reminded and encouraged Christians to devote themselves to doing what is good.
 - “*In [your] doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility.*” After focusing on the life-example of Titus, Paul now turns to his teaching ministry. The word integrity carries with it the idea of honesty, void of corruption. The fact that the teaching of Titus revealed integrity would contrast him with the false teachers (**2 Peter 2:1-3**), as well as the Cretan culture, where lying was a way of life (**Titus 1:12**). Reverence indicates teaching with sincerity so that the words of Titus would be respected, purposeful, and taken seriously.
 - “*Sound speech that cannot be condemned.*” Paul counseled Titus to be above reproach or criticism in the things that he taught. Because of his unique role in Crete, his life must display a remarkable degree of godliness/God-likeness. The word translated “speech” here is *logos*, and can also be translated “words.” By God’s grace, Titus must carefully choose his “words” so that he would remain above criticism and condemnation.
 - “*One who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*” In **2 Timothy 3:12** we read “*all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer*

persecution.” Titus would face opposition, but he should live in such a way that all accusations would prove to be invalid. His exemplary life, teaching, and speech may never stop the false accusations, but his accusers would be put to shame when their accusations prove to be groundless.

Read Titus 2:9-10.

- Slavery was common in Paul’s day. Millions of slaves occupied the empire, and many of them found their way into the early churches. Slavery was a part of the culture; thus, Paul did not condemn slavery in any of his letters. However, Paul did advise both Christian slaves and masters to be loving and responsible (**Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-25; 1 Timothy 6:1-2; 1 Peter 2:18-25**). Slaves were just naturally submissive because of their position, but Paul’s great concern was the attitude of the slave toward his master and toward his work. A slave-master, whether a believer or nonbeliever, was to be treated with respect by his slaves and the work well-pleasing to the master. Paul wrote the following to the Colossian believers: ***“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters”*** (Colossians 3:22-23 NRSV).
- ***“To be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering.”*** If there was any doubt about Paul’s exhortation to slaves regarding their submission and cooperation with their masters, he removed it with these examples. Christian slaves were not to be stubborn, unmanageable, or resistant to authority, but rather should submit to the authority over them. Slaves might consider themselves of no value (indeed, their society certainly told them so), but Paul’s implication here is that they had an incredible opportunity to witness for

Christ on all social levels. A slave's behavior demonstrated Christ's love and gospel to the children and family members they cared for, the merchants they dealt with, other slaves and their families, as well as their master.

Read Titus 2:11.

- The word “for” ties everything together that Paul had written prior to this statement. God's salvation was offered to all the people groups that had just been identified. It's interesting that Paul referred to “***God our Savior***” in verse 10, and then follows with this statement about the salvation that God brings. God, by His grace, sent Christ to earth, and through His death, salvation is available to all. It is apparent Paul understood that the gospel message was offered universally to all types of people, regardless of their religious background, race, age, gender, or station in life. “***For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God***” (Ephesians 2:8).
- The word “all” here refers to the universal offer, rather than implying that everyone will be saved. The grace of God appeared bodily in Christ, and that message of grace arrived in Crete with Paul and Titus.

Read Titus 2:12.

- This is what true grace teaches: Christians are positionally dead to our three enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil (**Romans 6:6; Colossians 1:14; Galatians 5:24; 6:14**), as well as conditionally having the power and desire to say “no” to all that they have to offer, while being alive to God, and having the power and desire to say “yes” to and live for Him (**Romans 6:13**).

- “**Ungodliness**” refers to the lack of God’s influence or control in our lives (God-lessness); it is a disregard for God Himself (**Romans 1:18**). We live in an age when many reject God’s influence in their lives. By God’s grace, Christians have the power and desire to deny or say “no” to godlessness and live lives that are pleasing to God (**Philippians 2:13**).
- “**Worldly lusts or passions**” can be best seen in **1 John 2:16**: “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*” These are the desires of people who have an anti-God mind-set.
- The power to “**live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age**” is a gift (grace) from God and comes through the working of the Holy Spirit (**Romans 8:13**), as we by grace through faith appropriate the truth of our co-crucifixion with Christ (**Galatians 2:20**). Because Christ died and rescued us from sin, we are free from sin’s power, from its control. It’s His grace that motivates and fortifies us to live for Christ in this present age.

Read Titus 2:13.

- Paul gives an encouraging motivation for life—believers are waiting for and eagerly looking toward Christ’s glorious return with confident, eager expectation and hope because it is a certainty.
- In the words “**looking for**” we find the tension of an eager expectation that has been promised but has not yet occurred.
- The phrase “**blessed hope**” is a reference to Christ and His Second Coming—the confident expectation of His return to receive those who have trusted Him. It’s interesting to ponder the following phrase which is found in **Hebrews 6:12**: “*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul.*” When the problems of life seem

overwhelming, and our souls (mind, will, and emotions) are out of control, our thoughts become fearful or anxious, our desires are not rational, and our emotions are at an all-time low. It is at this time, when hope in Christ anchors (calm and quiets) the soul (**Isaiah 26:3**).

- The final phrase of this verse, “***our great God and Savior Jesus Christ***” raises a rather interesting question: was Paul referring to two persons of the Trinity (“our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ”), or was he bringing to our attention the divinity of Christ (“our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”)? While the phrase can be read either way, the grammar of the sentence supports the view that this was a reference to the deity of Christ. The same construction appears in **2 Peter 1:1** (“***our God and Savior, Jesus Christ***.”) Both these verses affirm that Jesus is God (**John 20:28; Romans 9:5; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20**).

Read Titus 2:14.

- The “***great God and Savior, Jesus Christ***,” whose return believers are awaiting, is the same Jesus Christ who came to earth and died for our sins. His act of sacrifice is summed up in the phrase “***gave Himself for us***.” The words “gave Himself” indicate the sacrificial nature of His act of giving (**Mark 10:45**). “For us” indicates the substitutionary nature of His sacrifice; Christ died in our place. His giving of Himself for us was sufficient and effective, for we are redeemed “***from every lawless deed***.” He gave His life on our behalf with a twofold purpose. First, that He might “redeem” us or purchase our release from the captivity of sin (**Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6; 1 Peter 1:18-21**). Christ paid the ultimate price, to redeem us “***from every lawless deed***.”
- God’s second purpose was that, through His redemption, He would set apart for Himself “***His own special people***.” This phrase has an important Old Testament background. In **Exodus 19:5**, God referred

to the Jewish People by saying “You are [...] a special treasure” (**Deuteronomy 7:6**). The basis of the covenant was God’s choosing this people and purifying them to be set apart for his possession and use. In **Ezekiel 37:23**, God reaffirmed this special relationship: *“They will be my people, and I will be their God.”*

- However, we are now in a new dispensation and God is no longer working through a nation, but rather the Church of Jesus Christ. The apostle Peter referred to the church in this way (**1 Peter 1:18-21**). Christ has accomplished the work required to purify for Himself those whom He died to save (**1 John 1:7; Hebrews 9:12-14**). This purification process is called “sanctification,” which sets us free from sin’s power as well as sin’s influence as we grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. We are a people who are redeemed and purified and now have the power and desire to live according to God’s will, *“zealous for good works”* (**Ephesians 2:10**).

Read Titus 2:15.

- *“These things”* refers back to verses 1-10. Paul strongly urges Titus to teach and boldly speak out rather than being silent and permitting wrong attitudes and wrong doing to continue.
- *“Encourage”* (exhort, admonish) and *“rebuke”* (express disapproval, reprimand). Basically Titus was to persistently communicate to those in Crete what he had learned from Paul.
- *“Let no one despise you.”* No doubt, as Titus exercised his God-given authority, some would look down on him, either because he was a young man or because they may not agree with his decisions. Paul had made a similar statement with respect to Timothy’s youth in **1 Timothy 4:12**.
- The implication of this phrase communicates that neither Titus nor Timothy should allow anyone’s definition of who they were, to affect what they knew themselves to be...in Christ.

TITUS

Chapter 3

A. Obey the Government

Although at first glance Paul seems to have introduced the government as a new subject, his motive was to show yet another place where Christianity could have an impact. Most of Chapter 2 covers relationships and roles of believers, while in Chapter 3 Paul is mainly dealing with Christian behavior in the context of government and society. Paul reminds all Christians that they once shared the same “lostness” that marked the lives of those around them, but Christ came to earth to provide salvation, grace, the Holy Spirit, and mercy. He took those unable to save themselves by their own righteousness and made them into a people who are *“heirs according to the hope of eternal life”* (3:7). The quality/condition of our earthly citizenship should reflect the position of our certain heavenly citizenship!

Read Titus 3:1.

- In addition to speaking, exhorting, and rebuking (2:15), a Christian leader must also “remind” his flock of their attitude toward human government/human authority. As believers await the return of Christ and living eternally with Him in His eternal government (2:13), we are to live in submission to God-ordained human authority here on earth (**Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17**). So Paul points out that the believers in Crete must subject themselves to human authorities as well as obey civil laws. There is no mention here of the government, the authority, or the laws being godly.
- Ponder the following. Christians tend to understand subjection to human government in different ways. Many would agree we are to live at peace with

government as long as that government permits us to live by our religious convictions (**Acts 4:18-20**). For hundreds of years, however, there have been at least three interpretations of how we are to do this:

1. Some Christians believe human governments are so corrupt that Christians should have as little to do with them as possible, believing that a Christian should not work for the government, vote in elections, or serve in the military. Although this fulfills the principle of abstaining from evil, it prevents the Christian from being salt and light in the governmental, political, and military system.
 2. Others believe that God has given the government authority in certain areas and the church authority in others. They believe Christians can be loyal to both and can work for either. In this view, church and state are concerned with two totally different spheres—the spiritual and the physical. Thus, they complement each other but do not work together. This view supports Jesus’ teaching to give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s (**Matthew 22:21**), but it can lead to isolation from the political world and indifference toward state leaders.
 3. Still others believe that Christians have a God-given responsibility to make the state better. They can do this politically by electing Christian or other high-principled leaders. They also do this morally by serving as an influence for good in society. In this view, church and state are working together for the good of all. This view seems to best portray the New Testament teaching. The danger here would be for the Christian to get so involved in worldly affairs that the God-given mission of the church is lost.
- Besides submission to authority, Paul mentioned readiness for good works—a willingness to serve. ***“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”*** (Ephesians 2:10).

- Christians who submit to the governmental authorities are no doubt a great witness. Also, Christians who are active in community service and/or government have great opportunities to witness for Christ. It might be good to keep in mind our true citizenship. According to **Philippians 3:20**, we are citizens of heaven rather than and earthly kingdom such as India, South Africa, Mexico, etc. In **1 Peter 1:1, 17** and **2:11**, we are called strangers and sojourners (or tourists and resident aliens) of our own nations on earth.

Read Titus 3:2.

- These Christ-like characteristics reveal changed lives and attract unbelievers. “*Speak evil of no one*” is a reference to spreading evil reports (**James 3:9**). An interesting Scripture to ponder is (**1 Peter 2:23**).
- “*To be peaceable*” conveys the idea of a meek, quiet contentedness which avoids contention/arguments. Christians are to be known as peacemakers (**Romans 12:18**). There may be disagreements, but believers are to avoid, not the disagreement, but the quarrels.
- Being “*gentle*” (sensitive, considerate, and tolerant) is a Christ-like quality that should characterize our lives. The sensitive believer considers the other person’s point of view more important than his own (**Philippians 2: 3-4**).
- Paul ended this short list of Christ-like characteristics by emphasizing true “humility/meekness.” Paul summarized for us the attitude of Jesus by these words In **Philippians 2:8**: “*And being found in human form, He humbled himself.*” It’s interesting to note that these words were written to illustrate an earlier statement by Paul to “*let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus*” (**Philippians 2:5**). What greater compliment could a believer ever receive than to be told that his or her actions or attitudes exemplified Christ-like humility.

As Christians, we are on display to manifest to the world Christ-likeness (**1 Thessalonians 1:6-8**).

Read Titus 3:3.

- The Cretans had a rather poor reputation (1:12), yet Paul wanted them to understand that all believers were once sinners who had lived far from God (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 4:17-24**). Paul never forgot the change that God had made in his own life (**Acts 9:1-22**). Paul included himself, Titus, the believers in Crete, as well as all believers in the list of past rebels.
- “**Foolish**” is used here as it is in Proverbs. A wise man is one who looks at life from God’s point of view; a fool can be defined merely as one who is going his own way and is not looking at life from God’s point of view. In Proverbs, fools are proud and arrogant (**Proverbs 21:24**); they scorn wisdom (**Proverbs 23:9**); they trust only in themselves (**Proverbs 28:26**); they persist in their foolishness (**Proverbs 27:22**).
- Instead of being submissive, obedient, and ready to do good (**Titus 3:1**), we were disobedient toward God, and led astray by the flesh, deceived through false teaching, and unable to do anything good or pleasing in God’s sight (1:16).
- Paul goes on to say that before Christ was the focal point of our lives, we were enslaved to our fleshly passions and desires. This paints a dismal picture of humanity without Christ: “*that which is born of the flesh, is flesh*” (**John 3:6**). The only thing the flesh will ever produce is more of the same.
- “*We ourselves were [...] living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*” Instead of avoiding slander and quarrels, being peaceful, considerate, and humble (3:2), we lived in malice desiring to harm one another and envious of others’ possessions and appearance. No matter how much “love” the world tries

to create without God, the overriding power of the flesh produces a greater amount of hatred. Thus, there is no hope for humanity apart from the intervention of Jesus Christ.

Read Titus 3:4.

- It might be good to keep in mind that the next four verses, in the Greek, actually forms one long sentence. Fortunately for us, God did intervene on earth for the sake of hopeless, sinful humanity and His kindness and love appeared in the human form of Jesus Christ to provide the only way for us to be saved. By His death, He saved us from our deserved punishment by taking that punishment upon Himself and allowing us to personally experience His kindness and love. His saving action was for people estranged from God (**Titus 3:3; Romans 5:6, 8, 10**). Man's condition was so desperate that he could not save himself; only God could save him.

Read Titus 3:5.

- God saved us because of His mercy (not getting what we deserve) alone, not because we earned it by doing good, for we were incapable of righteous works (3:3). If anyone knew this truth, it was Paul. God had mercifully saved him as he traveled to Damascus on a mission to harass and arrest Christians. Other Scriptures to consider (**Romans 3:23-24; 4:4-5; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16-17**). It might be interesting to consider Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant in **Matthew 18:21-35**.
- ***“He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”*** Paul is summarizing what God does for us when He saves us. The words ***“He saved us”*** explains that Christ's completed action is a

historical fact. The Bible uses a number of images to describe the transformation from being lost to being saved. Here Paul chose to picture his previous state apart from Christ as a condition of moral corruption that had to be cleansed. The means of salvation, then, is pictured as washing. “Washing” and “renewing” together, describes the entire work of cleansing and regenerating by the Holy Spirit. Rebirth is the new creation of **2 Corinthians 5:17**; renewal is the constant sanctification process started at conversion.

- The New Living Bible translates verse 5 in this way; *“He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit.”*

Read Titus 3:6.

- The Greek verb translated “*poured out*,” *ekcheo*, is used here and in **Acts 2:33**. At the moment of salvation, Paul and all believers received the Holy Spirit abundantly, richly, generously. God is not stingy; He gives in abundance. Jesus Christ, as Mediator, came to earth and then returned to the Father and sent back the Holy Spirit. He exchanged His physical presence with a few disciples for His spiritual omnipresence with all believers. Jesus told His disciples, *“Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you”* (John 16:7).

Read Titus 3:7.

- As was often his style, Paul repeated what he had just written, changing some words for emphasis. We were all born into sin that leads to certain death (3:3) and clearly in need of rescue. Because of His mercy (3:4), God “saved us” (3:5). Because we were sinners incapable of supplying our own righteousness (3:6), God cleansed us through the Holy Spirit’s work. Now

in this verse 7, the phrase “*having been justified by his grace*” summarizes the problem (needing justification) and God’s solution (justification by grace). From Adam we inherited guilt, a wretched sinful nature, and God’s penalty for sin—death. Because Jesus took our deserved punishment for sin and “justified” us before God, we are able to trade our punishment for forgiveness; we trade our sin for Jesus’ righteousness. Christ offers us the opportunity to be born into His spiritual family.

- “*We should become heirs*” refers to the fact that we are God’s children who inherit all His riches. “*And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise [...] Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ*” (Galatians 3:29; 4:7).
- In the human realm, heirs don’t inherit until the owner of the estate dies (though they may enjoy many benefits in the meantime). But in the spiritual realm, something different occurs—we do not fully inherit all that God has for us until we have died; yet in this life we can experience many joys and benefits of being “heirs” of God as we live out the “crucified,” “dead to self” life. Our inheritance is summed up in the words “hope of eternal life.” As mentioned in 2:13, this “hope” is a certainty. “Eternal life” began the moment we gave our life to Christ, but there is more to come! Our experience now is only a foretaste of what God has guaranteed to us in the future!

B. Avoid Useless Arguments

As Titus proceeded with the task of planting and nurturing the church, Paul reminded him that he would encounter resistance. The aging apostle Paul had summarized the key points of the faith that Titus was to communicate, and he was to lead in such a way that the truth would not be

compromised by arguments, false teachings, or conflicts over power. Some people in the church, who were unteachable, would not follow even when they were patiently and repeatedly corrected. These people would lead others astray and cause divisions in the church. Titus was not to tolerate their divisive behavior.

Read Titus 3:8.

- Paul used this phrase several times (**1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11**) to indicate that what he just wrote was faithful or trustworthy. It was Paul's desire that Titus faithfully affirm (teach) the miracle of salvation, rebirth, and eternal life given to the believers by God's mercy alone, as well as the lifestyle changes available to all who claimed the name of Christ.
- ***“Those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.”*** Paul now reminds Titus that the believers must live out their beliefs before all men. Sound doctrine will naturally manifest itself in a changed life of doing God's will (good works). In **Ephesians 2:8-10**, we see the role good works plays in the development of the life of grace. **James 1:22; 2:14-25; and 3:13** show the central place of good works in the true believer's life. However, we must always keep in mind **Romans 7:18**—***“In my flesh dwells no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.”*** Only what Christ does in and through me is “good.”

Read Titus 3:9.

- If sound teaching and good works are ***“good and profitable to men”*** (3:8), then we can know that foolish arguments are unprofitable and useless. Paul warned Titus, as he warned Timothy, not to get involved in foolish and unprofitable arguments (**1 Timothy 1:4**;

6:4; 2 Timothy 2:14, 23). The false teaching in Crete apparently had Jewish roots and focused on two errors: “Jewish myths” (1:14) and “quarrels about the law,” which may have been useless speculation regarding the Old Testament rules and rituals regarding what was clean and unclean. Paul also referred to “genealogies” in his warning to Timothy. It might be that the false teachings in Crete, Ephesus, and Colossae were similar in content (**1 Timothy 1:4; Colossians 2:8, 18**).

- Paul warned Titus and Timothy to avoid the false teachers’ debates and arguments, not even giving an answer to their pretentious statements. This did not mean that church leaders should not wrestle with the Scriptures, studying and discussing difficult Bible passages. Paul was warning against petty quarrels, not honest discussion that leads to wisdom.

Read Titus 3:10.

- Paul gave a similar warning in **Romans 16:17-20**, which follows Jesus’ pattern in **Matthew 18:15-17**. Besides avoiding the false teachers’ debates, Paul instructed Titus as to how he might respond toward anyone who causes divisions. While false teachers outside the church were to be avoided, a person inside the church must be admonished/warned not to cause division or threaten the unity of the church. The warning is intended to correct the individual’s divisive nature and restore him or her to fellowship. Paul allowed for two warnings before having nothing more to do with the person.

Read Titus 3:11.

- A person’s stubborn refusal to stop teaching false doctrine and to stop causing division in the church (even after being lovingly admonished) is evidence of a perverted and sinful mind. Some Scriptures to consider

are **Matthew 18:15-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15**. A local church must not modify its doctrine to accommodate every person's viewpoint. It may be better to risk having a member leave the church than to try and be a church that caters to every theological bent.

- Paul ended his letter with several personal notes. Unlike **2 Timothy**, written when Paul was in prison, this letter to Titus came from Paul while he was still deeply involved in ministry. Paul was making plans to winter in Nicopolis and was hoping to rendezvous with Titus there.

Read Titus 3:12.

- Little to nothing is known about Artemas. Tychicus was one of Paul's trusted companions (**Acts 20:4**) and a chosen messenger who delivered the letters to the Ephesian and Colossian churches (**Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7**). Apparently Paul planned to send one of these men to Crete for the purpose of overseeing the church in Titus' absence.
- ***“Be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.”*** We do not know Paul's location at the writing of this letter; however, he noted here that he wanted to winter in Nicopolis. Three places in the Roman Empire were named Nicopolis (literally, “city of victory”). The city mentioned here probably was on the western coast of Greece.

Read Titus 3:13.

- Nothing is known about Zenas the lawyer except that he would have been an expert in the law, either Hebrew or Roman, depending on his nationality; his Greek name might assume the latter. Apollos was a famous Christian preacher. A native of Alexandria in North Africa, he became a Christian in Ephesus and was trained by Aquila and Priscilla (**Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 1:12**).

Read Titus 3:14.

- Paul repeated his words of verses 1 and 8, again stressing the importance of doing what is good. Speaking to the Cretan believers as “our people,” Paul urged them to focus these good works on providing for daily necessities for themselves, their families, and those in need (such as the traveling preachers mentioned in 3:13, as well as believers who might be in need). The Cretans needed to understand that taking on normal responsibilities was needed to live fruitful and productive lives (**Ephesians 4:28**). Paul’s view of productivity differs radically with today’s view. Most people think “productive” means becoming affluent, achieving notoriety, or holding a high position. But Paul emphasized good works and fruitful Christian ministry for the purpose of meeting the needs of others.

Read Titus 3:15.

- We do not know who was included in the “all” who were with Paul; however, such a greeting occurred in many of his letters (**1 Corinthians 1:19-20; Colossians 4:10-15; 2 Timothy 4:9-12**).
- “*Grace be with you all. Amen.*” Paul used a similar closing in both his letters to Timothy. The inclusion of “all” indicates that this letter was to be read to a wider audience than just Titus.
- Possibly the greatest need in the church of Jesus Christ today is a “grace awakening,” and it was Paul’s pattern as he wrote each epistle to begin and end with grace: “*Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (**2 Peter 3:18**).



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