

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ..." (1a)

Before we look at the first part of the first verse, let's bring in a little background from other books of the Bible and from the letter itself.

Titus was a young pastor who was of Greek heritage (Galatians 2:3), a convert of Paul (Titus 1:4), who allowed Paul to circumcise him according to the Jewish tradition so he could minister to the Jews, and a traveling minister with Paul (Galatians 2:2-4 which refers to Paul's trip recorded in Acts 21).

Sometime later, Paul and Titus came to the island of Crete (possibly the time described in Acts 27). It seems that during that visit Paul won many to the Lord and began a church. But because he was in route to stand before Caesar in Rome (because of charges the Jews had brought against him), he left Titus at Crete to finish establishing the church there (Titus 1:5).

This letter was probably written within a few weeks of leaving Titus there. Paul urged Titus to finish the work and as soon as his replacement arrived (Titus 3:12) to meet him in Nicopolis in time for winter. Perhaps Paul believed his trial in Rome would not last long and he would be free to travel again soon.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

- I. Paul,
 - A. a servant of God
 - B. an apostle of Jesus Christ

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Even in his introductory remarks, Paul sets before the young pastor Titus a primary principle of the Christian life and of pastoral ministry. This statement is in what scholars call "biblical progression",

which means the elements of the sentence are in a certain order on purpose.

Paul refers to himself, first of all, as *"a servant of God"*. The word servant is "doulas", which literally means "slave". Paul considered himself a slave of Jesus Christ. He was owned by Christ and lived his life doing whatever Jesus needed him to do. He lived to please Christ. Paul knew he did not own his own life and could never again live for himself.

He had spent much of his adult life living for his own self, building a name and reputation (a religious one at that), and establishing his mark in the world. Then he met Christ (Acts 9). He was forgiven and transformed. It was at that point he gave all of himself to Christ and considered himself His servant...a servant that served out of love, gratitude, and loyalty. Remember what Paul said in Galatians 2:20? *"I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I do live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

Now notice the next part of the verse. Secondly, Paul refers to himself as *"apostle of Jesus Christ."* The word apostle means "an envoy or messenger". This means someone who speaks on behalf of another or acts as an ambassador for someone else. This statement speaks of Paul's vocation...his call...what he does in the Kingdom.

The biblical progression part means this: Only out of Paul's relationship with Christ (servant) can Paul do anything worthwhile for Christ (apostle). Being with Christ comes before doing for Christ. Relationship first...service second. Only as he walked with Christ could he effectively serve Christ's purposes. Only as he maintained his servanthood to Christ could Paul properly handle the responsibility and authority given him to work in the Kingdom.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?

1. Here is a list of questions that I've been asking myself after this study. Why don't you suffer with me☺?
 - Would I consider myself a servant of Christ?
 - Does my life look like I serve Christ?...the choices?...the priorities?...how I spend my free time?...the things I think about and plan for?...how I spend my resources?

- If those closest to me (spouse, kids, parents, friends, co-workers) were polled and asked the question, "Would you describe so and so (your and my name) as a person devoted to Christ and Christ's desires?"...what would they say?
2. A servant lives for his master. That which is important to his master is important to him. Fulfilling His master's purposes becomes his purpose for living.
- Do I know what Christ's purposes are?...what Christ would be doing if he were walking the earth today?...what things are important to him?...what His heart is passionate about?...what He cares about?
 - If I really was His servant, wouldn't I know these things?...shouldn't I know these things?
 - After inspecting my life, do I find any of what Christ cares about...scheduled into my life? Do those things have any priority in my day to day life?
 - And here is the biggest question of all...If no, what can I do today to change that? Repentance, surrender, dedicate, and obey.

Thanks for thinking through these things with me. It certainly isn't comfortable but it is beneficial. I'm praying for you today.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior.”
(Titus 1:1-3)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

We looked at the first part of verse 1 yesterday. Paul considered himself a servant (slave) of God and only after that, could he do the work of an apostle of Jesus Christ. Remember...Biblical Progression?...being with Christ before doing for Christ? Next, Paul talked about his role as an apostle.

- I. ...an apostle of Jesus Christ
 - A. for the faith of God's elect
 - B. and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness
 - 1. a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life...
 - 2. a faith and knowledge that God promised before the beginning of time.
 - 3. a faith and knowledge that at His appointed season He brought to light through preaching entrusted to me (Paul) by command of God our Savior.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

...for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness - Paul said his role as apostle was for *"the faith of God's elect"*. His call from God was to spend his life helping strengthen the faith of those whom God called to salvation. His primary method for building up the faith of Christians was the preaching ministry God entrusted to him (3).

What was it that he preached? He preached truth so that those who heard it would have *"the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness."* Knowledge of truth enables Christians to know what God has made available to them...which enables them to embrace the work of Christ by faith...which enables them to walk in the truth they have learned...which enables them to be free from sin's slavery...which enables them to live godly lives.

...a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, , and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior. - Paul said this *"faith and knowledge"* for the saints were founded upon 3 things.

(1) It rested upon the *"hope of eternal life"*. A heart that is thirsty for the knowledge of the truth and a mature faith has a belief...a conviction that there is more to life than what is seen on this earth. He longs to have a taste of the Divine...to have the life of the Eternal One living within him.

(2) It rested upon... *"which God, who does not lie, promised..."* A heart that is thirsty for the knowledge of the truth and a mature faith trusts in the character of God. He knows God does not lie. He believes that if God promises something, God will do the thing He promised.

(3) It rested upon that fact that God brings *"his Word to light through the preaching"* ministry. All faith and true knowledge that lead to godliness come from God's Word. God's Word consists of God's wisdom...His proclamation of what is right and what is wrong...what is truth and what is falsehood...an understanding of who He is and how His creation functions.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

The phrase that draws me this morning is the phrase, *"the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness."* Knowing the truth can move my life toward godliness. Knowing who God is and what God wants enables me to respond in faith to Him and His will for my life.

I suppose the opposite of this statement is equally true. An opposite rendition might read like this: *pursuing knowledge based upon a false worldview leads to ungodliness.* To pursue knowledge based upon the opposite of what God says about Himself and the opposite of what He

says about how His creation functions will lead to ungodly living...living that cannot honor God and his purpose for us.

The application for us today is a simple one. From what do we pursue knowledge? Do we use our time everyday to read God's Word and listen to it being taught so we might know truth and allow truth to have its way in us? Or...do we pursue what the world calls knowledge which is based upon false information regarding the Creator and life as He intended for it to be lived?

Maybe a practical way to get at this is...do we spend more time reading magazines, newspapers, and novels than we do reading God's Book? Do we spend more time in front of the TV drinking in the world's philosophies and its suggestions on how life should be lived than we spend time learning the ways of our God and His Kingdom?

Now don't get me wrong. This is not a legalistic lesson on the evils of TV. Your TV habits are none of Paul's business. You can do what you want. The simple point Paul is making is this: *"the knowledge of the truth leads to godliness"* and by implication *the knowledge of falsehood does not.*

Everyday I make a choice and so do you. Today...will we pursue the knowledge of the truth or will we not? Paul says that choice determines the spiritual direction and quality of our lives.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

"To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you." (Titus 1:4-5)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

- I. To Titus...
 - A. my true son in our common faith
 - B. Grace and peace from God...and Christ Jesus

- II. The reason I left you in Crete...
 - A. was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished
 - B. and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Titus, was evidently converted under Paul's ministry. Paul calls Titus *"my true son in our common faith..."*. Paul regards Titus as a son in the faith and obviously Titus regards Paul as a parent in the faith. Blessed are those who have won others to Christ and who have had the opportunity to mentor those won and see them grow and mature in their walk with Christ. To be involved in the birth and nurturing of sons and daughters in the faith is one of the greatest and most rewarding privileges in all of life.

Paul greets him with a warm prayer asking the Father and Son to bless Titus with *"grace and peace"*. Grace, of course is the underserved and unearned favor of God at work in our lives through Jesus. Paul, in Romans 6:14 also tells us that grace is the conduit for the power of God. Paul says, *"sin shall not be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."*

Grace is not given to us so we can live in sin and somehow get away with it. Grace is given to us so that we can be free from sin's slavery. So many people seem to look at grace all wrong. They see it as a license to sin or a security blanket in case they mess up. Some in

Rome defined grace in this way too, but Paul refutes it sharply. In Romans 6:1-2 Paul said, *"What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin, how can we live in it any longer?"* Grace is meant to be neither. Grace delivers the forgiving and transforming power of God to the doorstep of our hearts. Grace is a deliverer not a pacifier.

"...The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you." - At this point in the letter, Paul gets to the reason he writes in the first place. When Paul left Titus in Crete he left him for a reason. Paul writes to remind Titus of the reason and to give him detailed instructions as to how to carry out his wishes.

When they were together on the island of Crete, they must have introduced many to Christ. Paul had to leave before he could finish all that needed to be done. It was Paul's pattern, when he won people to Christ in a new area, to establish churches. In Paul's mind there were two main things that needed to be done.

First of all, Paul wanted Titus to *"straighten out what was left unfinished"*. This phrase literally means to set in order...to bring order to...to organize. Many today downplay the necessity of Christianity to organize itself into local bodies of believers and for those local bodies to organize, as well. But here we have Paul instructing Titus to do this very thing. God is not a God of disorder. He is in favor of order and bringing his body (the church) into order...for the sake of productivity and accountability.

Second, Paul wanted Titus to *"appoint elders in every town..."* No organization can rise higher than its leadership. Leadership development is a high priority. The church who neglects this will soon live to regret it. A great deal would go into appointing elders. Titus would need to build relationships so that he could know the character of each man's life. There would need to be some sort of training so that those who were spiritually qualified would know the "what" and "how to" of leadership.

God has some strong qualifications for the ministry of "elder" because leadership is so key to the Kingdom of God. In two other letters, Paul tells us that leaders are called to help others find their purpose and succeed (Ephesians 4:11-12) and leadership can be learned (2 Timothy 2:2). We will start with these concepts tomorrow.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. I think today's study can give us a better appreciation for the local church, if we allow it to. Sometimes we are tempted to get impatient with the organizational and the leadership parts of the church.

We certainly don't want organization for organizations sake. We don't want to "over" organize the church to the point that the process to get anything done is so complicated it takes forever.

For instance, a church denomination or association is usually put into place for the purpose of organizing several local bodies of believers. This is a good thing. However, we have to be careful not to allow a denomination's maze of organizational structure to become the point and purpose of it all.

Associations and denominations are a good thing and can offer us helpful organizational structures and accountability. But we must never allow those structures to become a distraction from fulfilling the Great Commission or allow the structures to convince us that simply by maintaining them we are advancing the Kingdom of God.

We need just enough organization to help people be accountable and focused on the mission God has given us. As the church we must be fruitful in the things God gives us to do.

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And then there is the matter of leadership. Our study today should spur us on to do a better job at developing leaders...to submit to a process of development over time...to help those called to leadership become the leaders God intended.

Most churches don't usually have a problem finding someone who wants to lead. But as Paul will show us beginning tomorrow, many churches may have some misplaced leadership. They may have people in charge who are simply not qualified and others who are simply not qualified...yet.

God values the organization of his people so they can obey Him and give themselves to His purposes. God also values the accountability and development of those He has called to lead the Kingdom's charge into the world.

Do you and I value them the way He does? Do we show that we "value" with our attendance, prayers, energy, and resources?

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

⁶An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷Since an overseer^[a] is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:6-9)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

We are going to spend a few days in verses 6-9. There is a lot here. Let's get these words out of a paragraph format and into an outline format and see what our eyes pick up.

- I. An elder... (6)
 - A. Must be blameless
 - B. Must be the husband of one wife
 - C. Must be a man whose children believe...

- II. An overseer... (7-9)
 - A. Is entrusted with God's work
 - B. Must be blameless
 - C. Must not be overbearing
 - D. Must not be quick tempered
 - E. Must not be given to drunkenness
 - F. Must not be violent
 - G. Must not be pursuing dishonest gain
 - H. Must be hospitable
 - I. Must be one who loves what is good
 - J. Must be self-controlled
 - K. Must be upright
 - L. Must be holy
 - M. Must be disciplined
 - N. Must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught...
 - O. Must encourage others by sound doctrine
 - P. Must refute those who oppose it

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Before we get into what each phrase means, let's use this outline to discover a few more things.

Did you notice that Paul gives a list of 12 things an elder/overseer must be like and a list of 5 things an elder/overseer must not be like. Also notice how Paul lays it all out: he begins with a list of 3 (he uses blameless twice) things the leader must be like. Then he gives a list of 5 things the leader must not be like. And finally, he gives a list of 9 things that a leader must be like. Positive list, negative list, and ends with a longer positive list.

After staring at the outline a little longer, we notice that some of the items are of a different category than others. For instance, notice that some of the items are more "character" in nature (based upon moral choices) and some of the items are actual things a leader should be doing.

Here is what I mean:

Character issues:

Blameless (6, 7)
Husband of one wife (6)
Believing children (6)
Not overbearing (7)
Not quick tempered (7)
Not given to drunkenness (7)
Not violent (7)
Not pursuing dishonest gain (7)
Hospitable (8)
Loves what is good (8)
Self-controlled (8)
Upright (8)
Holy (8)
Disciplined (8)

Leader - job descriptions

An overseer (7)
Entrusted with God's work (7)
Holds firmly to the message (9)
Encourages others in doctrine (9)
Refutes those who oppose it (9)

Notice that there are 14 character issues and only 5 job description issues. This ratio might suggest something to us. It is almost 3 to 1 in favor of character issues.

Look at the "character issues" column. Notice all the relationships represented here. Start at the top and work down the list with me.

(Blameless) would certainly deal with a man's relationship with Christ, first and foremost. Like Job, God wants a person to be blameless before Him. Blameless could also deal with a man's public reputation or his relationship with society. The next two (husband and children) have to do with his relationship with his wife and with his kids. Then, (overbearing, quick tempered, violent) would look at a person's overall relationships and interaction with others.

(Drunkenness, self-controlled) would look at a person's inner dependencies and his relationship with himself. (Dishonest gain) deals with his business relationships. (Hospitable) looks at his relationships with those less fortunate.

(Goodness, upright, holy, disciplined) are fruits of the Spirit and would look at a person's relationship with Christ. Actually a case could be made that the entire list of "character issues" would reflect on a person's walk with the Lord.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. The quality of our Upward relationship is so tied to the quality of our Outward relationships, isn't it? When we are living in close relationship with Christ, our relationships with our family, friends, co-workers, and society as a whole, improve. Can you see that God wants and expects for those relationships to be healthy?

The Spirit cleans our inner lives and His fruit (qualities) come out in our lives and affect those we interact with. He exposes sin and leads us to repent and give the sin up. The absence of particular sins and selfish attitudes lifts a relationship and makes possible the establishment of trust between two people. Trust is essential to healthy relationships.

Unfortunately, the opposite is true, as well. When we are not living in close relationship with Christ, our horizontal relationships are often an indicator of this spiritual lapse.

As a pastor, I see this a lot in troubled marriages. Often when the "fighting" couple is encouraged to look at their own individual relationship with Christ first, they find that willful sin and carnal attitudes are ruling the heart. When they repent and turn from those things, God's Spirit begins to bring a peace, a

right perspective of the other, and begins to re-establish trust between the two again.

2. We would have already understood that the quality of a person's relationship with God is a major qualifier as to whether or not he should be in leadership. But had you considered that the quality of a person's relationship with himself and others is also a major qualifier as to whether he should be in leadership or not? A person's relationships with a spouse, children, other family members, business associates, friends, and even strangers indicate a person's readiness to lead.
3. Overwhelmingly, the most important quality for a leader is Godly character. The person must walk consistently with the Lord. Leadership skills and duties can be learned. And certainly there must be an innate natural or spiritual gifting for an area of service. However, without Godly character the attempts using skill/gifting will fall far short of God's intended purpose.
4. Did you notice that the character qualities mentioned in Paul's letter are not just for leaders to live out? These are the same character qualities that God wants to produce in every believer. Fill up your eyes on Galatians 5:19-25. Sin and ungodliness are defined the same for the follower and the leader. The fruit of the Spirit and God's expectations of a holy life are the same for the follower, as well as, the leader.

How are you doing with all of this? The power of Christ's Gospel is a changing power...a transforming power...a freedom giving power.

May I ask...Are you being changed? Are you being transformed more into the likeness of God's Son? Are you experiencing freedom from sin...the sins that used to have you enslaved before you met Christ...new sins promoted by current temptations?

We all know how distasteful it is to find out that a Christian leader has been living a double life...aka...talking the talk but not walking the walk. Did you know it has the same effect on the heart of God when any believer acts the same way?

God did not call us to talk the talk but not walk the walk. He called us to be changed on the inside so our talk and our walk will be in sync.

God expects both because He has given us a wonderful salvation that produces both. It not only offers forgiveness but also cleansing.

Today, if you have found yourself in need of grace and that life changing power....Christ is waiting and ready to do something about it. He is closer than your next breath.

In His Love,

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

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WHAT DOES IT SAY?

This is day two with this section of verses. Let's use part of the same outline format as we used yesterday.

- I. An elder... (6)
 - A. Must be blameless
 - B. Must be the husband of one wife
 - C. Must be a man whose children believe...

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Let's begin working through the list of characteristics that do describe an elder/overseer.

⁶An elder must be blameless - The word "blameless" means to be unaccused, above reproach, unable to be spoken against. He must have a reputation before God and in the community that does not have a blemish attached to it. If this person were to lead the church and not be trusted in the community, then it would in turn give the Lord and His Gospel a bad reputation, too.

...the husband of but one wife... - This phrase deals with the issue of multiple spouses. This could mean multiple spouses at the same time or stretched out over the years. The quality of a spiritual leader is that he should have a "single marriage loyalty". He must have the ability to love, be faithful, and work successfully through the strains and stresses of married life. If one cannot remain faithful to a spouse when the going gets tough, how will he remain faithful to God's Kingdom and the church when the going gets tough?

Ok...so an elder/overseer must have only one spouse. We understand the polygamy thing, but does this exclude someone who may be living in a second marriage? Churches trying to answer these type questions will need to look deeply at the spirit of the Truth Paul gives.

The Scriptures tell us that while divorce is not God's will for a married couple, there are times when, because of an immovable commitment to being unfaithful on the part of a spouse, it may be unavoidable (Matthew 19:9, 1 Corinthians 7:15). Should a person who finds himself in this situation be permanently kept out of the leadership of the church?

How about the person who makes a mess of his life and marriage before he knows Christ? He gets a divorce and remarries. Then later on, he meets the saving and transforming power of Jesus and becomes a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). He laments the sins of the past and the pain he has experienced. He regrets he didn't make better choices and wishes he had been wiser in his relationships. The point being: He is a redeemed person now and God has changed him from the inside...out. Should he forever more be disqualified from Christian leadership?

These are difficult issues to navigate. On the one hand we want/must be obedient to the Scriptures. We also want/must make sure that we have rightly understood the heart of the Word of God.

Those who have experienced a failed marriage and who are thinking about a leadership role in the church, should be patient with a church as its leaders seek to apply God's truth to each individual circumstance.

Also in keeping with the spirit of Paul's teaching, those who have had a marriage failure for any reason should gladly welcome the ministry of counseling in order to discover and work through issues they may have that could have contributed to the failure of their first marriage or any dysfunction that might sabotage their current relationship. Furthermore, wisdom should also require a waiting period before a leadership assignment is entrusted so that a faithful and consistent marriage witness can be established.

One more scenario: What about a Christian who is in a difficult marriage and because of how dysfunctional the relationship has become and the emotional toll it has taken, decides to cut his losses,

divorce, and hopefully one day start over? There is no indication that his spouse has been unfaithful or even wants out of the marriage.

Even though God's Word clearly forbids a divorce under such circumstances, he convinces himself that God wants him to be happy. Since his current marriage produces anything but happiness, he believes that God understands his unique circumstance, waves the demands of His Holy Law just this one time and gives His blessing to dissolve the marriage. So with a twisted understanding of God's Word and a gross misunderstanding of God's grace...he ends the marriage.

Sometime in the near future, this person wants to fill a leadership role at his church. Should he be allowed? If you answered "no", you are correct. There is not a more dangerous man in the land than a person who thinks he can trample the Word of God, willfully disobey the Lord and still be in close fellowship with Him (1 John 3:7-10).

Someone might say, "Where is the grace of God in this scenario? Doesn't God forgive?" And of course the answer is "yes". But let's remember that the objective of God's grace is freedom from sin's control (Romans 6) and the prerequisite for forgiveness is repentance (a willingness to admit and turn away) from the sin (2 Cor. 7:10, 1 John 1:9).

So...what is the bottom line of this passage? Is it to monitor the number of marriages someone has had or is it to make sure that those in Christian leadership (and every Christian, for that matter) live out a commitment to God's view of marriage (which is a living and breathing symbol of the relationship between Christ and His Church - Ephesians 5:22-33)?

Isn't the idea to make certain that those who are leading the church are Godly people who love Christ with all of their hearts and who will choose to obey Him regardless of how much Satan tempts and how convenient it is to do otherwise?

...a man whose children believe... - Spiritual leadership begins in the home. One of the most important tests of whether or not a person is qualified to lead the church is the test of home leadership. A person must be able to successfully instruct his own children in the principles of the faith before he can be trusted to lead the church with those same truths.

Some may say, "How fair is that? Can a person control whether or not his children embrace Christ?" Good point...especially when it is adult children we are talking about. I know of situations where a husband/wife and even single parents have been faithful to show Christ through their lives and instruct about Christ through their words. And yet, much to the heartbreak of the parents, their children are currently choosing not to follow Christ. What do we do about those in these circumstances who are considering leadership roles?

Once again, what is the Lord after in this verse? What is the most important thing here...the "salvation" batting averages of parents or the need for Christian parents to provide a Godly environment in the home in which their children can have every opportunity to choose to follow Christ?

Isn't Paul pointing to the fact that we must make certain those who are leading us are the type of people who are providing such an environment? We must insist that their private lives match their public lives. Our leaders must be doers of the Word in public, as well as, behind the closed doors of their homes.

...and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. - If the children were wild and disobedient, it could undermine the reputation and influence of the Christian leader in the community and eventually the credibility of the Gospel.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. There are many applications to today's study but the one that stands out to me is this...*the close connection between the Gospel's reputation in a community and our personal choices.* Our choices have vast consequences, not only to ourselves and our families but also to our ability to minister in the lives of others.

Our choices of obedience to Christ are more than an outward appearance of piety. They involve the very difficult, day in and day out decisions that chart the direction of our lives. To make it personal: Obedience means when I see dysfunctional patterns in my relationships, I have the responsibility to seek God's answers and then implement those truths until the dysfunction ceases.

Obedience to Christ means that I must choose truth over comfort. It most certainly involves a commitment to truth

even when everything in my emotions is telling me differently. It means having confidence in God's ways even when the majority of my fellow Americans think His ways are non-existent.

It means a commitment to do life God's way even when I am tempted to think God has failed me or tempted to be angry with God because he has allowed me to live in an uncomfortable circumstance.

Our choices in the small things (the things we believe go unnoticed)...are powerful. The choices we make now, not only determine the trust we are given later, but they also indicate the true status of our faith right now.

The moral choices we make trump our words...every time.

Pastor Will

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WHAT DOES IT SAY?

This is day three with this section of verses. Let's use another part of the same outline format that we developed yesterday.

- II. An overseer... (7-8)
 - A. Is entrusted with God's work
 - B. Must be blameless
 - C. Must not be overbearing
 - D. Must not be quick tempered
 - E. Must not be given to drunkenness
 - F. Must not be violent
 - G. Must not be pursuing dishonest gain
 - H. Must be hospitable
 - I. Must be one who loves what is good
 - J. Must be self-controlled
 - K. Must be upright
 - L. Must be holy
 - M. Must be disciplined

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

"...entrusted with God's work..." - This phrase belongs to verse 9 because it describes what an elder/overseer's role should be. It is not a character quality and we are looking at those first. We will get to this phrase next time.

"...he must be blameless..." - This is the same word as he used in verse 6. It means to be unaccused, above reproach, unable to be

spoken against. Because an elder is entrusted with God's work, how others (particularly those outside the church) see him is of much importance. Any reputation of dishonesty could bring dishonor on the Gospel and hinder the ability of Christians to introduce others to Christ.

"...not overbearing..." – Someone who is a leader in God's work must not be self-willed. This is the literal meaning. Someone who wants his own way all the time, who is arrogant and strongly opinionated will create much conflict in leading others. People won't follow someone who asserts his own rights and is reckless of the rights, opinions and interests of others.

"...not quick tempered..." - This is a person who is easily angered. There is nothing wrong with getting angry when an injustice is done, but this type of anger is usually due to one not getting his own way or things not going the way he wants them to. Quick temperedness usually has selfishness at its root. It indicates a quick journey from calm to hot headedness and then back again.

"not given to drunkenness..." - This phrase literally means not to "sit alongside of wine". It later came to refer to "an over-indulgence of or addiction to wine/alcoholic drinks". While the verse does not forbid drinking wine it does require strict temperance in the use of it. The concept Paul created with this phrase takes the view that a Christian leader does not drink for fun or comfort or hang out in drinking places and parties.

"...not violent..." - The word literally translates "striker". An elder/overseer must not be ready to use his fists to settle things. A person who uses violence to settle matters isn't qualified to be a Christian leader.

"...not pursuing dishonest gain..." - This type of person does not care how he makes money, as long as he makes it. A man who is this way is covetous and is always thinking about how he can have more. He probably convinces himself that he deserves more and that God wants him to have more.

How dangerous it would be to have a person like this leading a church. He would be tempted to look at the church as a money - making enterprise and furthermore tempted to justify helping himself to ministry funds. I can't help but think when I run across some of the "health and wealth" gospel teachers on TV, that this type of person is

being allowed to lead many a Christian ministry today. The man whose main goal in life is to amass material things, irrespective of how he does so, is not fit to be a leader in the Christian church.

"⁸Rather he must be hospitable..." - This literally means to be a "lover of strangers". In the ancient world, inns were notoriously expensive, dirty, and immoral. It was essential for a traveling Christian (some who had been persecuted and rendered homeless) to be able to find an open door within the Christian community. Paul describes a person who uses his home to meet the needs of others. He is unselfish and believes that all that God has given him is to be used to bless others.

Go back for a moment to the TV preachers. They live in multi-million dollar homes with high security and bodyguards. I'm sure that none of the laity that go to their churches have ever stepped foot inside their homes. Because of their emphasis on accumulating wealth, they cannot be hospitable.

"...one who loves what is good,..." - He is a lover of good things and a lover of good people. This person is a good person and surrounds himself with good things...good books...good music...and good causes. It is difficult to believe that a dedicated servant of God would deliberately associate with things that are bad for him and his family.

"...who is self-controlled,..." - This word means to be "prudent, to have command over the passions and desires." The Christian leader must be able to wisely control every instinct and bring it under the Lordship of Christ.

"... upright..." - This means integrity, a lover of justice, in action and character. An upright man says what he means and means what he says. He keeps his word and commitment no matter what. When he says he will be there, he is, even if he gets a better offer.

"...holy..." - A holy man is devout and has a Christ-like quality in his heart. The fruit of the Spirit are clearly evident. He has a warm, loving, personal relationship with Christ. The word also suggests that a person is this way... not because he is obeying a law but because God lives within him.

"...and disciplined." - This word is very closely related to "self controlled", which we looked at a moment ago. This word goes a little deeper. It refers to a person's ability to limit anything from gaining

mastery over him. Even in pleasure he monitors and keeps the pleasure from controlling him. He disciplines his time so he gets done what must get done. He keeps his mind and body under control, as he yields to the Holy Spirit.

Paul told Titus that those who would oversee God's work in the church should be men who live in a way that demonstrate these qualities. How could Paul expect these many character qualities to be in enough people to fill the many leadership roles needed? Simple!

These character qualities describe Christ. Paul believed that if a person really had received the Gospel, he would be changed from the inside...out. If Christ really lived within a person, then His Holy Spirit would continually cleanse the person and Christ's qualities would be manifested.

When we look at the culture of the Cretans (verses 10-16) in a couple of days, we will see how great the work of the Spirit in these individuals really was.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. As we mentioned yesterday, when considering the role of elder/overseer, character is evidently higher on the list than skills. Skills can be learned and developed. But the one who lives in step with the Spirit of God will reflect the Spirit of God. This is what Christian leadership is all about.

Notice that people were not to be selected for leadership based on education (although education is important), nor wealth, nor community influence, nor looks, nor family blood lines, nor experience, nor speaking ability, nor intelligence, nor a special emotional feeling inside that some call "God's voice".

Don't get me wrong. I do believe God speaks to us but what many call God's voice is really their own voice justifying what they want to do. I've seen so many church boards or pastoral committees select a leader without even consulting God's Word or having any knowledge of what God considers to be key qualifications for a church leader.

Many wind up selecting a leader based upon all the wrong things. I've even seen selection committees use a criteria developed by the secular business world. They chose secular ideas over God's Truth. Incredible, isn't it? Unfortunately, about

6 months into the relationship...they discovered the truth. The selection committee was careless and got what they deserved but the people they represented...did not.

No...the selection of an overseer in the church is not based upon intuition or personal preference. Selecting an overseer in the church should be based upon a thorough interviewing process that includes some hard investigation of the facts. Multiple references should be called. Stay away from the warm and fuzzy stuff. This is the only way to ensure that God's standards are upheld and the church will be in capable hands.

2. The second idea is related to the first. People in the church are supposed to wisely and with great discernment select their leaders. Leaders are never to be "self appointed". Beware of a person who appoints himself the leader of a church or Christian organization. Run from the person who says, "God told me to be the leader of this church." That simply is not how the Kingdom of God works.

In this letter, Paul told Titus to appoint leaders probably because the work had just begun. But after Titus left, the church would have had to learn how to be discerning and how to continue finding the right leaders. This was part of what Titus was to teach them and organize among them.

Those who lead should not lead by positional leadership. If people only follow because a person has the "title", then the leader's leadership isn't being built upon the right foundations. It is better if a leader leads by relational leadership. This means that the people who follow have confidence in the character of the person and because of this, they learn they can trust him. They feel a sense of safety with him and they know without a doubt that he has their back. They know he will put their needs before his own.

This is the type of leadership we can follow and God can use to bring honor to His name. This is the kind of leader that will build a good name for the Gospel among the lost, as well as, lead many a Christian into the Spirit-filled life and into maturity.

3. Last but not least. If the character qualities mentioned in today's study describe the character of Christ, then God also expects these qualities to be in the life of every Christian

because God's Spirit lives inside of all believers. Let's not leave this section of Scripture thinking that those character qualities are just for elders/overseers. Not on your life! God desires holiness in all of His people.

All of us are called to walk everyday in step with His Spirit so that His Spirit can/will cleanse our inner/outer lives and reflect the image of God's Son through our lives.

What about those character qualities? Do you see them in your life?... selflessness... even tempered... sober... non-violent... not materialistic... hospitable...lover of good... self-controlled... integrity... holy... and disciplined? Would those closest to you see them reflected in your life?

In God's Kingdom, these should describe every Christian. The same Spirit lives in all. Jesus died on the same cross for all. So what's the difference? Why do some Christians reflect this character and some do not?

The difference in the spiritual quality/depth of Christians is determined by how much each person yields to the Spirit's control. Give Jesus your all today.

Have a great day,

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

⁶An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷Since an overseer^[a] is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:6-9)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

For the last several days Paul has been teaching us about the required spiritual character qualities of a church leader. Today we begin to look at the key responsibilities of such a leader. Let's get the words out of a paragraph format and into an outline format. Our eyes can better observe all that is in the passage.

- I. An elder is...
 - A. An overseer
 - B. Is entrusted with God's work...
 - C. Must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught.
 - D. So that he can encourage others by sound doctrine
 - E. And refute those who oppose it.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

This is a valuable passage because it gives insight into the responsibilities of a pastor or other leader of a local church. While Paul was not exhaustive in listing the responsibilities of a church leader, he did give the broad underpinnings for such a role.

⁶*An elder* - The word Paul uses (presbateros), simply means "older...senior...eldest...which indicates maturity. We cannot interpret the fact that Paul used this word to say that only older men can be church leaders and pastors. Think of the man he is writing this letter to...Titus...who is much younger than Paul. What about Timothy? Paul told him to not let anyone look down on him because of his young age (1 Timothy 4:12). The disciples themselves were not "old" when they

began their ministry after Jesus' death and resurrection. It is clear that Paul meant "maturity" when he spoke of an "elder" in the church. An elder is someone who has lived with the Lord long enough for the Lord to have developed a competent level of maturity in him.

an overseer - This word is (episkopos) which means a bishop, a superintendent, or someone who does general leadership. While the word "*elder*" describes the person of leadership, the word bishop or "*overseer*" describes the function of church leadership. This person oversees as he *is entrusted with God's work*. This is his God-given responsibility. He has been "*entrusted*" with the work God wants to accomplish.

"*Entrusted*" is the language of a steward. A steward manages what someone else owns. The elder does not own God's work...does not own the church. He has been entrusted (given the responsibility for) making sure that God's Will happens in a particular church or community. This means that one day this "elder" will stand before God and answer some mighty strong questions. He will be judged on his faithfulness to the call and the responsibility God has given him.

While Matthew 25:14-30 is often used to refer to the responsibility to serve that every Christian is given (I believe it does speak to this), the context of this passage is that Jesus was giving a private teaching session to his disciples (Matt. 24:3)...those who were going to be the "elders" in the work of God's Kingdom and be entrusted to lead God's work. Taken in context, I believe this passage shows us what the judgment of pastors and other church leaders will be like, also.

⁹He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught,
- How does the "elder" become faithful and maintain faithfulness to what God has entrusted him? He does it by holding firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught. There are several things here.

First notice that he is to "*hold firmly*". This means he is to not let go of something...he is not to, for any reason, stop holding firmly to the Truth. Unfortunately, so many pastors/church leaders today let go of the Truth. They are persuaded by the words of a fallen culture...or convinced by the claims of an incomplete conclusion from the scientific world. They are abandoning the claims of Scripture at an alarming

rate. In doing this they have disqualified themselves from Kingdom leadership.

Second, they are to hold firmly to *"the trustworthy message"*...- The trustworthy message refers to the Gospel of Christ...and more accurately...the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. The trustworthy message was and is conveyed through the Bible. It is trustworthy. Remember what Paul said about it in his second letter to Timothy (3:16-17), *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

Third, notice the last phrase, *"as it has been taught..."* This is a big one. In context, Paul means to hold firmly to the Truth, as it has been taught by the Apostles. They were originally entrusted with establishing and spreading the Gospel to the world (Matthew 28:18-20). Contrary to what many may think, this is not a command to be faithful to a particular denomination's prescribed teaching. This is not a call to teach as you were taught but to teach *"as it has been taught."*

Don't get me wrong, denominations and associations can serve a very meaningful role in the development of the Kingdom. I belong to one myself and enjoy the benefits from it. The problem enters when a denomination or association believes it has the corner on Biblical Truth.

Here is how it usually happens. The original pioneers come out of a negative church experience or out of a Spirit-filled revival and believe God is calling them to establish a Christian community where the Truth can be taught without interference. With good intentions, they write down their particular beliefs and their "unique" interpretations of Scripture.

They work hard, sacrifice much and the group has a glorious beginning. Then the pioneers all get old and die off. The next generation holds the sacrifices and teachings of the first generation up in high esteem. They follow the teachings to the letter. Then the second generation gets old and dies off and the third generation begins to lead and holds the teachings of the first generation up with equal fervor...and so on and so forth. Unfortunately, after a while, the group stops studying the Apostle's teaching directly. They refer to the founding father's teaching more often or, at best, interpret the Scriptures only in the way the founding fathers did it.

Unfortunately, by now a few things have happened to the group. (1). They see the teachings of the first generation as elevated to the same status as the Holy Scriptures. They would never say it that way but they treat those early teachings as if they were contained perfect ideas. (2) This group has lost the ability to read and study the Scriptures apart from the doctrinal lenses the first generation gave them. (3) The group actually begins to believe that the small group of founding families was smarter and more spiritual than any other group of Christians in the history of Christianity.

(4) For this group it becomes more important to maintain the "legacy" handed down to them than it is to build God's Kingdom. Regional meetings become more about maintaining their "unique" identity among churches than about "making disciples of all nations."

(5) Arrogance sets in. They begin to believe that their "legacy" is God's gift to the world. They feel they have something that other believers don't and that they are a "special" people of God.

(6) Isolation sets in. They do not work with other Christian groups because they see their own ideas and ways as being superior. They couldn't possibly learn from other Christian groups because, after all, "they don't have what we do." The truth is, other denominations won't work with them either because they themselves are caught up in the same arrogant trap.

I can't imagine that any of this pleases the Lord. The point is...the Bible is our source for all we believe and practice. We must use the Word of God (not man's teachings) to learn and grow in our understanding of God and His ways. Scripture must be carefully studied, paying attention to context, and taught under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But please know that the Truths we discover will not be unique or foreign to what God has taught His people for ages. There is no Christian group founded in the last few hundred years who is "special" and who has better understanding of the Scriptures than all of the other believers who have ever gone before.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. Hopefully, what Paul taught us today and will teach us tomorrow will help you understand your pastor a little better. What I am about to say does not completely come from my own

experiences. Some of it does, while other components come from conversations I've had with other pastors.

Your pastor is a steward, entrusted to oversee God's work in a particular church and community. There is a lot of pressure and stress that comes with this trust. The judgment he faces from God and others is at a different level than most.

It is a consuming trust. It can't be shut off and turned on at will. It is a call, not a job. One cannot punch a time clock and leave the responsibility until tomorrow.

There are pressures, stresses, and spiritual attacks that most will never realize or imagine. If the enemy can discourage and sidetrack the one who is entrusted with overseeing God's work, then he has a good chance of discouraging believers and interrupting the obedience of God's people.

Your pastor is called to love people and speak with them at a different level than most conversations take place. He is invited into private matters and must speak the truth in love even when it hurts or embarrasses another or makes them angry. He must love the Truth more than he loves to be liked by others. Often what God asks him to say causes people to avoid him.

He must be able to take rejection, receive harsh criticism, listen to rehearsed excuses and handle the public emotional eruptions of others while still maintaining a loving, grace-filled, and professional response.

Your pastor is both a popular person and an unpopular person. In the public arena he is often unpopular...and this not having anything to do with his character. The moment the secular world realizes he is a pastor, they suddenly feel uncomfortable around him and conversations stop.

In Christian circles, he is usually respected, trusted, and called upon when there is a need. And yet at the same time, he finds that few, even in his own flock, are interested in developing a close personal friendship with him. Because of this, many pastors feel isolated and alone much of their lives.

Paul's words over the last few days should provide a great prayer guide for you to use when you pray for your pastor.

- Pray for his spiritual life...his walk with Christ.
- Pray for his character development and the implementation of that character in all of his relationships
- Pray for his reputation in the community
- Pray for his wife and children
- Pray for his marriage and parenting
- Pray for his ability to lead others
- Pray for him when the enemy tempts him
- Pray for him to have close friendships
- Pray for his faithfulness to the Gospel of Christ
- Pray for his faithfulness to the Word of God
- Pray for him as a person. He has the same thoughts, hopes, dreams, and emotions as everyone else.

Have a great day. I'm praying for you today.

Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

⁶An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷Since an overseer^[a] is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:6-9)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Yesterday, we studied A-C of the outline below. We saw how an “elder” (pastor/main leader of a church) is an overseer of God’s work. He is to be responsible for administrating God’s work in a particular church and community. We learned also that he must not let go of the Truth as the Apostles’ taught it.

Today we will look at D and E.

- I. An elder is...
 - A. An overseer
 - B. Is entrusted with God’s work...
 - C. Must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught.
 - D. *So that he can encourage others by sound doctrine*
 - E. *And refute those who oppose it.*

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Paul continues to lay out the responsibilities of the one who oversees God’s work. Remember outline point C taught us that at the very foundation of an elder’s work, is the “*message*” that came from God. It is not the elder’s message. It is not the elder’s opinions that administrate the work of God. It is not the elder’s special interests, spiritual gifts, or burdens that are the foundation for all that God wants to accomplish in a particular church and community. Everything that is built must be built upon the “*trustworthy message as it has been taught.*”

How does he begin to build? What does this work look like? According to Paul it has two major components. First of all, he begins to build God's work in a particular church and community by encouraging others in sound doctrine – "*so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine...*"

Let's break this down into smaller bite-size pieces. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message, as it has been taught, so he can do two things. The first thing he is to do with the trustworthy message is he is to "*encourage others*".

The word "*encourage*" is parakaleo. It is two words combined. First, there is (para) which means to call beside, to bring something near that was far, to bring something close to you. Second, there is (kaleo) which means to strongly urge by urgent appeal, to incite, to invoke. Put them all together and you have a word that conveys the idea of what we mean by the word "mentor". A mentor brings people in close to his life, teaches and molds them, and influences them toward becoming all they should be and toward a particular end. This is the concept Paul means here.

"*...by sound doctrine...*" What does he encourage people with? Does he mentor using the latest wisdom of the culture? Does he shape them with his own thoughts and ideas? Does he incite people to action based upon his own burdens and causes? God forbid!

He is to use "*sound doctrine*". The phrase literally means "healthy teaching". It refers back to the "*trustworthy message*". The message, as the Apostles taught it, is trustworthy first of all because God gave it to us and God does not lie. Secondly, it is trustworthy because it contains sound doctrine... teaching that will promote spiritual health... spiritual growth... spiritual fruit. How does it do all of that? It can accomplish all that because it is the Truth of God, from God, about God and His redemptive plan.

Someone once said to me, "*I don't want doctrine, just give me some devotional thoughts.*" This person didn't really understand what he was saying. What he probably meant was he wanted teaching that was practical to his life. Some how he had gotten the idea that doctrine wasn't practical.

Doctrine is all about the practical because that is the chief aim of God; "*Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what*

it says. " (James 1:22) Doctrine simply describes the teaching of the Truth as God has laid it out for us. Without doctrine there can be no spiritual help or health.

There is a second thing a pastor/leader of a church must be about. Not only must he love, teach, shape, and spur on the body of Christ (believers), he must also ...*refute those who oppose it.* So in short, he is responsible to minister to both the members of the flock and the enemies of the flock. In farm language, the minister is supposed to tend the sheep and keep the wolves away.

There will always be plenty of people who oppose the Truth. However, the pastor/leader of a church must have a ministry to these people, as well. The word "*refute*" is "elegchein". It is a meaningful word. It literally means to rebuke an opposing person with such a convincing argument that the one in error is compelled to admit the error of his ways.

Can you see the incredible love and grace of God in this concept? God loves even those who oppose Him. He desires to extend His mercy and grace to them, as well. He wants this so much that he instructs His "overseer" to be in ministry to those who oppose the Truth.

Can you see how much the overseer's character would play into the ability to persuade? A person cannot be convinced with just words. He must also see the truths of the "*trustworthy message*" lived out...fleshed out, as it were. When a person is faithfully walking his talk, the talk is completely validated. When the power of Christ is seen at work in the everyday fragments of human relationships...WOW!

Can you see how important it is for the overseer to "*hold firmly*" to the "*trustworthy message*" and to know "*sound doctrine*"? See how it all is interwoven together? Do you see how the power to accomplish the vision all comes from God's Truth?

As a local church looks at its pastor, it should not be about a pastor's intellect, creative ideas, or perfected speaking abilities. It should be about an authentic walk with Christ, character and integrity through and through, a passion for the Truth of God's Word, a heart to mentor God's people and to bring others out of the darkness and into the light.

Who are those who oppose sound doctrine? Paul gives much more insight into what Titus was facing on the island of Crete. He stays on this subject for a few more verses. We'll look at verses 10-16 in a few days.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TRUTH TODAY?

1. Paul gives us more helpful info we need to know about our pastors' call and job description. Everything he does should be founded upon the Word of God. He is responsible to use the Truth to mentor Christians and to convince those who don't believe.
2. Of course, there is more to pastoring than this. But we should be careful to not overbuild a pastor's ministry description to the point that he cannot invest the time needed to study and teach the Word of God. His knowledge of, participation in, and his opportunities to teach "*the trustworthy message as it has been taught*" are crucial to the work of God being accomplished in a church and community.

The operation of a church's ministries should be done by laymen and not the pastor. Often pastors spend so much time running all the ministries that they neglect the primary component of their call. A great example of this is found in the Book of Acts.

The first church in Jerusalem had a compassion ministry program whereby those who were going through hard times could get some assistance. As is often the case, with church growth comes administrative problems. In other words...they grew faster than their structure comfortably allowed.

It seems that a certain group's widows were not getting what was promised them. That group became angry and came to the Apostles to complain. Notice what the Apostles told them. (Remember, at this time in the life of the church the Apostles were the elders/pastors of this congregation.)

The Apostles said, "*It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.*" (Acts 6:2-4)

When a problem arose, the churchmen immediately thought it was a problem with the pastors. But in fact, it was a layman issue. The elders knew they needed to protect their time for the ministry of prayer and the word of God. So, the elders had the people select 7 leaders to run the compassion ministry. The administration of various ministries belongs in lay hands.

I often wonder how different the spiritual condition of our churches would be today if we structured the ministry description for the pastor differently? I wonder how much more spiritual power we would witness through our churches if we insisted that his ministry of prayer and the Word, came first in his daily priorities?

I wonder how many more lives could be reached and changed if we honored God's ministry description for those called to be overseers? In Ephesians 4:11-13, Paul taught, *"It was he (Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ (Christians) may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith ...and become mature..."*

Are you allowing yourself to be prepared for works of service? Are you cooperating with the plan God uses to bring about His will in a church/community?

How do you look at church? Is it a place you go to "get fed"? Is it a place that you go to sit...to watch...to receive...to be ministered to? Or do you see it as something you can be part of that can usher in God's will into the lives of those who attend, as well as, into the life of the community it is in? Do you see it as a conduit through which God can redeem people and change lives?

Part of God's plan is that we all have a role. Often, particularly in smaller churches, when laymen do not embrace God's plan for all to serve, the pastor takes on the unfilled roles. When this happens, the ministry of prayer and the Word are neglected.

When we all submit to God's plan, His desires are accomplished in a local church and community. When His people will not obey, His desires are not accomplished.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

¹⁰For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. ¹¹They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. ¹²Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." ¹³This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith ¹⁴and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. ¹⁵To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. ¹⁶They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. (1:10–2:1)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

These 8 verses are packed with important insight into what Titus and the Church in Crete faced, as well as, Truth we can embrace today. Let's get this passage out of a paragraph format and look at the content in outline form.

- I. There are many rebellious people
 - A. mere talkers and deceivers
 - B. especially those of the circumcision group
 - C. they must be silenced
 - D. they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to
 - E. they teach for dishonest gain
- II. One of their own prophets says...
 - A. Cretans are liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons
- III. Because this testimony is true...
 - A. rebuke them sharply so they will be sound in the faith and not pay attention to myths or false commands
 - B. to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure
 - C. their minds and consciences are corrupted
 - D. they claim to know God but their actions deny him

- E. they are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing anything good
- F. Titus must teach them sound doctrine

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

We are not sure where these “rebellious” people came from. It could be that before Paul evangelized the area and Titus stayed to organize the new churches, Jewish evangelism had taken place in Crete. Perhaps those who were leaders in that group had a huge negative, religious influence in the area.

Or it could be that after Paul evangelized the area, self-appointed leaders briefly took over and caused a downward movement among Christian groups. Or it could be that Jewish converts (those who were part of Judaism but who converted to Christ) felt that they should be in leadership roles because they were Jewish. But because of the corrupt religious system they had come out of, they were not qualified to lead. Or it could be a combination of all three.

Nonetheless, it appears that Titus had a difficult job ahead of him. Before we look at each phrase, let’s observe the text a little more. In addition to outlining a passage, it is also helpful to categorize themes within a passage. Take another look at our passage today and notice what words and phrases go together.

Did you see that some words/phrases describe the people Titus faced, some described what Titus was to do, and some described why Titus was to do it? Let’s lay this info out in column form. This is another great way to see what a text really says.

Who opposed truth

- * Rebellious people
- * Mere talkers, deceivers
- * Circumcision group
- * Those ruining whole households by teaching what they should not and for dishonest gain
- * Liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons
- * Nothing is pure
- * Those corrupted in mind and consciences
- * Those spiritually deceiving themselves
- * Detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing good

What he was to do

- * Silence them
- * Rebuke them sharply
- * Teach sound doctrine

Why he was to do it

- * So they will be sound in the faith

Let's briefly look at the columns again. Notice the directional flow of the content in those columns. (1) Look at the list of carnal characteristics in column one! Wow, could you imagine ministering in the midst of opposition like that?

(2) Notice column two: Titus was to minister to them by silencing them, rebuking them sharply, and teaching truth. (3) Notice column three: He was to minister to them so they could change and move from living out the characteristics of column one to living out the characteristics represented in column three... *"being sound in the faith."*

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. Think about this idea: Titus (and the church, too) were called to minister to people who were openly rebellious, who were all talk and no do, who worked to undermine the family and purposely deceived people in order to get money, who were products and proponents of a carnal culture, who saw nothing as pure/good, who's minds and consciences were corrupt, who claimed a connection with God but who were only deceiving themselves, who were detestable, who were disobedient, and who were unfit to do anything good.
2. Can you get your mind around the idea of ministering to people who lived life this way? Allow me to help us see three quick things:
 - **The love and care of God** – God cared so much for people who were living this way that he brought His Gospel to the island of Crete through Paul and called Titus to organize the churches so that people living in such gross sin could experience faith, redemption, and freedom... so they could live in relationship with God.

This great Truth should make us cry with humility and shout with excitement. Do we really even begin to understand the love of God? God sees us much differently than we see each other. The problem with this is if we have God's Spirit living within us and cleansing our hearts then the difference in how God sees us and how we see each other should be shrinking.

- **The power of the Cross and Resurrection** – Think about it. The power of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection upon the human life can bring forgiveness and an incredible transformation that changes a person from the inside...out. He/she can go from rebellious... carnal... corrupt... deceptive... detestable... disobedient and unfit for anything good **to** submissive to Christ... holy... pure... honest... sacrificial... lovable...obedient... and fit for ministry to others. WOW!

With this kind of salvation available to us there is really never any good excuse for us to remain in sin. No wonder the writer to the Hebrews said, "*...without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.*" (Heb 12:14) Holiness is not an option!

- **Don't give up on anyone** – If the Gospel of Christ is that powerful, no one is beyond its reach. To say (or even think) that someone is too far gone... too carnal... too corrupt that Jesus cannot minister to him/her is contrary to the Scriptures.

In today's world, I've heard many Christians complain and lose motivation to build God's Kingdom when a co-worker was rude or flaunted his love for sin in front of them.

I've seen believers resort to gossip and character assassination upon an unbeliever for simply living out the spiritual darkness of their unbelief.

I've witnessed Christians judge with a venomous, "final" judgment an unbeliever who is only following the impulses of a heart controlled by sin. Christians seem to struggle with hating the sin and loving the sinner.

Have you written anyone off as being too evil to be saved?... to rebellious to submit to Christ's lordship? What about the demonic man in Mark 5? What about the religiously arrogant Saul (Paul) in Acts 9? Is there anyone that you have stopped praying for and witnessing to? A co-worker?... a boss?... a neighbor?... a family member?... a spouse?

Because of the incredible love of Christ and the incomprehensible power of Christ no one is beyond His love and reach. Let's think on these things today.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

¹⁰For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. ¹¹They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. ¹²Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." ¹³This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith ¹⁴and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. ¹⁵To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. ¹⁶They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. (1:10-2:1)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Let's use the same outline we used yesterday. Read it over again and get familiar with the content and flow of what Paul is teaching Titus.

- I. There are many rebellious people
 - A. mere talkers and deceivers
 - B. especially those of the circumcision group
 - C. they must be silenced
 - D. they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to
 - E. they teach for dishonest gain

- II. One of their own prophets says...
 - A. Cretans are liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons

- III. Because this testimony is true...
 - A. rebuke them sharply so they will be sound in the faith and not pay attention to myths or false commands
 - B. to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure
 - C. their minds and consciences are corrupted
 - D. they claim to know God but their actions deny him
 - E. they are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing anything good
 - F. teach them sound doctrine

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Remember the scene. Titus is organizing new churches on the island of Crete. Part of this organization involved putting new, qualified leaders in place (1:5-9). Another part involved removing bad, self-appointed leadership. Paul gave Titus a brief description of the characteristics of the "bad" leadership and then told Titus "how" he should go about it removing them. Let's start with the character descriptions today.

¹⁰For there are many rebellious people, - Notice Paul said there were "many". This makes them all the more dangerous. Often, when there are many who are deceived and deceiving, it makes the wrong appear more convincing... more authentic. It is like synergism in reverse.

These false teachers/leaders who Titus needed to convert or replace were "*rebellious*" people. They would not submit to the authority of God's Word... to the authority of the apostles... nor would they be accountable to the church. They would, no doubt, claim to be under the fresh revelation of God and would convince their followers that they were above following the teachings of other men.

...mere talkers and deceivers... - The phrase means "vain" talkers. Their words were fluent and persuasive, but empty. Their words never produced good fruit or ever led someone else to true spiritual victory. Because of this, their ministries were deceptive. They talked out of both sides of their mouths. There was always a double meaning... a hidden agenda... another motive behind their words and ministry. They claimed to be teaching truth but they were peddlers of error.

...especially those of the circumcision group. - Paul means Jews and those who had converted to Judaism. As we mentioned earlier, there must have been the spread of Judaism and the building of synagogues on Crete. Unfortunately, those who were leaders/teachers of Judaism were obviously not men of character and godliness. Their hearts were hard and they were very far from God. How sad that those who represented God's first covenant with mankind (Old Testament) were so carnal and careless with the teachings of God.

...they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. - Since a main meeting place for Christians was individual homes back then, it is easy to see that false teachers could have such a large impact on households. False teaching does create dysfunction at the foundational levels of life. If parents were deceived, then children would be led astray, as well. Under false teaching, fathers and mothers would be confused on their God given roles in the family, on finances, and on parenting.

These false leaders/teachers were *"teaching things they ought not to teach..."* Again, we are not sure if this group of false leaders/teachers had confessed Christ as Savior or whether they practiced Judaism and were simply religiously influential in the area. Perhaps they were trying to mix Jewish legalism ("circumcision", verse 10) with Christianity, which Paul rejected. They were also teaching Jewish fables /myths (1:14) which probably described weird interpretations of the genealogies in the Old Testament (3:9, and 1 Timothy 1:4). The point is they were taking Old Testament Scripture and twisting its precious message. Be very cautious when a person claims to get revelation on a passage of Scripture that no one else gets.

Why did they do this? ...*for the sake of dishonest gain.* - When a person twists and manipulates the message of Scripture, he creates a sense of spiritual authority and influence. False teachers use this spiritual authority for their own profit. God's teachers use this authority to deny themselves and help people walk in relationship with Christ. These teachers were not ministering to others. They were using religion to fill their own pockets and stroke their own egos.

WHAT CAN WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. So far, we have learned 4 characteristics of a false teacher/leader.
 - He doesn't submit to the spiritual authority of others. Usually the claim is that he has heard directly from God about such and such. He usually insists that everyone should follow him... sort of with a cultish feel.
 - His words are flowery and well rehearsed... but empty. The substance of his words can't even change him, much less someone else. Because of this his teaching is deceptive. It promises what it can't deliver.
 - His teaching hurts families. His words cause dysfunction and discord between family members. When his teaching is applied to life, it breeds unhealthy relationships.
 - He is consumed with the concept of making money. It is all about increasing his resources.

We sure don't have to look very far to see this kind of suspicious activity among religious leaders today, do we?

2. We have been reminded that there were many false teachers back then who the masses considered to be OK but who the apostles (like Paul) considered to be deceptive and evil. If that was so back then... how much more today?

We must be extra careful who we allow to teach us. We must be very discerning as to who we allow to influence us in spiritual matters. False teachers don't always, at first look or listen, appear to be false or deceptive. We must look deeply at who he is as a person...how he lives his life...and the content of what he teaches before we trust (Titus 1:6-9).

3. Using false teachers is one of Satan's most popular schemes to discourage, deceive, and de-rail Christians from living out the will of God. It always has been and probably always will be (see Matthew 24:4-5, 10-11). Let's not be naïve. Expect it. Be on the look out for it. Be discerning.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

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WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Let's use the same outline we used before. Read it over again and reacquaint yourself with the content and flow of what Paul was teaching Titus. We will be looking at verse 12 and verses 15-16 today.

- I. There are many rebellious people
 - A. mere talkers and deceivers
 - B. especially those of the circumcision group
 - F. they must be silenced
 - G. they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to
 - H. they teach for dishonest gain

- II. One of their own prophets says...
 - A. Cretans are liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons

- III. Because this testimony is true...
 - A. rebuke them sharply so they will be sound in the faith and not pay attention to myths or false commands
 - B. to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure
 - C. their minds and consciences are corrupted
 - D. they claim to know God but their actions deny him
 - E. they are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing anything good
 - F. teach them sound doctrine

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Let's remember the scene. Titus is organizing new churches on the island of Crete. Part of this organization involved putting new, qualified leaders in place (1:5-9). Another part involved removing bad, self-appointed leadership.

Paul gave Titus a brief description of the characteristics of the "bad" leadership and then told Titus "how" he should go about removing them. In the last devotional we got started looking at the character descriptions of the non-qualified leaders who Titus needed to replace. Paul taught us four of those characteristics last time. False leaders...(1) don't submit to the spiritual authority of others. (2) their words are flowery and well rehearsed... but empty. (3) cause dysfunction and discord within families. (4) are consumed with the concept of making money.

Let's look at the rest of this passage and discover more. ¹²Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." - Notice that Paul doesn't say this about the Cretan culture. Instead he quotes one of their own to help Titus understand what he is up against. At that time this was known across the country. The leaders in question were either from Crete or had been there long enough for the Cretan culture to have affected them. Imagine a culture where truth didn't matter, there was no sense of wrong or right and hard work was not rewarded.

¹⁵To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. - More commentary on the Cretan culture. They had no concept of purity. Nothing was sacred. They had no ideas they could hold up in their minds as upright, good, pure, or something to strive for. Living with a worldview like this...year after year...did something to their abilities to think/reason and their moral compass. Paul said - In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. - Perhaps their minds could not easily comprehend the principles of truth. Truth was easily rejected. They felt no natural inner guide...no natural conviction. They found no natural motivation to improve themselves...to grow...to mature as human beings.

¹⁶They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. - Notice that even in a culture like this, there was a religious expression. Whether these mentioned were Jews practicing Judaism or new Christians, we do not know. Whoever they were, they claimed to know God. They believed they had found and were following the ways of God. They told each other and proclaimed it to those who were new that they were living as God instructed. Paul disagreed. Their actions...the priorities and choices that sprung from their beliefs were not of a quality that resembled God.

They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. - This phrase is kind of a summary phrase. If all that he had said was true...the

bottom line was these leaders were not to be admired, were not following the will of God, and were not qualified to lead anyone.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. Notice this: A people called Cretans were perpetuating a reprobate worldview and existence. By all accounts, most were a poor example of humanity...some would probably say, "A waste of good oxygen..." That is how man looks at man.

God saw the Cretans differently. God loved these people. Christ died for these people. The Spirit led Paul to evangelize this area. The Spirit (through Paul) led Titus to organize the churches on Crete. God brought the Gospel to a confused and hardened people. God did not leave them to their own destructive devices.

Why would God even try with the Cretans? Because He knew that the power of His Gospel could radically transform individual believers. Radically saved individuals could transform a culture. There was hope that adults could be made new and children could grow up differently than their parents.

Let this remind us today that there is no one too corrupt or too hardened for Christ to reach. He loves the most unlovable person you can think of. And just like He took His Gospel to the Cretans, He wants to take His Gospel to that corrupt and hardened individual in your life.

He calls you and I to carry His Gospel to these people. Maybe he or she is a relative...a neighbor...a co-worker. No one is without hope. Our God is mighty to save. Speak His Truth with great confidence and to everyone. Pray for these people, knowing that God hears you and wants to answer your prayers.

Have a great day!

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

¹⁰For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. ¹¹They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. ¹²Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." ¹³This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith ¹⁴and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. ¹⁵To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. ¹⁶They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. (1:10-2:1)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Notice the underlined portions of our passage today. In this section Paul set out to do two things: (1) to identify (by their fruit) the false religious teachers on the island of Crete (2) to teach Titus how to stop their influence so that people could know the truth.

So far in our study we've looked at those identifying characteristics of bad leaders. Now Paul works on his second goal. What should Titus do? It is one thing to know who the bad influencers are but what does one do after that? Paul taught:

- I. They must be silenced because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach... Titus might have thought, "Ok, but how?" To which Paul said:
 - A. Rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith (13)
 - B. You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine (2:1)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

¹¹*They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach* – The mood of the verse has a sense of urgency to it. These religious leaders were bringing an ill effect on families. Their teaching ruined family life. It brought confusion and dysfunction to relationships within the family. This was an urgent situation.

Paul said that these leaders must be "*silenced*". The word is (epistomizein). It literally means to muzzle, to put something into the mouth to stop it from speaking. Of course Paul isn't suggesting violence.

He simply means that at all cost, Titus was to reduce them to silence. He wasn't to tolerate teaching that wasn't true. How would he do this? Paul continues...

Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith... - We ran into this concept in verse 9 with the word "*refute*." However, in verse 13 it has a firmer connotation. It means to convict and convince. Paul meant for Titus to break down the views of the bad leaders to the point that they would confess they have been wrong and repent. Titus was to tell them and everyone else that these leaders/teachers were wrong...that their teaching was filled with lies and actually led people away from the truth instead of toward it.

Notice the word "*sharply*". This was to be done with passion, conviction, certainty, and aggressively. Just like the surgeon who cuts away the cancer, Titus was to cut away the bad doctrine from among them. Faith (even faith that begins correctly) will become unhealthy when it feeds on unhealthy teaching.

Notice one more thing. Look at the end of the verse - "*so that they will be sound in the faith.*" Titus was to silence and rebuke with the redemption of these false teachers in mind. God loved them and wanted to save them from the poisonous doctrines of Satan and deceived men. The hopeful outcome would be that these bad leaders would repent, receive Christ, and be Christians who were solid in their faith.

What would he rebuke them with?...*You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.* - Truth is the only weapon that will completely destroy Satan's lies. He was to silence and rebuke them with sound doctrine...God's Word. Truth will expose the falsehood of other doctrines and provide the path we are to walk upon.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. Ministry that is based upon the truth of God's Word is sometimes confrontational. It sometimes requires evaluating another's teaching and exposing its error.

We see from Paul's writing that just because a person is designated as a leader/teacher it doesn't mean he is teaching truth. A leadership position isn't proof he is teaching the truth. Having the ability to draw a crowd or to have a following doesn't prove he is telling the truth. We tend to think today that just because a teacher is on TV or has a radio ministry or writes books that he is telling the truth. We somehow believe that because he has a massive audience he is credible. It shouldn't.

In Crete the false teachers had the crowds...the influence...the position. Paul asked Titus to come in and silence and rebuke those who were popular. He told Titus to challenge them and confront them with sound doctrine (truth). It is the same today. The Scriptures tell us that in the last days people will have itching ears and will flock to teachers who will tell them what they want to hear...not what they need to hear (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

I was scolded the other day for labeling something that a TV preacher said as wrong. The person thought it arrogant of me to question someone so successful. After all he had a church of 25,000 and I only have a church of 100. My comment didn't come out of arrogance but out of a deep love for the truth and a deep concern that people are not fooled by Satan's lies.

That is probably the kind of reaction that Titus received. *"How dare you call into question those who have the position of authority and influence in our towns,"* they may have said. *"These teachers have great crowds who follow them and you have a small church or two you work with? How dare you criticize what they say."*

Actually, according to the Scriptures those walking in the truth will usually be in the minority not the majority (Matthew 7:13-14). We must know the truth and not be afraid to tell it boldly...with love and humility.

Have a great day!

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

¹You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. ²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

⁶Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

⁹Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. (2:1-10)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Paul now moves his attention from the idea of leadership to a list of individuals in the church and what to teach them. Let's outline the first 10 verses of chapter 2.

- I. Teach what is in accord with sound doctrine (1)
 - A. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self controlled, and sound in faith, love, and endurance. (2)
 - B. Teach the older woman to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanders or addicted to much wine but to teach what is good. (3)
 - C. Then they train the younger women to love their husbands/children, to be subject to their husbands, so no one will malign the word of God.
 - D. Encourage the young men to be self-controlled. (6)
 - E. Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, try to please them, not to talk back to them, not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so the teaching about God is attractive. (9-10)

- II. (Regarding Titus' teaching) In everything set them an example by doing what is good. (7)
 - A. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned. (7-8)
 - B. So that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. (8)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Our passage today is in context with the verses from the last chapter. Remember back in chapter 1:11 Paul said, *"They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach and that for the sake of dishonest gain."*

Now in chapter 2 Paul challenges Titus to teach sound doctrine, not only to the false teachers, but also to the households of the believers. Notice the groups of people he mentions: older men, older women, younger men, younger women, and slaves. Would you be interested to know what the typical Greek family looked like in the first century?

The typical family was made up of the grandfather, grandmother, dad, mom, son, daughter-in-law, children, and slaves. They all lived together and functioned as one family. The false teachers were teaching things that were upsetting healthy family life. Paul now tells Titus to teach each age group sound doctrine and he mentions a few specific things for each group.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. The first thing we notice in chapter 2 is that Paul puts a high premium on the training of the family. Paul knew that the family is the heart beat of a society and the foundation of every other social institution. As the family goes so goes the world.

The family is where people get their most important training on how to be a human and a responsible part of society. When the family is dysfunctional...the people in the family are dysfunctional and the children learn to be dysfunctional.

For Paul, it was not enough for members of a family to become Christians. They also needed to be disciplined. They needed God's Truth applied specifically to their roles in their families.

What about us? We also need to go beyond an elementary knowledge and experience with Christ. We need to sit at His feet and learn from Him. We need to know how to live close to Him and be the best grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers, mothers, teens, and children that we can be. We need to know how to be the best workers we can be for our employers.

Our relationships within these social groups are crucial. Are you willing to learn and grow in these areas? Do you understand that God wants us to become more like His Son in all areas of life? Let's prepare our hearts for what God wants to teach us in this study. *Pastor Will*

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

¹*You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. ²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.*

³*Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.*

⁶*Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.*

⁹*Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. (2:1-10)*

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Let's take our outline from yesterday to another level today. Let's categorize the info from our outline. This helps our minds pick out the specifics of what Paul is saying.

Older Men (v2)

- *be temperate
- *be worthy of respect
- *be sound in faith
- *be sound in love
- *be sound in endurance

Older Women (v3-4)

- *be reverent in lifestyle
- *don't slander
- *don't be addicted to wine
- *teach what is good
- *train the younger women

Young Women (v4-5)

- *love husbands/children
- *be self controlled
- *be pure
- *be busy at home
- *be kind
- *be subject to husbands

Young Men (v6)

- *be self controlled

Slaves (v9-10)

- *be subject to their masters in everything
- *try to please them
- *don't talk back to them
- *don't steal from them
- *earn their trust

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

²*Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.* - Titus is to begin with the older members of the family. The older men are to be "*temperate*". The word literally means sober but has a meaning beyond a relation to alcohol. It indicates a balanced mindset. Temperate means to not embrace anything in excess and not to allow anything to dominate. An older person should have learned what is a good enjoyment of pleasure and what is a bad expression of pleasure. He should have learned to govern every instinct and every passion. His way of thinking and his behavior earn him respect (*worthy of respect*).

He is to be in control of himself (*self-controlled*), his thoughts, his feelings, and not out of control. His is to know what he believes and why (*sound in faith*). His understanding of God and how God works should be mature at this stage. He should be living out the truth of God in all of his relationships (*sound in love*). His years of service to God should have tempered him like steel so that he is able to bear more and more and respond with grace and peace consistently time and time again (*sound in endurance*).

³*Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.* ⁴*Then they can train the younger women...* - The older women should live a life that reflects holiness and is engaged in sacred things (*be reverent...*). Their hearts should be focused on Christ and being Christ-like in all their ways. They understand that it is better to not say anything at all than to pick up and spread any type of slander (*not to be slanderers*).

There must have been a strong temptation for the older women in particular to drink and drown their sorrows with wine. Perhaps in the culture of Crete they were not highly respected and didn't have much influence so they would turn to strong drink in order to cope. Titus is to teach them that God did not want them addicted to such things (*not...addicted to much wine*). Instead, God had a wonderful purpose for them and place of ministry for them. They were to be teachers of good (*teach what is good*). In particular, they were to mentor and teach the younger women. What a powerful ministry. They were to mentor those who would mentor their own families. Talk about a far-reaching ministry. Those who impact the family...impact the world.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. It is clear that older people are to be leaders and influencers over younger people. It might have been easy for Titus (a young minister) to neglect or not understand the importance of those growing older in a society. But Paul made sure he didn't miss this.

Their years of life and particularly their years living with Christ are so valuable. Their seasoned faith can help the younger Christian tremendously. If you are a grandmother or grandfather or even a father or mother of a grown child, you are of the age Paul is referring to. For some, growing older is a frightening experience and one that is fought every step of the way. But Paul describes a different outlook. Growing older can be a time of honor, respect, of solid choices, strong faith, healthy relationships, and enduring qualities. It can be a time of holy living and great spiritual impact on others.

If you are a younger person reading this today, would you encourage those in your life who are older? Would you remind them of the place, grace and privilege that is theirs? Would you show this type of respect to them and encourage them to gladly take their place of influence among the Christian family? We need them to fulfill their God given call. If they don't, a whole generation will suffer for a lack of Godly leadership and influence.

Not long ago I had the privilege of speaking at a retreat for retired people. I'm not sure I can put into words the impact it had on me. As I worshiped with them my heart was so blessed by their depth of understanding and the genuine expression of their love for Christ. They modeled so much to me that day. I cried as I heard their testimonies of the faithfulness of God to them down through the different stages of their lives. And yet when I had the chance to sit down with them one on one, they each said they felt that there was no place of ministry for them in their home churches.

My church is a newer church and is populated with mostly a younger and middle-aged crowd. As a pastor, I grieve the fact that we don't have many older people. I clearly realize how empty we are because of this fact. We need to hear those who have walked with God for long years as they testify to the faithfulness of God at every stage of their adult lives. We need to see them worship aloud, hearing the emotion in their voices and seeing the resolve on their faces. We need them to lead a small group of married couples and share God's plan for marriage. We need them to talk to us about family finances, about tithing, about parenting, about careers, about health, and a host of other things.

As I am writing this, it is dawning on me that I'm older than most in my church. I'm the parent of an adult child. There are many just like me in my church. Maybe God is using Paul to remind us that we should be taking a more assertive role in leading, mentoring, and modeling for those who are coming behind us.

Let's think on these things.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

¹*You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. ²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.*

³*Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.*

⁶Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷*In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.*

⁹*Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. (2:1-10)*

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Let's use the categories we used yesterday to help our minds pick out the specifics of what Paul is saying. Yesterday we looked at verses 2-4 (the older men and older women sections). Today will look at the younger women and younger men sections.

Older Men (v2)

- *be temperate
- *be worthy of respect
- *be sound in faith
- *be sound in love
- *be sound in endurance

Older Women (v3-4)

- *be reverent in lifestyle
- *don't slander
- *don't be addicted to wine
- *teach what is good
- *train the younger women

Young Women (v4-5)

- *love husbands/children
- *be self controlled
- *be pure
- *be busy at home
- *be kind
- *be subject to husbands

Young Men (v6)

- *be self controlled

Slaves (v9-10)

- *be subject to their masters in everything
- *try to please them
- *don't talk back to them
- *don't steal from them
- *earn their trust

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Once again, these lists of what to teach are not meant to be exhaustive lists. These particular lists must be what those age groups needed the most in that particular culture.

⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. - The younger women were to be taught and trained in matters of the heart. The more experienced women were to mentor the younger women in the areas of marriage and motherhood. You've heard the old saying, "*The one who rocks the cradle rules the world.*" Younger women were given the most important instruction. They were to learn how to guide the home...manage the affairs of the household.

The success of the marriage and the atmosphere of the home would have the biggest impact on the children and on the reputation of the Gospel (*so no one will malign the word of God*). In a culture where women were seen as less important came the Gospel of Christ, which brought freedom and new light to the role of womanhood. As women and men came to Christ, they came to realize that in their baptism into Christ, "*there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" (Galatians 3:28).

Love is to be the priority of the home and all the relationships in the home. It is the highest blessing on a home. Wives and mothers are to be at the center of this blessing and influence.

Young women are to be in control of their desires and passions. They should be able to live out what they say they believe. These young ladies were to be pure in mind and heart...were to have a strong work ethic, be kind and gracious within and without the home, and respond positively to the leadership God had placed on their husbands.

⁶Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. - In young men it seems the blood runs hotter and passions are more commanding. Paul sets the bar high and calls for self control. He insists that there not be a gap between their beliefs and their actions. "*Self-controlled*" is the same word we looked at in verse 2. It means balance and self-restraint in our lives. It means that our faculties, appetites and passions are under the Spirit's control.

Youth often have unrealistic confidence and believe they are indispensable. Their lack of judgment and experience can create for them dangerous situations. Paul calls for a spiritual maturity in young men.

When the eagerness of youth is confronted with Spirit-filled self-mastery, something great comes into the life of a young man.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. I can't help but notice the spiritual bar that Paul set for young people. We often write off the younger crowd of not being able to live successful Christian lives. Paul will hear nothing of it. He calls the young women and men to purity...to self-mastery...to love...to obedience. The power of God's Spirit can overcome the immaturity of youth. The Holy Spirit can deepen and purify the youthful heart.

If you are a young single person or young wife/mother or young husband/father reading this today, understand the expectation of God upon your life. And with God's expectation always comes God's provision. The Holy Spirit can cleanse the heart from sin, freeing it from slavery to sin. The Holy Spirit can bring maturity to the youthful mind. Don't listen to the enemy when he says, *"live it up while you are young...or sow some wild oats while you can."* He has nothing but destruction in mind. God calls you to holiness and purity and intimacy with Himself.

If you are a parent or any other significant older person in a young person's life, remind that young person of God's call on their lives...of God's expectations...of God's provision for them. Keep in front of their minds the nobleness...the honor...the blessing of a pure life. Remind them constantly of the depth of relationship with Christ that is available to the heart that will obey God. Fill their minds with the truth of God's reward for those who are faithful to the end.

Blessings,

Pastor Will

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⁶Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

⁹Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. (2:1-10)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Let's use one of the categories we used yesterday to help our minds pick out the specifics of what Paul is saying. Today will look at the last member of a household mentioned...slaves.

Slaves (v9-10)

- *be subject to their masters in everything
- *try to please them
- *don't talk back to them
- *don't steal from them
- *earn their trust
- *so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Paul has been referring to the Christian household. This section seems to be addressing the Christian slave...as part of the 1st century Cretan, Christian home. Let's remember something we have discussed already in one of our former studies. The concept of slavery that Paul and Titus were dealing with was not exactly like what we think of as slavery in our day.

Slavery was not as tied to the mistreatment of a particular race as it was to military conquests and economic circumstances. However, it was very wrong. The very idea of one human owning another is insane. Unfortunately, people who were conquered or who were in substantial debt often became slaves to those who were wealthier.

In light of these circumstances, Paul tells Titus to teach those in the church who were enslaved to... be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them,¹⁰ and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted - These Christians were to be obedient to those who were over them. They were to take orders and do it with a great attitude. They were not to be bitter, sulk, or have a victim mentality. They were to really try to please them...genuinely.

They were to not talk back to their masters. They were to talk to them with respect. They were to, in every way, be honest in all their dealings with them. At that time many businesses were in the hands of the slaves...meaning they did the bulk of the work. It would have been easy to cheat and steal without the knowledge of the owner. Slaves were to speak and act in a way that earned them trust. God wants his people to be trusted. And what is the motive to be in all of this?

...so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. - This was to be the real motivation. They were to live in such a way that those who were unsaved would see the Gospel of Christ at work in the life of the believer. Slavery had to be a difficult issue for the early Christians. Imagine the slave owner who became a Christian. His relationship with Christ must have demolished any notions that one human being should be the owner of another, since God alone is the Father of everyone.

What were the options for them back then? One would be the immediate release of all the slaves. But this could have been disastrous, not only for the owner, but also for the slaves who would have nowhere to go. Another option could be to move from slavery to a partnership or employment type situation. This is probably what most chose to do but because of the law of the land it may have taken months or even years to work through the legalities of all of this. So this left, as a practical option for most, to try to be a caring, loving master, and a genuine and faithful workman under the banner of a social system that was saturated with slavery.

Imagine also a situation of a slave who became a Christian. If his master was not a Christian, it's certain that the same kind of mistreatment would continue. How could that person handle such abuse once he had tasted a new sense of self-worth in Christ? Paul wants this person to understand that his patience and integrity might be the witness that could point his master to Christ. Or what about this scenario? What if the master is a Christian and the Christian slave were to expect preferential treatment as a brother in Christ? The person who is filled with the Spirit of Christ should have the best attitude, noblest of actions, and the purest of motives. He should not expect an easy ride because of his faith. And all of this is for the glory of Christ and the honor of the Gospel.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. Notice first of all, the power of Christ's gospel in the life of a person. Look at the expectation of God upon the older men...the older women...the younger women...the younger men...and those who were Christian slaves. God's redemption not only brings forgiveness but also an awesome transformation that literally changes a person's attitudes, actions, choices, priorities, and life patterns. Wow! What a great salvation God has given us.

2. I suppose the passage we are looking at this morning applies more specifically to us in our time in the area of our jobs. While we are not slaves, most of us are employees who work for bosses. Some of these bosses are Christian but most are not. If God expects such attitudes and actions from those who were slaves, how much more would He expect a servant's heart, a strong work ethic, respectful treatment, and faithful service from us to those who employ us?

Our motives must be the same. We, as Christians, live for the glory and honor of the One. We love...Jesus Christ. One of the most powerful influences in a boss's life is the influence of a hard working Christian who has a great attitude and who knows how to follow the authority of someone else.

Many Christians today concentrate on their rights and privileges as Christians and not on following Christ where ever He leads and into whatever circumstances He leads. Because of some incorrect Bible teaching, they can't imagine it to be God's will for them to work in a less than perfect situation. And the moment things are not as they expect, they begin to look at the job listings in the paper. Remember...the slaves in Paul's day didn't stop being slaves to other men just because they gave their hearts to Christ and began to follow Him. They were asked by God to follow Christ and have a holy heart even while living the life of a slave. It was more about winning others to Christ than their comfort. And so it is today.

Paul called them to an unconditional love and obedience to Christ. He called them to live a holy life with a holy attitude and to sanctify each and every situation they found themselves in.

What about us? How do you see your job?...your boss? Are you bringing a holy life and a holy attitude to your workplace?...to the relationship with your boss? Do you see that God has called you to be where you are at? He has called you to be His witness in that place and to those people. Are you working in a way that will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive to unsaved co-workers or an unsaved boss?

Let's think on these things today!

Pastor Will

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⁶*Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.*

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WHAT DOES IT SAY?

So far in this passage we've looked at specific teaching directed to the older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and those who were slaves to others. There is one more section in this passage that we have not looked at (verses 7-8). Let's outline them.

- I. In everything set them an example
 - A. by doing what is good
- II. In your teaching
 - A. show integrity
 - B. seriousness
 - C. soundness of speech
- III. So that those who oppose you
 - A. may be ashamed
 - B. cannot condemn
 - C. have nothing bad to say about us.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

So far in this section of Scriptures, Paul's words were addressed to other people groups through Titus. But verses 7 and 8 are directed to Titus himself. Paul's instruction was intended to help Titus' over-all ministry. Paul discusses some key components to an effective ministry.

⁷*In everything set them an example by doing what is good.* -_The phrase "set them an example" is described by a single word (tupos). Tupos means a pattern.

The idea behind it is an impression made by a stamp or die. Just like a die would stamp an image or pattern in metal or on a piece of cloth, the Christian's habit of doing what is right should be a spiritual die/pattern stamped upon the lives of others.

If a Christian's leadership and teaching are to be effective, the leader's words must be backed up by the witness of his own life. He must be a doer of the Word as well as a teacher of the Word.

In your teaching show integrity, seriousness⁸ and soundness of speech... - In Titus' teaching ministry, Paul urged him to first of all "*show integrity*". This phrase speaks about the motives of the heart. When teaching, he must first keep watch over his motives. His motives need to be pure and honest.

Those who are teachers might be tempted to think too highly of themselves because of the position of trust given them. They might be tempted to misuse the influence given them to make gain for themselves. They might be tempted to rely on their own cleverness or intellect instead of on what God's Word says. They might be tempted to be "people pleasers" (saying what people want to hear and what will make people like them) instead of focusing on what pleases God. Their motive must be to glorify Christ alone and let Him be known to all who will hear.

By "*seriousness*" Paul means mature reverence. He is to live every day with the idea in mind that he is an ambassador of Christ. His thoughts, words, and actions must be kept in focus so that he honors and brings dignity to Christ. This does not mean he must never laugh or have fun. Paul wants to make sure Titus' ministry is characterized by a thoughtful, sober, focused outlook on life.

⁸and soundness of speech... - literally means to have what you speak be sound (solid). When a teacher is not careful about what he says, it can hurt the reputation of God's truth. Teachers are not to be careless when it comes to the preparation of what they teach. When there are flaws in logic, careless mistakes in structure, and when teaching lacks clarity, people become confused and distracted. God's teachers do not specialize in side issues. There are many great "causes" but we must be careful to not put the teaching of God on the back burner or allow a "cause" to take center stage. The teacher of God's Word is to teach what God says, not what the teacher thinks or feels. God's perspective is what we need.

that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. - Titus' teaching ministry should be so solid that those who oppose the Gospel (and there are always many who do this) would feel ashamed for trying to condemn his ministry and have nothing credible to say against the Gospel and those who promote it. People will always complain and criticize but the Christian should live with such integrity that no one could legitimately make a case against him.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. This section is sort of a Leadership/Mentor 101 overview. He is saying that if you want to touch people's lives with the Truth, as a Christian you must adhere to certain leadership ideas. Truth is best passed on when:

- a leader practices what he preaches – nothing says hypocrisy like saying one thing and doing another. Before most will believe that the Gospel of Christ is powerful...they must see the power of the Gospel lived out in someone's life. A leader/mentor must first of all set a good example.
- a leader is honest and transparent – nothing builds trust as easily and quickly as when a leader ministers out of a pure motive and wants only to help others follow Christ. People can tell when ministry is about Christ and not about the leader. People respect and desire others who have integrity, a transparent honesty, and a reverence for the things of God.
- the substance of what a leader speaks is true, practical, and clear. Teaching must always be accurate. This means that what he speaks is organized so that it is easily understood and it addresses the real needs of a person's life. There is no greater work than to reconcile God's truth with man's need.

2. Do you have anyone in your life that you would like to mentor and encourage? How is that going? Make sure you put into place the foundation Paul instructs Titus with. A three-fold ingredient is a must – modeling the truth, integrity, and true/clear instruction.

Before a person allows himself to be influenced with an idea, he must hear and understand the idea...he must trust the person who is speaking it...and he must see what the idea looks like in real life situations.

Hope this helps as you seek to impact others.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age... (Titus 2:11-12)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

I. The Grace of God:

A. Brings salvation.

1. it has appeared to all men
2. it teaches us to say no to ungodliness
3. it teaches us to say no to worldly passions
4. it teaches us to live self-controlled...lives
5. it teaches us to live upright...lives
6. it teaches us to live godly lives
7. in this present age

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Paul, it seems, is now laying the foundation upon which all that he has already said should be placed. All that Paul has called for in the lives of Christian leaders (chapter 1) and Christian laity (chapter 2) can be accomplished only because of the grace of God and the great salvation that has appeared to all men.

Notice that he said the "*the grace of God...brings salvation.*" Because God is merciful and desires to treat humanity better than humanity deserves to be treated, He sent His Son to earth to live, minister, be punished for our sins, and raised from the dead. Deep within this plan, God has taken care of all of man's spiritual needs. Notice also that this salvation has "**appeared to all men.**" This salvation is not for only a few elected folks. The Scriptures say that it is God's will that all men come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). He is no respecter of persons. He loves all and extends His grace to all.

¹²It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions... - The grace of God not only brings salvation to humanity but it also is a teacher. Paul said it teaches us some things not to do and then it teaches us some things to do. Grace teaches us to say no to "ungodliness" and "worldly passions". This means things that are un-God-like and things that are worldly in nature or things with no eternal significance.

When we become recipients of God's grace and are redeemed/adopted into God's family, we are so affected by God's redemption that we desire to say no to things that God forbids and to things that don't have eternal value. Our attitudes, appetites, ambitions, and actions are affected by Christ's redemption.

"...and to live self-controlled..." - Now he concentrates on the things we should do. This grace not only recalibrates our taste for ungodliness and temporary things but it also teaches us to live lives that are under the Spirit's control. We've seen this word many times in this chapter. It means balanced...living in a way that doesn't allow any emotion or desire to lead or have its way. It means we make choices based upon principle and not on feelings or circumstances.

"Upright" literally means a life filled with justice and a commitment to honesty. *"Godly lives"* refers to lives that reflect the nature and character of God. Holiness of heart and life is meant here. *"...in this present age..."* - Paul says that God means for us to live this way now.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. There is no better passage in the whole Bible that describes the call and will of God for mankind. Here we see the miracle of moral change. God not only wishes to free us from the penalty of our sins but He also wants to free us from the slavery to sin. He calls us to give up ungodliness and worldly passions. He further calls us to live lives characterized by self-control, uprightness, and godliness. And He calls us to live this way now...in this life.

There are some under the banner of Christianity who would have us believe that the normal Christian life is nothing but one moral failure after another. They would also try to convince us that it is not a big deal to sin... thought, word, and deed everyday of our lives. The only problem with this concept is that the Word of God is diabolically opposed to such a view.

The redemption that Christ provides is far too powerful to leave us in such a pitiful state of existence. To settle for a life characterized by spiritual defeat is to deny the power of the Gospel and is to say that Christ came and died for much less of an effect than He actually did.

In fact, John says that those who think and live this way, haven't even met the Father (1 John 3:4-6). It is beyond my understanding how those who claim to experience the salvation Christ provides can in the same breath justify the right to continue to live in sin. Either they have really never met Christ or their definition of sin isn't the same as John's definition of sin.

We learned something about grace today. Most think of grace as "unmerited favor". Others use the concept of grace to justify their right to keep on sinning and get away with it. But God's Word says that grace is a teacher...a teacher that teaches us to forsake ungodliness and worldly passions and to embrace a holy lifestyle.

The questions we must ask ourselves are obvious. Is God's grace transforming us? Here is a tough question that I ask in love. Are you one of those who uses the concept of grace to help you feel better about sinning and to think that somehow you are getting away with it? If so, Paul has a

phrase for you "*God forbid*" (Romans 6:1-2). Paul says that you have completely missed the point of "grace". He says the point of "grace" is that "*sin shall no longer be your master*" (Romans 6:14). In fact, the writer to the Hebrews tells us that those who deliberately keep on disobeying God after they have received the truth can get to a point where the sacrifice of God's Son is no longer applied to their lives (Hebrews 10:26-29). Their crime, among other things, is that they have "*insulted the Spirit of grace.*"

How does grace teach us to be godly? Those who are truly recipients of God's grace are so overwhelmed by such undeserved love, unmerited mercy, such deep tender care, and such incredible sacrifice for them that they repent of their sins and forever more embrace a heart that wants to forsake that which God hates.

And we've not even talked about the effect that being forgiven, having our guilt and shame removed, and what the cleansing presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives has on us. And then there is the benefit of the community of faith (church). The presence of other believers in our lives that encourage and lovingly help us be accountable. Of course, all of these are available to us because of God's grace.

It is so important that we understand the Biblical definition of grace. If we get it wrong...we can easily misunderstand everything else.

May God help us to live according to His Will today.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

...while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. (Titus 2:13-15)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

- I. ...While we wait for the blessed hope (the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ)
 - A. Who gave himself for us
 - B. Who redeems us from all wickedness
 - C. Who redeems to purify for himself a people
 - 1. who are his very own
 - 2. who are eager to do what is good

- II. These are the things you should teach
 - A. Encourage with all authority
 - B. Rebuke with all authority
 - C. Don't let anyone despise you

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

(From verse 12)...*"Grace...teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age..."* While grace does its work in us, we are waiting *"for the blessed hope..."* which is *"the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ..."* The second coming of Christ will be a glorious appearing. What a great reminder from Paul that Christianity is not about rules, regulations, or traditions. Christianity is about Jesus Himself.

The hope of Christ's return is vital to our perseverance and our staying power in the tough issues of life. I know there are many opinions about when Christ will return. Sadly, some Christians are so adamant about their particular beliefs that they cause divisions among the church. Whatever your perspective, allow the truth that HE IS COMING to be your hope. Let it be your sustaining joy and strength. Our Savior will return for us one day and take us to be with Him where He is.

...who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. - Jesus sacrificed himself for us. He gave his total self...all of who he is...for us. He held nothing back. As Paul taught in the book of Philippians, *"who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness...he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"* (Phil. 2:6-8). He sacrificed so that he could *redeem us* (ransom us) from *all wickedness* (lawless deeds). This means that Christ died for us so that we could be free from sinful deeds. Oh that the church

would here this, believe this, and live out this truth. More damage has been done to the name and reputation of Christ because of those who call themselves Christians but still live in wickedness.

He also purifies us. He purifies us for himself...for his own reputation...for his relationship with us so that we can be *a people who are his very own*. He wants us to be people who are distinctively his. There must be no fence riding. We can't live like we are his one day and then live like we are not his the next day. The people he purifies for himself are a people *who are eager to do what is good*. We don't just do good when it is comfortable. We are excited about living out the truth.

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. - This is what Titus is to teach. The grace of God is given to us to redeem us, to transform us, and to reward us at his second coming. Grace is not given to forgive only. It is given to empower us to change the way in which we live our actual lives. Grace transforms our attitudes, priorities, and choices. It teaches us to be people who are distinctively Christ's. This is what Titus is to teach.

He is to teach this truth with encouragement and with correction. Old incorrect ways of thinking about God and his redemption must be exposed and corrected and replaced with the truth. People must be encouraged to let go of the bad and embrace the true. There is a definite right way to believe and a definite right way to live. He is to be firm and faithful with the message that has been given him.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?

1. The hope of His second coming! I'm afraid I don't talk about this great truth near enough. Some talk about nothing else and others rarely mention it. Some force people to believe their particular way of thinking about his return in order to join their church. Others disobey a dozen commands on how to treat other people for the sake of winning an argument about his second coming. It is definitely a subject that can bring out the worst in people.

That is sad, isn't it? Regardless of our belief over the time of his return is the fact that he WILL return. We all agree on that. He is coming back for his people...to right every wrong...to judge and set everything straight...to destroy the devil and all who follow him...to destroy the earth and replace it with a new earth (Rev. 21:1). This is our blessed hope.

We should be looking forward to this event. It is when we will see Him face to face. It is when our struggles will be over...our hurts will be ultimately healed...our disappointments will be forgotten...and our faith will be sight. It is the time when we will get to thank him face to face for his love...mercy...grace...for the incredible salvation he provided for us...for the forgiveness...for the freedom from sin's slavery...for a personal comforter and

guide in the Holy Spirit...for eternal life. Yes, this will be a glorious appearance.

Think for just a moment what his second coming will be like for the person who resisted him in this life...for the person who treated all that he provided with casualness, carelessness, and neglect. Can you imagine what it would be like for someone to stand in front of him one day, eye to eye, and try to explain why he/she didn't respect his love... didn't honor his mercy...and treated his grace with contempt? No thank you.

Do we long for his second coming? Let's allow that "longing" to motivate us to embrace the grace of God as He intended. Allow the return of Christ to be your joy and strength.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

¹Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ²to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.(3:1-2)

Hey everyone,

If you don't mind I'm going to change up the format a little today just for the sake of change. This passage is very simple to outline and understand. Paul's point to Titus is to remind the Christians under his care that they are not just a group of people who meet together with common beliefs, they are also the body of Christ called to penetrate a lost world and effect it with Christ's Gospel.

The most powerful way to effect a lost culture is two-fold. The first part is to proclaim the truth...purely...simply...often. The second part is to live out the truth. The Gospel will not be respected in the minds of the lost until they see its power lived out in the lives of those who claim it to be the truth.

Paul tells Titus to remind the Christians of this truth by reminding them to live out the truth in 6 practical ways:

1. Christians are to be law-abiding members of society.

"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient..." (1)

2. Christians are to be active in doing good works for their fellow man.

"Remind the people to...be ready to do whatever is good..." (1)

3. Christians must be careful to never damage the reputations of others.

"Remind the people to...slander no one..." (2)

4. Christians should not stoop to quarreling to make their point or get their way.

"Remind the people to...be peaceable..." (2)

5. Christians should be thoughtful of the rights and feelings of others.

"Remind the people to...be considerate..." (2)

6. Christians should demonstrate a deep dependence upon God and sincere courtesy/respect toward others.

"Remind the people to...show true humility toward all men." (2)

These 6 reminders are simple to understand and do not need much explanation. The bigger concept for Paul is this. If a person encounters Christ, the way he lives his life will change. Because he has received such love, mercy, and grace, his inner life is radically altered. Because he has been treated in such a way, he can now treat others in the same way.

The way we treat others is the test of whether or not we really have the truth or not. Whether it is those who are in authority over me...or those who are in need...or those who have done wrong or hurt me...or those who disagree with me...or those who I simply interact with in the normal ebb and flow of life...the way I treat these people either dispels or validates the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the unsaved person.

The unsaved person can reject authority...can think of himself instead of the good of others...can damage the reputation of someone else...can argue and manipulate another for the sake of being right...can trample the rights and feelings of others...can be self-absorbed and arrogant toward other people. These impulses are normal in a fallen world. He is used to living out a knee-jerk reaction to his environment. These impulses are mere survival techniques.

But when such a man meets a person who does not live for himself but lives to reflect and honor Christ, then the thoughts and behaviors he will witness are the opposite of worldly impulses and survival techniques. If he witnesses a Christian who is thinking and acting in a way toward others that defies logic, he may, for the first time, see true love, mercy, and grace. And it is in those moments that he will get his first glance at the One behind it all and see the Lord's Gospel lived out in the flesh. I tell you the truth...this man will never be the same again.

Just as he did to Titus, Paul admonishes us also to be devoted to doing what is right and good for two reasons. First, because it is God's will to do so. Second, because in doing this, we show the power of the Gospel to transform lives...to a lost world. God Bless, *Pastor Will*

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

³*At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. ⁸This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. (3:3-8)*

Once again Paul is addressing the public life of the believer...how the believer interacts with his/her world. Last time Paul taught us six things we needed to know about the Christian's relationships with the law, society, and his fellow citizens. In today's verses, Paul narrows the focus down a little and gives us some great perspective on how Christians should relate to the unsaved. If you don't mind, I will continue to change to format up again today.

Let's look at the content of these verses in principle form.

1. Remembering what our own lives were like before we met Christ will enable us to minister to the unsaved with love and patience.

³*At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us,.. (3:3-5a)*

- There is nothing like a trip down memory lane to humble us and remind us from where we have come.
 - God showed kindness and love toward us. This is what drew us to Him. Why would His representatives (us) deal with the unsaved any differently?
2. Remembering, from personal experience, how an unsaved person comes to know Christ will give us wisdom as we influence them as to how to place their faith in Christ.

⁵*he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. (3:5)*

- We must help those who are discovering Christ to come to Him, not on the basis of their own merits but only on the basis Christ's mercy. If we don't they may begin to be trapped in a legalism type mentality.

3. When explaining to the unsaved the great salvation Christ has made available to all of us...we must make sure we explain the whole Gospel.

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (3:5-7)

- We don't come to Christ for a better life. What Christ offers is so much bigger.
 - He offers first of all a "*rebirth*". A new start. A new beginning...being born again...this time into the family of God.
 - Secondly, He offers "*renewal*" by the Holy Spirit. He pours out His Spirit upon us and we are renewed. We are actually changed. This does not refer to our standing in Christ but to the way we actually live in Christ.
 - Third, He offers us an inheritance. We become "*heirs*" of a spiritual life and relationship that does not have to ever end.
4. Paul tells Titus to "stress" these things (#s 1-3) to Christians so that they will know how important their interaction with their world is to the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom.

⁸This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. (3:8)

- Years ago a bumper sticker came out that read, "*Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven.*" That bumper sticker was a bad idea from several angles. First, its words are the opposite of what Scripture says. In Matthew 5:48 Jesus said, "*Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*"

Yes...I know. The word perfect is used in two different ways. The bumper sticker meant it to mean (flawless) and the Bible verse means (mature, complete). But why would you put something on public display that at first glance contradicts the very wording of Scripture?

The part of the bumper sticker that really bothers me is the part that says, Christians...are "just forgiven." This is Paul's whole point and argument in Titus chapter 3. Christians are not "just forgiven." They are forgiven, to be sure... but they are so much more than "just forgiven".

They are filled, cleansed, and transformed. They are changed from the inside...out. The bumper sticker gives the impression that the reader should not expect much from the Christian because, after all,

he is "just forgiven" as if nothing else happened to the believer when he encountered Christ.

Paul is saying the opposite. He expects much from the believer because God expects much (in terms of a holy walk) from the believer. Paul commands Titus to stress this great truth and to expect much from the believer's walk. The best thing...holy living is not what we have to do in order to be loved by God...holy living is what we can do because we are loved by God.

I had coffee with a good friend yesterday. We were talking about how hurtful it can be to the unsaved and the saved alike, when Christians in the church don't live according to God's truth. We were both sharing stories that had happened to us and our loved ones throughout the years. When the church (believers) live carnal, selfish lives, the hurt this causes in others runs very deep. We are both praying for people we know who have left church all together, because of wounds caused by careless people who would dare call themselves "believers".

The big question for us to consider this morning is this: What are we doing to keep from becoming careless believers? Our interaction with the unsaved world (neighbors, co-workers, service attendants, family members) is crucial to the spreading of Christ's Gospel. We must show works (attitudes and actions) that reflect Christ and the redemptive work He is doing in our lives.

As we interact with the unsaved, our attitudes and actions must reflect the love, mercy, concern, and respect that Christ has for them. Those times are never the time to think and act selfishly. It is never about our rights but always about God's message. We are His ambassadors and we have a responsibility to get His message to the lost...correctly.

What do your attitudes and actions look like? Have you surrendered them to Christ and let Christ sanctify them? How do you treat your fellow man?...other Christians?...the unsaved? You are supposed to be a walking/talking testimonial for Christ and the salvation He died to purchase. Are you representing Him well?

Let's think on these things today,

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

⁸This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. ⁹But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. ¹⁰Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. ¹¹You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. (3:8-11)

Paul is still dealing with the public life of a Christian. He has worked with us concerning our social civility and our relationships with the unsaved. Today he is helping us avoid distractions...distractions that may seem Christian on the surface but are, in reality, not pleasing to God at all.

1. Right beliefs must produce right actions.

⁸This (the truth about salvation he just explained) is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. (3:8)

- It is absurd to know the truth and not do it. Doing the truth is why God gives us the knowledge of it in the first place.

2. Meetings/discussions/debates that do not produce Godly actions are a waste of time. It is easier to discuss one's religious opinions rather than doing the work of impacting our community.

⁹But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. (3:9)

- Talking about the salvation that Christ brings and being devoted to good works are profitable to everyone.
- But religious fables or the latest "Christian" opinion/experience that causes controversy, arguments, division, and quarrels among believers are unprofitable and useless. Paul says to avoid these things. Don't bring them up...don't try to persuade others to believe them. Stick to the fundamental truths of the Gospel. These are what change lives.
- The energy and time spent in trying to "outwit" one another could be spent in really showing the lost who Christ is.

3. People are not necessarily in a right relationship with God just because they argue (even with passion) for their particular religious opinions. Those things that are of true faith do not divide God's people; they unite them. Protect the unity and cooperation of believers.

¹⁰Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. ¹¹You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. (3:10-11)

- Sometimes people argue about religious things because of pride and love of power/influence. Religious zeal is not always good. Consider the extreme Muslims in Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. A perfect example of religious zeal but zeal that is a million miles from the truth.
- The spirit of a person who is filled with God's Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit. (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)
- No matter what a person says, if his spirit does not reflect these, he is not right with God.
- A truly Spirit-filled person will not disobey God in regard to how he treats other people in order to win an argument.
- He knows that his argument will not bring another person to salvation. That is the Holy Spirit's job (John 16:7-9). The Spirit begins to work before we start talking and continues to work even when we stop talking.
- Paul tells Titus that a divisive person is so dangerous to the Kingdom, the person is only to receive two warnings and after that he must be publicly dealt with so others will know not to be influenced by him.
- Paul says that someone who is divisive like this is really not the Christian he claims to be. By his own actions he condemns himself.
- When a person's opinion separates him from the fellowship of his fellow believers, he must beware. True faith does not divide the faithful but unites them.

Distractions. We face them everyday. Many distractions are secular in nature and we let them keep us from doing what we know we should do. Sometimes distractions have an element of spirituality about them. They can seem spiritually significant but eventually sidetrack us from the most important actions. Christianity is about doing the truth. If the truth is not being done, it is not Christian and Christ is not in it.

Distractions come in all kinds of packages. Sometimes the very things we do at church can become distractions. When we put too much focus on the

methods we use at church to promote the Gospel instead of the truth itself, we can become distracted. For example, when the components of a worship service are focused on more than our Savior is focused on...we have a problem. When there is more time spent on deciding "what" we will do rather than more time spent on "Who" we do these things for...we have a problem.

Let's guard our lives from things that are religious in nature but that take all of our time...our energy...our focus...and keep us from doing what we are commanded to do...to introduce others to Christ and help them become His disciples.

Let's think on these things today.

Pastor Will

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

¹²As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. ¹³Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. ¹⁴Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives. ¹⁵Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. (3:12-15)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

- I. As soon as I send Artemas and Tychicus to you
 - A. do your best to come to me at Nicopolis because I have decided to winter there.

- II. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way
 - A. see that they have everything they need
 - B. our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good
 1. in order that they may provide for daily necessities
 2. and not live unproductive lives.

- III. Everyone with me sends you greetings
 - A. Greet those who love us in the faith
 - B. Grace be with you all

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

¹²As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. - Paul is about to send one of two men to replace Titus on the island of Crete. We don't know anything about Artemas. He is never mentioned in Scripture again. We have heard of Tychicus before. He was with Paul when he was first imprisoned (Acts 20:4) and Paul sent him with the letters to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21) and the Colossians (Col. 4:7).

¹³Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. - Once again, we don't know anything about Zenas except that he was a lawyer. The word is "nomikos" which often refers to the Jewish scribe and is the normal word for lawyer in Greek culture. So Zenas could have been a converted Rabbi or a Greek born man who was a lawyer. Apollos is a name we know about. He was a well-known teacher and fellow minister of Paul (Acts 18:24).

Paul sent these men on a missionary journey to minister in some capacity. He sent them through Crete for two reasons. First, to deliver this letter to Titus. Second, to give the Christians on Crete the opportunity to

give (invest) resources into their missionary assignment. We get a picture of Paul as the Christian general strategically placing his leaders (soldiers) so that the Gospel of Christ can spread throughout the world.

¹⁴*Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.* - Paul wants the Christians on the island of Crete to have the opportunity to sacrificially give to a ministry that does not directly affect them. He says that "*our people*" (notice the Christian community feel) "*must learn*" to give themselves to doing what is good. He goes on to say what the "*good*" is in that context. He says that they must learn to give themselves to providing for the daily necessities of God's ministries and to live productive lives.

A Christian workman works not only to have enough for himself but also to have something to give away. Paul suggests that a person living only for his own needs and who neglects the needs of God's ministries is living an unproductive life.

¹⁵*Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.* - Paul is a conduit for blessing Titus. He conveys love and greetings from those who are with him. Paul also asks Titus to pass on to those working with Titus his greeting and love to those "*who love us in the faith.*" Love operating in the sphere of faith. Love binds them together. Paul's final word is "grace." His letter is about the works of the Christian life. Grace and works go together and are both needed for successful Christian living.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS TODAY?

1. In verse 14 Paul says that Christians must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good. I'm noticing the word "learn". This word does not de-spiritualize a person's decision to do good. We understand that the Holy Spirit, who lives in us, will lead us to do what is right...will produce His fruit in us (Gal. 5:22-23)

However, this word gives us the impression that there is a learning curve in mind here, also. As Christians, the impulses of the Holy Spirit, as well as, by reading the Word of God teach us what God says are good works and we learn to make *doing these things* a priority in our lives. We learn how important these good works are to God and because we love Him...we do these things. We learn how important these good works are to the salvation of the lost and because we want the lost to be saved...we do these things. We learn how important these good works are to the progression of the ministries that encourage and strengthen God's people and because we love God's people (the church)...we do these things.

We are not robots or puppets. We are humans created in the image of God. We have minds, emotions, and wills. We are built to hear truth and then

process truth. We take in truth, think about, understand it, get passionate about it, and then act on it.

Paul is saying that the opportunities to sacrifice for the sake of God's Kingdom create teaching moments...learning moments. By sacrificing for God's purposes Paul says we are devoting ourselves to doing good and to living productive lives.

Christianity without good works...without sacrifice on the part of Christians is doomed to becoming just another struggling social structure.

May God help us be people willing to sacrifice time, energy, and resources for the spreading of His Gospel and Kingdom.

May the Lord speak to you as you think on these things.

Pastor Will