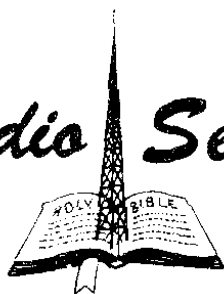


Godly Living
in
An Ungodly World

Radio Sermons



by
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Godly Living in an Ungodly World

(An Exposition of the Epistle to Titus)

Foreword

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Titus 2:11-12.

Titus is one of the four Pauline Epistles addressed to individuals rather than churches. The others are Philemon and the two epistles to Timothy.

First and Second Timothy and Titus are generally called the "Pastoral Epistles" because they are addressed to men serving as pastors and have a pastoral quality.

Titus, the shortest of the three Pastoral Epistles, contains only three chapters. Yet its 46 verses overflow with information for "godly living." The epistle, written for Christians, gives practical instructions for the day-to-day problems encountered in Christian living.

Titus presents the Gospel message and touches on some of the most profound doctrines of the Christian faith. Each of the three chapters treats a different aspect of godly living and spiritual growth. Chapter 1 concerns godly living in the church. Chapter 2 concerns godly living in the home. Chapter 3 concerns godly living before the world.

The epistle to Titus was apparently written quite late in Paul's ministry. The apostle had ministered on the island of Crete and had founded the church there. The Book of Acts does not record a visit to Crete. But, of course, Acts ends with Paul as a prisoner in a hired house in Rome, waiting to appear before the emperor Nero. Secular records tell us that Paul's audience

with Nero came after he had spent two years in Rome as a prisoner. At his first hearing he was acquitted of all charges.

A free man, Paul continued his apostolic ministry, traveling throughout various parts of the world, including the island of Crete. But he was arrested a second time and returned to Rome. This time he was confined to a dungeon in the Mamertine prison rather than the "hired house" of previous imprisonment. In the second trial Paul was found guilty of crimes against Caesar and sentenced to death. Shortly after his sentence, Paul, the bond slave of the Lord Jesus Christ, was beheaded by a Roman executioner. He thus went home to be with the Lord he loved and had served so faithfully.

Titus had been won to the Lord by Paul. When Paul was ready to move on to other fields, the Lord called Titus to minister as a pastor-teacher to the churches at Crete. Nevertheless, Paul was still interested in the well-being and spiritual growth of the churches he had established there, even after his departure.

In this epistle, Paul is Titus's spiritual adviser in his continuing ministry to the Cretian believers. Down through the centuries, this epistle has been a standard of instruction in godly living for the three spheres in which the child of God finds himself: the church, the home, and the world.

Godly Living in the Church

1.

The Writer

“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.” Titus 1:1-3.

In the style of the day, the opening words of the letter to Titus identify the author as Paul. They also specify Paul’s role in the family of God and direct attention to his office and mission.

As the apostle writes, he does not envision himself, as a great and exalted ecclesiastical leader of the early church. He is simply Paul, “the *bond slave* of God.” Having been redeemed from a life of bondage to Satan, he gladly served his heavenly Father.

As far as his office was concerned, Paul was also “an apostle of Jesus Christ,” the word “apostle” meaning “one sent on a mission.” Paul’s mission was to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles and then to teach those who received Christ to observe all things that the Lord had commanded. Thus Paul begins by setting forth both his *position* in God and his *role* among men.

A Letter of Instruction

In this letter to Titus, Paul is carrying out his commission to teach. This letter was intended to first of all instruct Titus in

those things that concern the carrying on of his ministry. Beyond that it was also intended to instruct Christians down through the centuries in "the truth which is according to godliness."

An expanded translation of the opening phrase of the book reads as follows: "Paul, God's bond slave, and an ambassador of Jesus Christ in accordance with the faith of God's chosen-out ones." Paul's apostleship (or ambassadorship) came not from worldly ecclesiastical sources but "in accordance with the *faith* of God's chosen-out ones."

The "faith" Paul refers to is that faith in Christ that is necessary for salvation. Paul entered the family of God by the same path all the rest of God's elect had; he had exercised simple faith in the one perfect sacrifice for sin, the shed blood of Christ. No one enters eternal life except by that path. Faith was an essential element in Paul's being called forth as an ambassador.

It was not only Paul's saving faith in Christ that prepared him for his mission but also "a precise, experiential knowledge of the truth in accordance with piety toward God." God had been preparing Paul for his preaching and teaching ministry even before his conversion, in those early days when he was still Saul of Tarsus. The Lord had seen to it that Paul was educated in the Old Testament Scriptures in the traditions of the rabbis and in the philosophies of the Greeks and Romans. After Paul's conversion, Christ himself gave Paul instruction in the truths of the Word of God. Paul had experienced the tremendous power of the truth of the Word as he had gone forth preaching and teaching the things of God. Therefore, as he addresses this epistle to Titus, he points out that he is an apostle through a precise, experiential knowledge of the truth.

"God Cannot Lie"

Paul goes on to speak of that wonderful assurance that belongs to all who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, who have experienced the forgiveness of sins and the new birth. He says that he stands on the basis of an expectation

of life eternal that God who cannot lie promised before eternity. The salvation of fallen mankind was in the mind of God (and was a part of God's eternal decree) even before the creation of the universe.

When Paul speaks of the faith of God's "elect" he directs our attention to the concept that God foreknew those who would place their faith in Christ, and God decreed that those who did so would be the recipients of eternal life. The Lord elected (or chose out) His children of the new creation, even before the creation of the world.

Paul rejoiced in that great expectancy that was his. He tells Titus (and all children of God) that he stands "in *hope* of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the ages of time." The Greek word translated "hope" refers to a definite expectancy. Paul emphasizes that there is no possibility he will not be included among the inheritors of this promise of God. The reason for this assurance is the foundation on which he stands, Christ Jesus.

God is omnipotent; that is, He is all-powerful. He is the Creator and the ultimate source of all the power of the universe. Yet in spite of this, Paul points to one thing that God cannot do. *God cannot lie!* God can only speak truth. As Scripture says, "Thy word *is* truth." It is impossible for God to lie, and He has promised eternal life to those who put their trust in Him.

The basis on which that promise is made is the finished work of Christ. Paul understood this well, for this was the Gospel he preached continually. So in identifying himself at the opening of this epistle to Titus, Paul stresses that he stands "in definite expectancy of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the ages of time."

God's Plan of the Ages

The ages of time are in the hands of God. The eternal plan of the ages is being carried out according to God's own schedule. The eternal Word did not become flesh for the work of the Cross until the time appointed. As we are told in Galatians 4:4, "When

the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman." The coming of the "seed of woman" was promised in the Garden of Eden, but the Incarnation did not take place for approximately 6,000 years. It was in God's own season, according to His appointed time.

In the opening of his letter to Titus, Paul says that this time is at hand. God "hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour." The Incarnation and the work of the Cross had come and gone. The "ladder" from earth to Heaven stood ready. That "ladder" is Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. God had ordained that the good news of a completed work of salvation be spread by means of the preaching of men. Paul, the bond slave of God and the apostle of Jesus Christ, was called to preach this word of salvation.

2.

The Recipient

"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." Titus 1:4.

Titus is mentioned in the Book of Acts and in several of the other letters of Paul. Titus was a faithful companion of Paul during part of his missionary travels. He also accompanied Paul to Jerusalem for attendance at the important church council of Acts 15.

Titus was a Greek and a personal convert of Paul. Paul's special relationship to him is brought out in the words "mine own son after the faith." Paul was Titus's spiritual "father."

During his early Christian life, Titus followed Paul, assisting him in his ministry and being taught the things of God by him.

But as Titus grew in spiritual maturity, the Lord revealed to him the pastoral ministry he was to continue after Paul left Crete.

Paul calls Titus "mine own son after the common faith." The "common" faith is that saving faith shared by all who have truly admitted that they are sinners and have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive work at Calvary.

Paul goes on to express his prayer for Titus and for all who share Titus's faith in Christ: "Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." "Grace, mercy and peace" are bestowed by God on those who through faith are part of God's family. The order in which Paul mentioned these three gifts of God is significant.

Grace

We are saved and sustained by God's grace. Grace is God's unmerited flavor to those who deserve the very opposite. Sin has separated all of us from God. Thus we all deserve to spend eternity in the lake of fire, which God has prepared for the devil and his angels. But in spite of this deserved judgment, God in His grace has prepared a way of escape. He sent His Son to redeem us from our sins by His own blood.

For those who accept that payment by acknowledging they are sinners and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, God in His grace gives new life. God's grace takes those lost in trespasses and sins and transforms them into new creatures who have everlasting life in Him. God's grace also sustains all who come to Him for salvation.

Mercy

After God saves us by His grace, we become the objects of His "mercy." Mercy is that pity and forgiveness God extends to those who are the children of His family. The word "mercy" has within itself the idea of the possibility of failure on the part of the recipient. Although those who are saved by God's grace are given a new spiritual nature, the old fleshly nature is not taken

away. While still in the flesh, God's children are not perfect. They still fall short of God's mark. They do not *practice* sin but they do stumble and fall. Then God's mercy picks them up. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9. Paul's prayer for Titus is for the mercy of God.

Peace

Paul also mentions "peace." True peace belongs only to the child of God. "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked." Isa. 48:22. Because of God's grace, we have "peace" with God; because of God's mercy, we have "peace" in our hearts as we live for God in this world.

God's grace saved Titus and sustained him in his called ministry; God's mercy forgave him his shortcomings and his failures; and God's peace filled his heart and made it possible for him to be contented, no matter what the circumstances.

The "grace, mercy and peace" Paul wished for Titus come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, Paul brings out the "separateness" of these two Persons of God and also asserts their equality in power and glory. The Lord Jesus Christ is not subordinate to God the Father but is co-equal with Him in power, majesty and glory.

Paul's sentence reflects Zechariah 13:7 where the prophet recorded a direct statement of God the Father: "*Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my equal, saith the LORD of hosts.*" In this prophecy of the coming Shepherd of Israel, God himself refers to this anticipated Messiah as both a "man" (clearly pointing to His Incarnation and humanity) and as "my equal" (clearly revealing His deity and absolute equality with God the Father).

The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

Paul referred to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ even before he penned words of greeting to Titus. Referring to his commission to preach the Gospel, Paul says in Verse 3 that God "*hath*

in due times manifested His word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour." The words "our Saviour" clearly refer to the Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul equates the man Jesus Christ to God by using the words "God our Saviour." So the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is positively stated, and He is once again placed on a plane of absolute equality with God the Father.

3.

The Assignment

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Titus 1:5.

Scripture provides us with no records of Paul's visit to Crete. The Book of Acts seems to disallow the possibility that Crete was visited by the apostle before his first imprisonment in Rome. Therefore his ministry to Crete must have come after his acquittal by Nero but before his second Roman imprisonment. Thus the epistle to Titus was written late in Paul's life, as were his two epistles to Timothy.

Paul opens the body of his letter with the words "For this cause left I thee in Crete." Then he states the exact cause for Titus's presence there on that island. First, Titus's commission was "to set in order the things that are wanting." Paul's ministry was that of an evangelist and an itinerant teacher. He took the Gospel to areas of the world where it had never been heard, and he was God's vessel to bring many to a saving faith in Christ.

During the brief intervals he was able to spend with his new converts, Paul taught them the great doctrines of God's Word. However, his commission as the Apostle to the Gentiles required that he continually move on to new fields where others had never heard the message of eternal life. When Paul left a

mission field, there was still much work to be done by the pastors and teachers who followed in his wake.

Instructions for Pastors

The instructions Paul gave to Titus are for all pastor-teachers down through the ages. There were many things wanting among the new converts at Crete. The church needed organization. Gifted members needed to be placed where they could best edify and benefit the saints. Titus was entrusted by Paul with the task of overcoming these deficiencies. Titus was to "set in order the things that are wanting." The remainder of this letter details how this was to be accomplished.

The Local Church: God-Established

The local assembly of believers is a God-established institution for the purpose of carrying out the Great Commission. It is the Lord's will that His children assemble themselves together for worship, prayer and instruction in spiritual truth. It is also the Lord's intent that the local church be organized and led by those whom God himself calls and appoints.

The Ordination of Elders

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee." The first thing Paul mentions to Titus is that he is to "ordain elders in every city." The first step in organizing a local church is to recognize the spiritual leaders who will take charge of the organization, govern and care for the assembly and administer discipline when needed. Titus's first duty was to see the appointment of "elders" in every city for this very task.

Observe that the word "elders" is plural. Paul's statement is that Titus is to "ordain *elders* in every city." There is to be a plurality of elders in each local assembly, not one elder in a plurality of cities.

The office of elder and the office of pastor are not identical, just as the office of deacon and the office of elder are not

identical. The pastor is an elder, and he is the chief elder of the assembly. But there are to be more elders than one over each local assembly of believers. In the early state of organization of the Cretian churches, Titus acted as pastor for more than one local church. However, after Titus's ministry to the churches of Crete, God sent pastors to the various local assemblies.

One Pastor: A Number of Elders

One pastor to a local assembly was the pattern that existed in the seven local churches addressed in Revelation 2 and 3. Letters are addressed to the "angel," or the "messenger," of each of these local churches. The word "angel" is singular in all seven cases; so it can be assumed that each of these churches had a plurality of elders of which the "angel," or "pastor," was chief overseer.

Titus was on the island of Crete to follow up Paul's evangelistic ministry there. Titus's mission was to establish the new Cretian converts (both Gentile natives of the island and Jews in dispersion there) into functioning "New Testament" churches. He was to see to the establishment of a system of church government within the local assemblies, and he was entrusted with the spiritual and moral training of the new converts.

Titus's assignment was difficult and exacting, but he had been properly prepared by God and by the aging Apostle Paul, who had every confidence that Titus would be successful in accomplishing those things entrusted to him.

Qualifications for the Office of Elder/Bishop

"If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Titus 1:6-9.

The administrators of the local churches are designated by two separate names by Titus (1:5 and 1:7), but both refer to the same office. Our English translation refers to these two as "elders" and "bishops," respectively. The Greek word translated "elders" is *presbyteros*, and the Greek word translated "bishop" is *episkopos*. Two forms of church government prevalent today derive their names from these two Greek words. These are the "Presbyterian" form of government and the "Episcopalian" form of government.

"Ordain" is translated from a Greek word that means "to place" or "set down." It does not imply that a formal ceremony of ordination (including the laying on of hands) was to be used in setting apart these church officers. Rather, it means that Titus was to appoint qualified men to the office of elder. He was to make known the appointment of these men to the various assemblies of Christian believers.

After instructing Titus to "set in order things that are wanting," Paul immediately proceeded to outline God's qualifications for the office of elder/bishop in the local assembly. This is one of two places in Scripture where this list of qualifications is recorded. Paul has given an even more detailed and more

inclusive list of qualifications for this office in I Timothy 3. There is no conflict between these two lists, but the list given to Timothy includes several qualifications not found in the epistle to Titus. The introductions to the two lists are different, which accounts for the inclusion of a more comprehensive list in I Timothy.

In his instructions to Titus, Paul did not include the qualification "apt to teach." Since Titus would have had a clear understanding of this requirement, Paul felt no need to include it. However, the list of qualifications for the office of elder in I Timothy 3 begins "If any man *desire* the office of bishop (that is, elder), he desireth a good work." The situation here involved a potential candidate seeking the office of elder. So Paul found it necessary to remind Timothy that an elder must have the gift of teaching. Both of Paul's lists of qualifications include the same high moral standards that must be met by those who are to be the overseers of God's local flock.

"Blameless"

At the head of this list, we find the words "If any be blameless." The word translated "blameless" means "unimpeachable." It refers to one who has no unresolved offense in his record of life for which he could be called to account by his fellow church members or by the people of the world. The Greek of this clause can be translated, "If a certain man is such that no charge can be brought against him." The candidate for the office of elder can have no unresolved offense in his life for which he could be called on to pay a debt to society. He can be neither a criminal nor a civil offender whose offense has not been totally reconciled. His life must be clear of anything that could reflect on the testimony of the assembly of Christians to which he is called as a spiritual leader.

"If any be blameless, *the husband of one wife*" is the second qualification for the office of elder. The literal translation is, "he must be a one-wife kind of man." This specification sets forth an extremely rigid requirement for the marital status of the man who is to be appointed elder in a local church. God declares that this man cannot have more than *one* living wife. This absolutely

precludes one who has been nonscripturally divorced and who is remarried (whose first wife is still living) from filling the church office of "elder/bishop."

A One-Wife Husband

The qualification of "a one-wife husband" does not simply restrict the appointment of those who are openly and actively living as bigamists, or as polygamists, as has often been the interpretation of these words. It restricts the appointment of all men who have ever been married to more than one woman and whose former marriage (marriages) has (have) not been dissolved on scriptural grounds and whose former wife (wives) is (are) still living. Divorce is an institution of man, not of God. Except for two specific grounds carefully specified in God's Word (unfaithfulness and desertion), God does not recognize men's laws of divorce.

When a man marries a woman, in God's sight that marriage is "until death do us part." When the laws of man grant a divorce for grounds other than those spoken of in God's Word and that unscripturally divorced man marries another woman while the first wife is still living, in God's sight that man *is* the possessor of two wives. And he is therefore *not* qualified for the office of elder in the local church. It does not matter whether the previous marriage was *before* or *after* the man became a Christian. Unless the nonscripturally divorced first wife is dead, the man is *not* a "one-wife kind of husband."

Some reject the plain teaching of God's Word on this point, feeling that if a man were divorced and remarried *before* he became a Christian, what he did before his salvation has no bearing on his eligibility to the office of elder after his salvation. They reason that God has forgiven him of his sin and that the slate of his past record has been wiped clean.

It is true that God has washed away the sin of divorce just as He has washed way all other sins of the one who comes to Christ for salvation. The saved one is completely justified from all sin and (as far as the courts of heaven are concerned) is innocent on

all counts. But salvation and justification *do not* wash away the *consequences* of past sin as far as this present life is concerned. One who was a thief or a murderer before he was saved is justified in heaven from these sins when he accepts Christ as his Saviour. But he is *not* justified before the courts of this earth. He *must* pay the penalty for these crimes as he continues to live here. Similarly, the consequences of the remarried man's sin follow him and disqualify him for the office of elder.

Further Implications

There are several other things brought before us by this second-listed qualification for the office of elder/bishop. First, this office can be held only by a man. The statement says that an elder/bishop must be "the husband of one wife." It is impossible for a woman to be "a husband of one wife." God's standards say that the office of elder/bishop is *not* to be bestowed on nor filled by a woman.

Second, the office of elder/bishop is to be occupied by married men only. The instructions say that he is to be "the husband of one wife." This statement requires that the elder *must* have a wife but also limits the number of wives to one the candidate may have.

These requirements for elder dispel once and for all the idea that the unmarried, celibate state is a more holy estate for those who are the called spiritual leaders in the church than is the estate of marriage and normal family life. Nowhere in Scripture does God set down a requirement for His called spiritual leaders to remain unmarried and celibate. The Apostle Paul does indicate that certain prevailing conditions of the Gospel ministry might at times make the situation easier if the traveling evangelist does remain unmarried. See I Corinthians 7:26. However, he never prescribes this as a requirement for any part of the Gospel ministry.

The Elder's Family

"If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly" restricts the

appointment of elders to mature Christian men having an unimpeachable reputation in the church and in the community, who are married to one wife, and who are the fathers of children who are believers. These children must be living examples of their father's ability to rule in his own home.

This significant requirement indicates that one who qualifies for the office of elder/bishop in the local church *must* be a man who has fathered children. The spiritual, moral and disciplinary state of his children must be unimpeachable. The way a man rules his own household is held up for observation to determine whether he has the capability for spiritual rule in the local assembly.

The ways, discipline and lifestyles of a man's children reflect the environment and discipline of the household. If a man who cannot properly train and discipline his own household is given the office of elder in the church, that local church will soon show the same lack of proper discipline and training. In I Timothy 3, Paul wrote. "One who desires the office of bishop" must be "one that ruleth well his own house, *having his children in subjection with all gravity*; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)." This particular qualification is often completely ignored by many of our local churches today. It is possible in a great number of churches to find men acting as elders who have children that are a disgrace to the teaching of God's Word. No wonder there is such a great spiritual drift and a great movement away from separated Christian living in our churches today. Men who do not meet God's qualifications have been handed the reins of rule in those local churches. The spiritual life of the church itself reflects this failure on the part of the ruling elders.

Negative Qualifications

A series of negative qualifications comes next in the list of scriptural requirements for the spiritual overseer. First, an elder must not be self-willed. He is not to be hardheaded and obstinate. He is to be yielded, not to his own will, but to the will of the Lord he has been called to serve. A self-willed elder can only lead the church down the path to destruction.

Next, the candidate must be "not soon angry." An elder cannot be a quick-tempered man. He must exercise control over his temper and conduct himself with due restraint under any and all situations. One is unable to make correct decisions while in a fit of temper. An elder/bishop in a local church who is constantly losing control of himself cannot be depended on to properly carry out the duties of his office.

A Total Abstainer

Also, the candidate for elder/bishop is to be "not given to wine." Notice that both here in Titus and also in I Timothy 3:3 Paul does *not* say "not given to *much* wine." Rather, Paul states that the candidate for bishop is to be "not given to wine."

This indicates that the elder/bishop is to be a total abstainer from the use of intoxicating beverages. The consumption of alcohol, as far as the spiritual overseers of the local church are concerned, is to be only for medicinal purposes — and then caution is to be observed.

The elder/bishop is to be "no striker." That is, he is not to be pugnaeous. He is not to be one who wants to settle all the differences with his fists, who feels that physical violence is the answer to any and all disputes. A public brawler, resorting to physical means to settle differences with opponents, is disqualified from holding this spiritual office.

Not Given to Filthy Lucre

The potential candidate for the office of elder/bishop should "not be given to filthy lucre." That is, he is not to be fond of dishonest gains. He is not to resort to dishonest methods to obtain profit. "Filthy lucre" is not a reference to money in general but rather to unclean money—funds obtained by questionable means.

An inordinate affection for money on the part of any Christian is an outward sign that he is still a materialist at heart, that he is still subject to the old fleshly nature and has not matured in the things of the new nature. Certainly no Christian is to have a fondness for monetary gains accumulated by dishonest means.

Even though the methods used to obtain the gains may be legal according to the law of the land, if those methods are questionable in God's sight, the profits would be classified as "filthy lucre."

Positive Qualifications

The list of positive things present in an elder begins with the words "a lover of hospitality." The elder must be one who delights in seeing to the needs of his fellow man, having a love for those with whom he comes into contact. He must display unselfishness in his dealings with them, be sensitive to suffering and want and be willing to use what means he has to alleviate these things. He must also have a sensitiveness to the spiritual needs of man.

"Fond of that which is good" is more accurately translated "a lover of good men." The elder must be one who desires good and who (in the words Scripture uses to describe Job) "eschews evil." A man's spiritual maturity is reflected in his attitude toward the things that are evil in this life. One who constantly turns toward things that gratify the flesh and turns away from things that gratify the spirit is not a spiritually mature Christian.

The candidate for the office of elder must be "sober," or "soberminded." He must keep his mind clear and functioning during all of his waking hours. Anything that would deprive him of his sobriety in any way must not be consumed or used. A man who uses intoxicants (even those of a very mild nature) could not meet the scriptural requirement for "sobermindedness." The usage of narcotics or drugs rob a man of his sobriety, and therefore such a one would be qualified for the office of elder. Even a man given to self-induced intoxication through frivolity of attitude or through a refusal to maintain a serious attitude concerning serious situations would fail to meet the qualification of sobriety.

"Justness"—A Vital Requirement

An elder must be "just." One holding the office of elder will be called on to administer discipline within the local assembly. The

elder must be "just" as he serves in this capacity. The characteristic of "justness" must be part of the elder's makeup, and something he must have demonstrated in his relationship with his family, his Christian brethren and those men of the world with whom he deals.

The candidate for the office of elder must be "holy." This means he must have an abhorrence for sin and for all that is not of God. The elder must be given to a holiness of life and must have a godlike attitude toward the problem of sin. Paul was not saying that the candidate for elder must have achieved sinless perfection. If this were a qualification for the office, there would be no elders in any church. No man can qualify because no man is "sinlessly perfect." Even though the Christian can never—in this life—be sinlessly perfect, the yielded Christian is not habitually to practice sin.

The candidate for elder must also be "temperate." The Greek word means "self-controlled." That is, a candidate is to be a man who has control over himself. He is not to be given to physical violence. He is not to be a user of alcohol. At all times he is to be yielded to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Holding Fast the Faithful Word

Paul closed his list of qualifications for elder/bishop with the words "holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." In the parallel passage in I Timothy 3, Paul wrote that the elder must be "apt to teach." But here in Titus, he extends the qualification beyond that. An elder must be firmly grounded in the Word of God, he must be sound in doctrine, he must *not* be one to compromise the Word and he must be able to use the Word of God to both exhort the members of the church and to convict those who oppose the things of God's Word. This qualification puts heavy emphasis on the spiritual maturity of an elder. Most definitely he must be well-versed in the Scriptures.

The elder is to realize that he is to use his position to direct believers in their daily lives before God. The Word of God is his

authority for exhorting and admonishing so "that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

To "exhort" is to "move one to action" in a positive way. The New Testament is filled with exhortations. Christians are exhorted to live in a manner pleasing to God, being separated from the sinful practices of the world. They are exhorted to carry out the Great Commission to disciple all nations by preaching the Gospel and by baptizing all who believe. The elder is to be a leader in this.

Exhortation *must* be by "sound doctrine," that it, in accordance with an uncompromised interpretation of God's Word. In this way the elder/bishop plays a vital part in the growth toward spiritual maturity of the Christians he oversees.

Dealing with Gainsayers

The elder must be able to "convince (that is, to convict) the gainsayers." "Gainsayers" are those who speak in opposition to the tenets of Christianity and to the things of God's Word. From the context it appears that at least part of the "gainsayers" Paul had in mind here were those "religionists" who attached themselves to the flock of God but did not truly know Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. These "gainsayers" had no godward spiritual lives and therefore were bondslaves of Satan infiltrating the local assembly. They tried to subvert the teachings of the church and to disrupt the work of the church. The elder must take an uncompromising stand against all such "gainsayers" and by using the Word of God convict them of their error.

The qualifications for the office of elder/bishop are high. They are God's standards. Not every church member meets them. But it is imperative that *all* the qualifications be met before any man is recognized as an elder in any local assembly. The spiritual condition of the local assembly is directly dependent on those who fill the office of elder. A compromising, liberal church will be found to be governed by compromising, liberal and unqualified persons. Churches that elect elders in a yearly

"popularity contest" without regard to meeting these God-ordained qualifications are certain to be on the way to apostasy and compromise.

5.

The Need for Spiritual Leadership

"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." Titus 1:10-14.

The need for qualified elders is brought out by the words that follow Paul's listing of the qualifications for elder/bishop. There are forces at work in local assemblies that threaten to destroy them.

The church at Crete had many new Christians, most of whom were still babes in Christ. These new Christians were easily led astray, both in doctrine and in conduct. Apparently there were both false teachers and misguided teachers in the assembly. The latter knew the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour but had been lifted up in pride. They had let themselves be deceived and led down false paths by the prince of this world.

The false teachers were not true Christians at all. They were just idle professors joined to the ranks of God's people for the purpose of bringing about destruction from within. They were the "tares" the Lord himself had spoken of in the parable of the wheat and the tares. Matthew 13.

The elders Titus was to appoint were to correct the errors in doctrine and Christian conduct of the misguided teachers. To the second group, the "gainsayers," the elders were to convict them of their sin against God and expose them for what they really were.

Disruption of Church Teaching

The expression "insubordinate vain-talkers" seems to refer to those naive, true Christians who had been lifted up in pride and refused to submit themselves to God's authority. Thus they had become "empty-talkers" and disrupters, carrying out Satan's purpose to cause disunity within the local assembly.

Paul also speaks of those who are "mind-deceivers." This seems to refer to non-converted "plants" within the assemblies—"tares" who have been planted among the "wheat." This group of disrupters is directly under the control of Satan, trying to introduce false doctrine, ungodly and immoral conduct, and distrust and hatred among the members of the local assembly.

Paul was not exaggerating the seriousness of the situation when he declared, "For there are many and insubordinate vain-talkers and mind-deceivers, especially those of the circumcision." The disrupters present threatened to bring about a crisis situation. The Cretian assemblies were of mixed cultural and racial backgrounds. Crete was a Greek island, and the basic population Gentile. But Crete also had become the adopted home of many Jews who had been dispersed from their homeland.

Of course, in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, because all are one. But in a practical sense, conversion to Christianity had not wiped away all racial lines. The Jews still had a problem in accepting the fact that God's grace was extended to Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and that all were on an equal basis in Christ. Paul pointed out that the majority of the disrupters were Jewish in background—"they of the circumcision." Jews who had remained rigidly separate (both socially and culturally) from Gentiles before the time of their conversion to Christ suddenly found themselves in the common family of believers made up

largely of Gentiles that they had formerly shunned. This mixed racial situation was something new to the Jews who had been trained from birth to believe that Gentiles were inferior to themselves in every way. For immature Jewish Christians, this was a very difficult situation, one which Satan made a major source of strife.

Prejudice Used by Satan

The phrase, "those of the circumcision," refers to the Jewish members of the local church. The disrupters of unity and the false teachers were mostly from this racial line. Their natural prejudice against Gentiles was a destructive tool that Satan was determined to use as much as possible.

Paul said that it was necessary that the mouths of these disrupters be stopped. Their disorted and inflammatory speech was doing untold damage to the unity of the assembly and the cause of Christ. They had even been able to subvert and overthrow "whole houses." The word "houses" here seems to refer to assemblies of believers.

Paul also indicated that behind these damaging teachings was the hope for monetary gain. The ministry of the "mind-deceivers" was profitable through gifts from those who had had their ears tickled by false words. Paul said they were "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake (that is, for the sake of dishonest gain)."

An Example of Cretian Character

The Apostle Paul referred to the writings of the Cretian prophet Epimendes, who lived around 650 B.C., and who described the Cretians of his day. Apparently these same characteristics plagued the Cretian Christian church, for Paul said, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies (lazy gluttons)."

This ancient Cretian "prophet" spoke disparagingly of the people of his day, saying that they were all incorrigible liars by

nature and that it was impossible for them to speak the truth. Furthermore, they were "evil beasts," having the morals and instincts of wild animals.

The reference to the Cretians as "slow bellies," or "lazy gluttons," reflects on their nature and attitude of life. This prophet was saying that all Cretians liked to eat in a gluttonous way and hated to engage in meaningful labor. They are "always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

We can well imagine the character of the Cretian Christians of Paul's day who were of a Jewish racial background and had the Cretian nature described by Epimendes. They would indeed cause trouble in the church, both by their poor character and by their Gentile prejudice. Paul was not exaggerating when he said, "Their mouths *must* be stopped."

Rebuking the Troublemakers

As the Apostle Paul continued his letter, agreeing with the ancient Cretian prophet Epimendes, he wrote, "This witness is true." Then he emphasized Titus's responsibility to stop all such subversion: "Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith: not giving heed to Jewish fables, and the commandments of men, that turn from the truth."

Titus was not to permit the immature, prideful racists to destroy the Christian assemblies with their false teachings—often taught in the name of Jesus Christ. Titus was to put an end to it by sharply rebuking the "gainsayers." Paul classified his superstitious, humanistic religious teaching as "Jewish fables, and doctrines of men that turn from the truth."

God has established authority in the church to correct and discipline those who are disobedient and in error. There is a popular concept today, even among fundamental, Bible-believing Christians, that there is no such line of authority in the local church. Many church members feel that the only function of the pastor and elders is to teach the Word of God, to preach the Gospel, and to administer the general affairs of the church. The individual conduct of the various members of the

assembly, even when that conduct directly affects the well being of the assembly as a whole, is believed to be outside the jurisdiction of church authority.

This belief is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, delegated authority to Titus, to rebuke and to discipline. This delegated authority was to be shared by the elders. Titus was to "set down in every city." And such authority has been passed on to all of God's elders/bishops in this present age of grace.

The reason for this authority was so that Titus might convict them with severity, that they (the church members who were the "vain-talkers and mind-deceivers") may be sound in the faith, "not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, that they turn from the truth."

Titus was charged with bringing order out of chaos by first "convicting with severity." He was not to handle these errant church members with kid gloves; rather, he was to use the power of God's Word to direct *with severity* these troublemakers — away from their error and wrongdoing into truth and submission.

Idle Profession

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Titus 1:15, 16.

Titus's rebuke to the gainsayers was to include instruction in the truth of God so that the gainsayers could be shifted from their error and moved toward spiritual maturity. Only this would turn those troublemakers who came from Jewish backgrounds away from the "Jewish fables" or "superstitions." Correct teaching would also turn them away from the "commandments of men" (which is actually what the Pharisaical religion of the Jews of that day was—a code of human commandments) into the paths of truth.

Titus was charged with bringing about this kind of change within the ranks of the errant ones in the local churches on the island of Crete. His task was to purify those infant churches.

It is with this background that Paul penned the words of Titus 1:15. This verse has often been quoted out of context and misinterpreted by those who would teach that there are no absolutes in life—good or bad.

To such false teachers, this verse says that all evil is in the mind of the observer. They say that the state of purity of the mind of the observer is the standard against which "good" and "evil" are measured. The logical conclusion of this line of thinking is that nothing is bad in itself. It is only when the impure mind of man sees it as "bad" that an act actually becomes bad. And, likewise, also nothing is "good" in itself. A concept or an act is only "good" when one sees it as good. But this is not the teaching of the Bible.

Titus 1:15 does not say that there are no absolutes of good and evil. If it did say this, then the verse would stand in contradiction to the rest of God's Word. God *does* have absolute standards of good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error. Neither does Titus 1:15 say that good and evil are only in the attitude of the beholder and that what is wrong for one is right for another. Evil is not purified by the lack of evil in the character of one who encounters it.

The True Meaning

The opening part of Titus 1:15 is speaking of those who have been saved by God's power and, thus (from the viewpoint of God) have been *positionally* purified. This does not mean that they have been *practically* purified and have thus become sinlessly perfect. In direct contrast to that thought, the context makes it clear that the "pure" referred to here are those "gainsayers" who are teaching "Jewish fables" and "commandments of men that turn from the truth." They are far from being sinlessly perfect in their daily lives; yet because they have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, they are saved. In a *positional* sense they are purified before God. God has imputed the purity of the Lord Jesus Christ to them. They have had a spiritual birth and so are capable of receiving spiritual truth. Titus has been told to "convict them with severity, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, turning away from the truth."

"Unto the pure all things are pure" means that the saved will receive pure doctrine and will conform to the things of God. Even though in their immaturity and in their pride they have become "gainsayers," with proper spiritual discipline and instruction they can be made to receive and conform to the pure things of God.

Those who are positionally purified but are straying into error in their daily walk are sharply contrasted to those who have never experienced the cleansing of regeneration. Paul continues, "To those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They *profess*

that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Here Paul is describing the "mind-deceivers" he mentioned in Verse 10. These are the unsaved "secret agents" of Satan who have been planted in the local assembly in an attempt to destroy the work of God. Verse 16 states that these men are not saved. They *confess* that they know God; but in their works they deny him. These are the ones Paul said "are defiled and unbelieving" and to whom "not even one thing is pure."

Every person who has never accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour is dead in trespasses and sins. That is the natural condition of all men before God cleanses them and takes away their defilement. This cleansing is received when one puts his entire trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His saving work on the Cross.

The "defiled and unbelieving" are children of this world only and have no capability to receive the pure things of God. To them "not even one thing is pure."

Discernment Is Commanded

Paul points out that these "mind-deceivers" *profess* to know God. They have to profess to know God in order to be accepted as members of the local church. But their profession is not real. Titus and the elders are called on to discern this false profession, and they are given a standard by which such discernment is to be made! "They *profess* that they know God; *but in works they deny him.*"

Are Titus and qualified spiritual leaders called on to judge those within the local congregation? The Lord has said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Matt. 7:1. No, Titus and his church elders are not being called on to judge men. *That is a function of God only.* But they *are* being called on to discern men's *works*. This is exactly what Paul brings up. "They *profess* that they know God; but in *works* they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work found reprobate."

Titus and his elders are called on to discern the works of the "mind-deceivers" and so thereby recognize false professions. Thus the assembly is to be cleared of the impure.

Godly Living in the Home

7.

The Teaching of Sound Doctrine

“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” Titus 2:1-3.

After Paul had instructed Titus as to how he was “to set in order the things that are wanting” in the local Christian assemblies on Crete, he turned to the subject of teaching. “But as for you,” Paul said, “speak thou the things which become (are fitting to) sound doctrine.” It was Titus’s duty as an overseer of the assemblies to be always teaching those things that are in accord with sound doctrine. This instruction is not to be limited only to those doctrines of God that we classify as “theology.” Theology is important and is not to be neglected. The child of God is expected to grow in his knowledge of God; but pastoral teaching is not to be limited to just “theology.” It is the duty and responsibility of the pastor-teacher to instruct the members of the flock of God in the practical things of day-to-day living.

Notice that Titus is to be *constantly* speaking the things fitted to sound teaching. This means he is to spend a great deal of his time in oral teaching. Instruction in godly living is to come through the local church, and the pastor of the local church is charged with prime responsibility for carrying out this function. This is to be his major occupation, not just something that is done when there is nothing better to do.

Sound Teaching Commanded

Paul commands overseers to speak the things fitted to *sound* teaching. The word "sound" means that the things taught must come from the written Word of God. Titus is not to teach "Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." He is to teach the "commandments of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." These commandments are very much a part of God's written Word. As the things that are fitted to sound teaching are constantly spoken, the various members will have their lives and their daily behavior shaped in accordance with the direction of God's Word. God desires His children to live in accord with His own principles, which are set down in His Word.

In the words that follow Paul's initial exhortation, the members of the local church are divided into four categories, arranged according to age and gender. Instructions in godly living are to be given to each of these four categories of church members. Paul's words concerning each of these categories are directed to the particular needs of the group specified.

The Aged Men

Paul's first words concern the "aged men." This designation refers to those men who are mature in physical age. Spiritual age could not have been the prime consideration here because all the Christians on Crete were relatively new converts to Christ. No doubt some Cretian Christians had progressed considerably toward spiritual maturity, but the instructions to be given by Titus are specifically directed to the stage of life represented by men of advanced physical age.

"That the *aged men* be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience" speaks of six characteristics that become Christian men who are referred to as "aged."

Sobriety

The first characteristic listed is "sobriety." This means the "aged men" were to refrain from the use of any and all intoxicating

substances in quantities great enough to take away sobriety. Both alcohol and all other intoxicants are in view here.

All substances, from the mildest intoxicants like tobacco to the hard drugs that are such a problem today, are to be avoided if they produce even the slightest degree of intoxication. This would appear to limit the usage of intoxicants to that minimum consumption that is for medical purposes only. Those intoxicants that have no medicinal benefit should be entirely avoided.

Fairness of Attitude

The aged men are also to be taught to be "grave." The Greek word translated "grave" can also be translated "venerable." This says that the older Christian men are to be serious-minded and fair in their dealings with others. They are not to be biased and obstinate in their approach to daily problems. Rather, they are to demonstrate wisdom and fairness of attitude that is to be expected from their age and experience.

The older Christian men are to be taught to be "temperate." The Greek word used here means "discreet." They are to be careful in their actions and in their daily encounters so that others do not see evil and are therefore caused to stumble because of their conduct. Mature Christians must realize that certain activities and associations can be a cause for stumbling. Thus these men must be taught to be discreet so that they will not bring dishonor to the Lord.

The older men are to be sound in "the faith"—a reference to the beliefs and doctrines of orthodox Christianity. The aged men are to be taught the Word of God, they are to receive it, and they are to be sound in their beliefs. God has exhorted us to study His Word and learn the truths of His revelation to us. The older men of the church are to be well-grounded in sound doctrine.

The aged men are also to be sound "in charity." The word "charity" is translated from the Greek word that refers to total-ly unselfish love, the kind of love exhibited by God himself. It is a love associated with the spiritual nature, and it comes to one

who has been born again to eternal life. The presence of this kind of love is evidence that one has truly been born again and is truly a child of God. The quantity of this godly love for the brethren grows with maturity.

The aged men are also to be sound in "patience." They are exhorted to overcome the impatience of the fleshly nature and to wait patiently on God for all things. Patience, or "long-suffering," is a characteristic of the new nature that belongs to one who has been born again.

Instruction for Mature Women

After his instructions concerning the teaching of the elderly men, Paul turned to the second category, the "aged women." He has written, "The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things."

The "aged women" are the older, more mature women of the local assembly. Titus was to instruct them to conduct themselves and their daily activities in such a way as to stand out as examples, so that all can observe what Christ has done for His own.

The godly older women are to instruct the younger women; therefore, it is necessary that they behave in a godly manner so that the younger women can be taught by the example of the mature sisters' lives. This sets a very high standard of conduct.

Don't Be False Accusers

As he gets down to specifics, Paul lays bare an area that seems to be a weakness of all—both men and women alike—but which sometimes becomes a special weakness of the elderly women. Paul wrote that they were not to be "false accusers." Here Paul used a Greek word that is actually the feminine form of the word "devil." Literally, Paul said the aged women are to be taught not to be "she-devils." The word "devil" comes from a word that means "slanderer" or "accuser."

One of the things Satan does is accuse and slander God's people before God. Satan attempts to act as the prosecutor of the saints. But the Lord Jesus Christ is our advocate, our "Attorney-for-the-Defense." He defends us against the accusations of "the slanderer."

The aged women are not to be slanderers and accusers or gossips. One who is a gossip is also a character assassinator. A sharp tongue is an implement for spiritual murder. James has pointed out in his epistle that the tongue is a deadly weapon. James 3:2-8.

The aged women of the church are to be taught to control their tongues; they are *not* to engage in idle gossip about others. If this is engaged in, then those involved are the devil's helpers, doing the work of the devil himself.

Sobriety

The elderly women are to be instructed that they are "not to be given to much wine." This requirement could be translated "not enslaved to much wine." Christians of all ages and sexes are taught that they are not—even in the slightest degree—to be subject to the intoxicating effects of alcoholic beverages—or to any other intoxicant for that matter. Intoxicants rob one of his sobriety, and over and over again Scripture exhorts God's children to be sober.

It is true that this instruction to the elderly women does say "not given to *much* wine" (in contrast to the qualification for elder which says "not given to wine"). Again, it would appear that the use of alcohol would still be limited to that consumed for medicinal purposes.

Finally, Paul says the "aged women" are to be "teachers of what is right." They are to be so trained in the things of godly living that they themselves become teachers of others. They are to be taught the Word of God as it relates to the things of daily living. Then they themselves are to become "teachers of what is right" to the third group in the local church, the "young women."

Young Women in the Home

"That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Titus 2:4, 5.

To guard against temptation and to avoid the appearance of evil, Paul directed the "aged women" to teach the young women in things that relate to morality and proper Christian relationships. This instruction of Paul to Titus should be taken to heart by those pastors and seminar teachers today who take it upon themselves to teach intimate details of proper Christian marriage relationships to both young men and young women. The "aged women" are to be trained for this area of teaching. Intimate associations in the teaching and counseling functions as it concerns young women members of the church has led to the downfall of more than one pastor. God's Word, if heeded, guards against this danger.

Be Sober

Paul's first instruction for the young women was that the aged women are to "teach the young women to be sober." The word translated "sober" refers to a state of nonintoxication. Young Christian women are not to be users of intoxicants of any kind.

Sobriety is mentioned in some way in association with all the groups that are considered in Paul's letter to Titus, and in several of the instances sobriety is mentioned first. One who desires to please God should be most careful to turn away from the consumption or use of any substance that can produce even the slightest degree of intoxication.

Love for Husbands, Children

The aged women are also to teach the young women to love

Discretion

Young Christian women are to be "discreet." This word means "possessed of or manifesting discernment or good judgment in conduct, especially in speech; prudent; circumspect; reserved; or reticent." Christian young women should show discernment in involving themselves in things that have the appearance of evil or that might actually lead to evil. They must exercise good judgment in all aspects of their conduct, especially watching their speech. They must be prudent, circumspect in attitude and demeanor, and reserved and reticent in all things.

The young women of the church are to be taught to be "chaste." This means that they are to be pure in both design and dress; they are to be pure in thought and action, being free from lewdness and obscenity. Christian young women are to be modest and decent at all times.

This instruction should be particularly heeded today as we see such a radical departure from modesty and decency. Ungodly women are no longer restrained by rules of modesty when they clothe themselves. The rule seems to be to wear as little as possible and to conceal as little as possible. But not so for Christian young women! Modern fads of half-dress and see-through clothing, of sensual conduct and immoral relationships are not to be followed by Christian young women. God's rule is that they are to be "chaste."

Homemaking Is Honorable

The young women of the church are to be taught to be "keepers at home." The expression "keepers at home" contains the thought that the young women are to be "workers at home." The woman's place, according to the divine order established by God, is to be a wife and a mother; and her place of business is the home. She is to keep the home (that is, take care of the home) for her husband and for her children. The young women of the church are to be taught that the home is their place of occupation. In the normal order of things they are not to go out and earn part of the living, thus neglecting their God-ordained job of

keeping the home. Their children are not to be left in day-care centers (Christian or otherwise).

God is not the author of the "women's lib" movement. God created woman for the role of being a wife to her husband and a mother to her children. He assigned her to the home as her place of business. There is enough there to keep her busy and to contribute to the fullness of her life. It was not God's intention that women go out into the world and compete with men. Just as Eve was created as a "helpmeet" for Adam, so the daughters of Eve were created to be "helpmeets" to their husbands. In spite of what man's thought may be today, God's thoughts are still that a woman's place is in the home.

Kindness Should Be Taught

Paul has further written that the Christian young woman is to be "good." The Greek word used here is better translated "kind." Kindness is to characterize her relationship to others. She is not to be harsh and difficult with her husband, her children or those outside her family. She is to be kind, going out of her way to show kindness and feeling for others. She is to be charitable, willing to help others as need arises. Always she is to be careful not to hurt feelings with unkind words and actions. She is to be firm in the discipline of her children; yet she is also to be kind. Kindness is a characteristic of godliness. The young Christian woman is to be taught to cultivate this part of her spiritual nature.

Follow God's Order

The young Christian women are to be "obedient to their own husbands." God has ordained that the man is to be the head of the household. This does not mean that men are superior to women or that women are second-class citizens. It simply means that God has ordered all things in the universe and that He has decided that the husband is to be the one who is the prime authority in the family unit.

Just as a corporation must have a chief officer to whom ultimate authority belongs, so must the Christian family have a

“chief officer” to whom ultimate authority belongs. God has selected the husband as this “chief officer.” There are several places in the New Testament where women are told to submit to this God-appointed order of things, to subordinate themselves to their husbands.

God’s appointment of the husband as head of the household does not, however, give him license for tyranny over the wife and children. The husband is commanded to love his wife (just as Christ loves the church), and that love is to be so deep that the husband is willing to give up his life for his wife (just as Christ did for the church). Where this type of love exists, the husband will not become a tyrant. But God has given him authority over the household, and the young Christian woman is to be taught to yield to her husband’s God-ordained authority.

Paul’s instructions go even beyond that. He has said that the young women are to be in subjection to their own husbands so “that the word of God be not blasphemed.” It is God’s intent that the wife subordinate herself to her husband. Disobedience in this area is an offense to the Word of God. And an offense to the Word of God is blasphemy. So Paul has said that a Christian woman who refuses to subordinate herself to her husband is actually blaspheming. This is a serious charge. Reader beware.

An Example to the Young Men

"Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." Titus 2:6-8.

Paul has considered the older men, the older women and the younger women of the local church. Now he turns his attention to the younger men.

"The younger men" Paul says to Titus, "in like manner exhort to be sober-minded." "Discreet" is a better translation of the Greek word rendered "sober-minded." One who is "discreet" has discernment or good judgment in conduct. He is marked by an air of reserve and is especially careful of his speech. A "discreet" young man would be characterized by silence and moderation.

Set the Pattern

Paul instructed Titus that it was his responsibility to serve as an example for the young Christian men: "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works." Titus was to set the example for the church, but the young men would be especially keen observers of the pattern he set.

This challenge applies to every one of God's leaders. When a minister sets a wrong example, the members of the flock will follow that example. When he fails in the public view, he drags the name of Jesus Christ in the mud.

After Paul exhorted Titus to hold forth a pattern of good works, he went on to list a few specifics. In his teaching, Titus is to be an example of uncorruptness. There is to be no error in the doctrine he taught. He is not to corrupt the Word of God

with the error of man. He is to be sound in his teaching of God's Word. He is not to be a distorter or a compromiser.

Gravity

Titus is to exhibit "gravity," that is, serious-mindedness and a lack of frivolity, in his teaching and preaching the things of God. He is never to appear to take lightly the things of God. Titus, in proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and in teaching Christians to observe the things the Lord commanded, was always to use "sound speech that cannot be condemned." When biblical teaching is sound, no one can oppose it. Titus was told to use "sound speech, which cannot be censured, in order that the one who is an opponent may be ashamed (defeated), not having one evil thing to be saying concerning us." There were "many and insubordinate gainsayers and mind-deceivers" in the local churches of Crete. Many of these were constantly looking for unsoundness in the teachings of a new pastor. But when "Titus's preaching and teaching were sound in the Holy Spirit, these opponents were put to shame; they were defeated. They were completely unable to find fault with the Word as it was expounded.

Instructions to Bondslaves

“Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” Titus 2:9, 10.

Many of the Cretian Christians were not free men. They were bonded to masters, many of whom were not Christians. These saved Cretian bondslaves no doubt knew that the Lord Jesus Christ had said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32.

Did the new freedom they had in Christ make them free from earthly masters? Were Christian bondservants to continue to serve their old masters, or were they freed from earthly encumbrances? How were Christian slaves to regard their bondage to non-Christian masters?

Paul told Titus that the new-found life in Christ *does not* release the bondslave from his earthly obligations to his master. Quite the opposite, the new life in Christ is to make the Christian bondslave a better and more devoted servant to his master. Eternal life in Christ does not free one from earthly bondage but gives him the strength and the grace to serve willingly in that bondage.

In our day, we do not have those who are bondslaves to human masters. But we do have a great number of Christians who are employees of others. They, in effect, have “sold themselves into bondage” for a price for a certain number of hours per day. During those hours, these men and women are in a technical sense “bondslaves” to a master. The obligation that Christian slaves had to their masters in Paul’s day is the obligation Christian employees have to their employers in our day.

Paul went on to say that Christian bondslaves and Christian employees were to give their masters or employers satisfaction, not crossing them, not pilfering, but showing the utmost trustworthiness so that they may embellish the teaching of God our Saviour in all things. The Apostle Paul touches on several specifics here. The Christian employees/slaves are to accomplish their work in a way that is satisfactory to the one paying their wages. The employer is to feel that he has received his money's worth when he pays the agreed-upon wages.

The Christian employee is "not to cross" his employer. That is, he is to have the employer's interest at heart as he goes about his job. He is not to apply himself in such a way that only his own interests—or the interest of some outside agency—is served. In other words, he is to be loyal to his employer and is not secretly to do things that will work against the best interests of the one who pays his wages.

The Christian employee is not to purloin (or to pilfer) from his employer. That is, he is not to steal goods or time that belongs to the one for whom he works. He is to be honest in the way he handles that which belongs to his employer.

Christian bondslaves or employees are to have as their driving motivation the desire to be good witnesses for Christ. Slovenly slaves or employees bring disrepute on our Lord Jesus Christ and His teachings. Slaves and employees are to serve their masters and employers as they serve Christ.

“Looking for That Blessed Hope”

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:11-14.

At the time of our Lord’s earthly ministry, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation” appeared to all men. All who look to Him and His work of the Cross may receive the gift of God’s grace, the gift of salvation. But all who reject Him and His work of the Cross “are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:36.

Paul never confuses salvation and discipleship. When we come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are saved by God’s grace. No human merit is involved in the new birth. God saves us by His grace, totally apart from all works of man.

But the same grace of God that brings salvation also teaches the saved one that he is to walk in a godly way as he continues his pilgrimage in this earth. This is discipleship. A godly walk is the practical result of salvation by God’s grace.

The “spiritual babe” is not a complete and mature spiritual being at the moment of his “new birth.” Rather, he also requires molding and training as he matures toward spiritual adulthood. Paul does not deny the presence of the old nature that causes God’s children to go counter to the teaching of His grace. But he does point out that God’s grace is our teacher, and that this teaching comes through the teachers in the local church.

The Apostle Paul mentions the negative things first. We are to deny "ungodliness" and "worldly lusts." "Ungodliness" is a general term that refers to all things contrary to the nature of God. Sin, in all of its forms, is to be denied in the daily lives of God's children. God is holy, and holiness is an abhorrence to all sin. Any activity or practice that would offend God's holiness is to be avoided by the child of God.

"Worldly lusts" refer to the desires of the flesh. The physical side of man has certain natural desires, but the gratification of them is to be strictly within the limits established by God. "Worldly lusts" are to be denied. Several aspects of this have already been touched on by Paul earlier in this letter.

Avoid the Appearance of Evil

The negative commandment to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts is followed by the positive commandment to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

The word translated "soberly" actually means "discreetly." To live discreetly means to live in a way that avoids even the appearance of evil, avoiding any activity that could be brought into question by anyone observing our lives. Questionable physical habits should be avoided. Being present in questionable places should be avoided. And personal relationships that might lead to questions concerning the Christian's moral habits should be avoided.

The Christian is also taught by God's grace to live "righteously" in this present age. To live righteously is to live in a way that is right in the sight of God. This means the Christian must be completely honest in all things; he must always take the "right" path rather than the path of least resistance. Where rules are involved, he must keep not only the "letter" of the law but the "principle" as well.

The grace of God also teaches the Christian to be "godly." That is, he is to conduct himself in a way that imitates the conduct of God himself. "Godly living" is living in an attitude of

Preach the Whole Word

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." Titus 2:13-15.

Once again Paul declares the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, referring to Him as "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Both designations refer to the same glorious Person. The Greek word translated "and" can also be rendered "even." The expression "our Saviour" refers to none other than Jesus Christ. Paul has also designated Him as "the great God." The One who gave His life on the Cross at Calvary is the God-man, fully God and fully man in one glorious Person. He is "the great God *even* our Saviour."

As he mentioned the name of "the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ," Paul felt led to go on and declare the facts of the Gospel. He declared God's great purpose in this present age for the church, the "called-out assembly" of those whom God is redeeming from every people and nation.

Paul went on to say that Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The Christian is "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts" and "to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present age." The reason is that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, so that He might redeem us and purify us as "a peculiar people zealous of good works."

Christians are to be "zealous of good works." That is, they are to be actively pursuing works of righteousness that please God. Thus Paul stressed to Titus that local church members are to be

instructed in godly living. This godly living demonstrates our love for the One "who gave himself for us."

In closing this chapter, Paul charged Titus—and all pastor-teachers down through the centuries: "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee."

Paul anticipated the time when many would deny the authority of the pastor to teach the things of godly living. Therefore, he declared here that the authority to teach and rebuke *does* belong to the teachers of the local assemblies. So Paul added, "let no man despise thee." Neither Titus nor any other pastor after him is to be intimidated in this work of God. The commission is to "declare all the counsel of God." Acts 20:27.

Godly Living in the World

13.

Civil Obedience

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.” Titus 3:1,2.

Paul continues by reminding Titus that Christians are to be obedient to the civil laws and civil officials of the political system under which they live.

“Principalities and powers” would refer in our day to the national, state, county, and city governments. Christians are also “to obey magistrates.” That is, they are to be obedient to those officials who exercise civil authority over the people of a given political subdivision. Although the children of God are citizens of heaven, that does not remove them from the immediate authority of the civil governments of this earth. Civil governments and civil authorities *are* to be obeyed. Earthly governments are God-ordained. The Lord himself taught his disciples to “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, but unto God the things which are God’s.” Matt. 22:21. Christians are to be good citizens, paying their taxes and being obedient to government authority in all other ways.

Civil Disobedience

“Civil disobedience” (the idea that it is all right to disobey a law that one feels is not a good law) directly opposes the

teachings of Scripture. "Civil disobedience" in the name of Christianity is a farce. Christians are to be obedient to all civil law except where a specific law clearly contradicts a higher law of God. And laws that impose taxes or regulate the public conduct of citizens are not in opposition to the higher law of God.

Paul elsewhere declared that the citizenship of the Christian is in heaven and that he is to avail himself of the blessings of that citizenship. But Paul himself more than once pointed out that he was also a citizen of Rome. He called on the rights and privileges of that citizenship—and subjected himself to the obligations of it—repeatedly as he carried out his work of the ministry. He made it clear that the heavenly citizenship of God's children *does not* put them beyond the law of the land. They are commanded "to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." Those who disobey civil law are subject to the penalty of that law. Disobedience to civil law—or to a civil magistrate of the law—is disobedience to God.

"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men" are the general rules for the life of the Christian as he interacts with the people of the world. The Christian is to be obedient to civil authority, subjecting himself to both the letter and the principle of the civil law. He must "be ready to every good work." That is, he must be prepared to do what is right and what demonstrates his complete submission to civil law and authority at all times. He must be prepared to do good in every situation he encounters.

That is part of the Christian's testimony to the men and women of the world. The unsaved are watching the lives and activities of those who profess to know Christ as personal Saviour. The reality of one's Christian profession is demonstrated in his day-to-day situations. The Christian must be prepared to react in a godlike way in every circumstance, doing good even though the situation may seem to be designed for evil.

Paul lists other specifics Christians are to be taught relating to godly living in this present world. They are "to speak evil of no man," destroying the reputations and characters of fellow human beings. Paul previously had directed this instruction specifically to the "aged women" in the church. They were to be taught not to be "false accusers." But this rule of conduct does not apply just to the "aged women." All Christians are to refrain from being "false accusers." Neither are we to be gossips. Even if an incident is true, we are not to repeat a story that degrades the one the story concerns. Many Christians need to be reminded of this!

The Christian is "to be no brawler." This means he is not to be contentious. He is not to go around with a chip on his shoulder ready to settle every difference with his fists or with some other form of physical violence. This instruction was touched on previously in Paul's list of qualifications for elder. A "bishop" was to be "no striker," "no brawler," "not a contentious man." That which characterizes the elder/bishop should also characterize the other members of the local congregation. Christians are "to be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."

A New Nature

The natural man is basically selfish. The motivation behind most of his actions is selfishness. The old sin nature, still present in the one who has turned to the Lord Jesus Christ, would have the Christian also to be motivated by selfishness. At the time of his new birth, his regeneration, the Christian has received a new spiritual nature. That new nature is not motivated like the old nature. Rather, the new nature is motivated by love: love towards God and love towards God's creatures. That new nature should rule in the life of the one who belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian is exhorted to "crucify the old man." That exhortation is for the child of God to put down the old nature and to live in the power of the new nature. When the new nature rules in the life of the child of God, he is able to abstain from being contentious and to exhibit meekness to all men.

It should be pointed out that "meekness" is not equivalent to "weakness." The dictionary defines "meek" as "gentle, submissive, mild of temper, humble, patient." These characteristics were possessed by the Lord himself. We are told that He was "meek and lowly." Matt. 11:29.

The Lord was *meek*, but He was not *weak*. He exhibited those qualities of meekness that sprang from the love of God that was in His nature. Yet He was not weak. He drove the money-changers from the temple. He, on more than one occasion, spoke out in righteous anger against sin and oppression. He had the strength to go to the Cross to die as our Substitute.

Paul tells Christians they are to be Christlike, exhibit love, kindness, and meekness toward the people of the world.

14.

That Which We Were

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Titus 3:3.

Paul continues by reminding Titus that Christians are different from the unsaved in the world because of the grace of God. The power of God that saves is the same power that transforms. Those who know Christ as personal Saviour, who have been released from the bondage of sin, were once just as the unsaved of the world with whom they have daily contact. But the grace of God has come to release men from the bondage of sin by giving them a new spiritual nature and the desire to live in a way pleasing to God. This is the walk under the direction of the new nature.

An expanded translation of these inspired words of Paul reads: "For we were at one time also foolish, non-persuasible, deceived, rendering a slave's obedience to various passionate

cravings and pleasures, in malice and envy passing the time, detestable, hating one another." The former conditions described here are just the opposite of that present condition to which Titus was to insist his church members "strive for." Not a very pretty picture is painted by these words; nevertheless, it is an accurate picture. It is a picture that describes man in his fallen state. It is a picture of us as we were before the grace of God appeared unto us.

Foolish

Paul told Titus that in those days before the grace of God transformed us we were "foolish." The word "foolish" means "without intelligence." The psalmist said, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalm 14:1) and that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111:10.

Scripture makes it clear that those who are the natural children of Satan *are* fools. They are totally lacking true wisdom. Satan was a liar from the beginning, and the children of the world follow after a system of false wisdom built on Satan's lies. All the unsaved follow after that false wisdom, and this—by definition—makes them foolish. But God's grace through Jesus Christ enables us to escape the foolishness of the world and to come to true wisdom, which is the knowledge of the true and living God.

While we were "foolish" in our natural state, we were also—just as the unsaved people of the world today are—"deceived." We were stubborn and disobedient, not willing to even consider that we were walking in the wrong way, that we were estranged from God and His laws. We were "puffed up" with vanity.

Enslaved to Lust and Envy

In our natural estate, we were slaves of Satan and slaves of the flesh. When Adam turned his allegiance from God to Satan in the Garden of Eden, he sold himself and us, his descendants, into bondage to Satan. Adam became a slave to various passionate cravings and pleasures, and we are his heirs to these things.

Before God's grace transformed us, we lived "in malice and envy." "Malice" is the working of evil against our fellowman. It is the opposite of "brotherly love," the attribute that comes from God.

Destiny of Men

Unsaved men do not see themselves as God sees them. They do not admit that it is selfishness, hate and envy that motivate their lives. Natural man likes to believe that he is "naturally good" and that his "natural goodness" will guarantee him eternal life. But God has said that natural man is a fool and destined to an eternity in hell.

Paul has made it clear that godly living is for the saved. Godly living is not the way of salvation, but we live godly because we *are* saved and because we desire to please God our Father.

15.

Our Salvation

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus 3:4-7.

This is one of the most comprehensive statements of the doctrine of salvation found in all Scripture. Paul tells how we are saved; he mentions the miracles that take place at the time of salvation; and he explains what salvation means to us.

The earlier part of Paul's letter to Titus has been devoted to exhorting Christians to turn from the sinful practices of this world and to live as proper representatives of the Lord Jesus

Christ. But these words make it clear that it is not "good works" that save; we are saved by God's grace, through His mercy and love.

The "kindness and love of God" appear to the individual when the Gospel is presented and the individual accepts it and applies it to himself, realizing that he is a sinner, alienated from God, and lost in trespasses and sin. When he sees that his only means of salvation is through Christ and His work of the Cross and applies that work to himself, then "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man" has appeared to him and God saved him. It is not by "deeds of uprightness" but according to God's mercy that we are saved.

The unsaved man is completely incapable of doing works of righteousness. He is motivated by selfishness and works from that source are not judged of God as "works of righteousness." Since we have no works of merit, if God is to save us, it has to be "according to His mercy" and by His grace.

Salvation by Grace Alone

One who reads Paul's letter to Titus should never have any question as to whether the sinner is saved by his own works or by God's grace. The Apostle to the Gentiles has positively declared that it was *not* by works of righteousness but "according to His (God's) mercy He (God) saved us." Notice that Paul has not said that it was *through means* of God's mercy that He saved us, but rather it was "according to His mercy that He saved us." It is not God's mercy that saves. Salvation comes by God's grace. But it *was* God's mercy upon the lost sinners of the world that caused Him to open the *way* of salvation. Because of the work of the Son of God on the Cross, God's mercy has opened the way for the application of His grace.

"The washing of regeneration" occurs when sinners turn to the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance and are washed in the shed blood of the Lord. This is the one-time-only bath of regeneration. In the upper room, the Lord said to His disciples, after He had washed their feet, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash

his feet, but is clean every whit." John 13:10. Those who have received the initial bath of regeneration do not ever need to have that bath again. The washing of regeneration cleanses wholly. Those who have had the bath of regeneration only need to have their feet cleaned.

Our feet walk in this world. When we fail the Lord, our feet become spiritually dirty. Then we need to go to Him in confession so that He can wash our feet and renew our fellowship. But we don't need another bath of regeneration.

The Abundance of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit's special ministry in the earth was opened by Christ's work on the Cross. This same Holy Spirit rested on the Prophets Elijah and Elisha, but there was a "measure" of the Holy Spirit that was poured out in Old Testament days. For Christians of this present age, however, He is "poured out abundantly." The word "abundantly" means "without measure." Thus we have the "renewing of the Holy Spirit whom He bestowed upon us abundantly through our Saviour Jesus Christ."

God has poured out His spirit abundantly on the saved of this age in order that, "being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Justification

When one is "justified," his record of offenses—as far as heavenly justice is concerned—is forever cleared. No charge can ever be brought against God's elect because justice has already been satisfied. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all the sins of that one who is justified. Because the penalty has been paid, justice has been served. All record of his sins—past, present and future—has been wiped away. The prosecutor's books are closed, and no charge can be brought against the justified Christian.

Those who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour are not only declared "not guilty" of all transgressions

but are also made heirs to the heavenly riches that belong to their Father in heaven. The work of God the Holy Spirit in regeneration and renewal of the repentant sinner is accomplished so that he might become an heir of his Father in heaven, a part of which is the gift of eternal life.

16.

Maintain Good Works; Avoid Contentions

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Titus 3:8-11.

"This is a faithful saying" would be better translated "Trustworthy is the word." The word translated "saying" is the Greek word *logos*, which means "word." It is the same Greek word John used when he wrote, "In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was with God, and the *Word* was God." John 1:1. John uses *logos* as a designation for the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who "became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14.

No doubt Paul had both the living Word and the written Word in mind as he finished this comprehensive statement concerning our salvation by grace alone with the statement "Faithful is the *Word*."

Profitable Truths

"These things" are the truths of God's Word that Paul summed up in Titus 2:11-15. They concern everything from the doctrine of salvation up through those specifics related to a godly walk in this present world. Paul had instructed Titus how the local church is responsible for teaching godly living in the church, the home and the world. He also told Titus that it was his responsibility to speak those things to the congregation and to exhort them to live according to the commandments of Jesus Christ. Titus was to rebuke those who did not conform to these commandments.

Foolish Questions

In contrast to the things that are "good and profitable unto men" are things that are to be avoided. This latter category includes those things that are "unprofitable and vain."

Verse 9 can be paraphrased as follows: "But stupid questions, genealogies, wranglings and contentions about laws turn away from and shun, for they are profitless and futile." Man's old nature is contentious, and Satan loves to stir up that old nature. By so doing, he can get the minds of God's people off important things and can occupy those captured minds with trivia. When the mind has been diverted into "empty and vain" paths, the work of the Lord comes to a halt. Divisions are caused among God's people, and they suddenly find themselves bickering among themselves rather than displaying the unity of brotherhood and purpose that is supposed to characterize Christ's body, the church.

These words refer to those problems in the local assembly that Paul mentioned in Chapter 1. A large part of the trouble and disunity Paul described in these Cretian assemblies sprang from the very errors he now enumerates. The "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers" had involved the members of the church in "foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law." This diverted true Christians (those who "had believed in God") from the Word of God and those things that were profitable.

"Foolish questions" are those idle speculations about things that have no real relationship to the things of God yet (on the surface) appear to be "religious" in nature. Men are prone to set their minds on such "foolish questions." They then spend a great deal of time and energy in contending for their position with others who similarly have been diverted from "profitable things" by the same "foolish questions." This is especially true among those who profess to be "learned theologians," those who supposedly think on a higher plane than the "laymen" of the church.

Genealogies

Titus was also told to avoid "genealogies." This does not mean Titus was to avoid those Scriptures which record the genealogies of God's people. Rather, Titus was to avoid genealogies as they relate to the membership of his congregations. Genealogies (bloodlines) meant a great deal to those of Jewish background. But many of them failed to see that there was no distinction of bloodlines in the church. Scripture firmly declares that *"there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye all are one in Christ Jesus."* Gal. 3:28. It is the new birth that makes one a child of God, not the birth that brought him into this world as a son of Adam.

Strivings About the Law

The Christian is not called on to keep the Law of Moses. Paul elsewhere stated that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." Gal. 3:24. The Lord Jesus Christ came to fulfill the law. We are not saved by the law, and we are not sustained by the law. Contentions over the fine points of the law (as had been the practice of the Scribes and Pharisees) is not to be promoted in the local church. This only leads to schisms and to disruption of the real work and purpose of the local assembly.

Instruction About Heretics

Titus was given instructions concerning those in the church who were caught up in false and perverted teachings and

persisted in disrupting the assembly by their perverted doctrine. Concerning these heretics, Paul wrote that those who cause divisions, after one or two admonitions, were to be rejected because they were of perverted character; and because of their constant sinning, they were self-condemned.

The word "heretic" refers to one who has espoused some false doctrine and determinedly persists in this teaching so that it causes contentions within the assembly. Such a contentious person in the church is a real problem. "His mouth must be stopped." However, there is a possibility that he may be turned from his headstrong path and brought back to correct doctrine, where he can once again become an asset to the Lord.

Titus was charged by Paul to attempt to bring about such changes. But he was not to continue to make such efforts for an unlimited period of time. "After one or two admonitions" a heretic is to be "rejected." So if there was no change after the second admonition, Titus was to realize that the heresy went deeper than would appear by casual observation. Such a character has been perverted by Satan and because of his state of sin, he is to be put outside the fellowship of the saints.

Closing Thoughts

"When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen."
Titus 3:12-15.

Paul closes his letter to Titus with some personal notes. He wrote, "When I shall send Artemas to you or Tychicus, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have determined there to spend the winter." We have no way of knowing what time of the year this letter was written, and we have no way of knowing what time of the year it was delivered to Titus. These words indicate that Paul was anticipating sending either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete to relieve Titus of his pastoral ministry there.

Titus had been left on the island of Crete to "set in order those things which were lacking." However, Titus's assignment to Crete was not a lifetime assignment. God had plans to move him on to another ministry when his work on Crete had been completed. A relief pastor was to be sent to take over the work that Titus was currently assigned. Apparently Paul had narrowed down the choice to two possible candidates, but at the time of this writing God had not yet given him the final selection. We can see that Paul was not only continuing his missionary work but that he was also God's assigned administrator to the local Gentile assemblies.

When Titus's relief arrived, whether Artemas or Tychicus, Titus was to make every effort to go to Paul. The apostle anticipated being at Nicopolis, "For there I have determined to spend the winter." Apparently Paul expected to send Titus's relief in a few months because the winter that was to be spent in

Nicopolis was most likely the same one that was approaching at the time this epistle was written.

Zenas (whom Paul designates as "the lawyer," probably because he was an expert in Jewish law despite his Greek name) and Apollos (apparently the great orator who became a Christian missionary after his encounter with Aquila and Priscilla) were already on their way to Crete. Titus was requested to see that "not even one thing (apparently physical needs are in view) was to be lacking in them." Perhaps Zenas and Apollos were coming to Crete in order to carry on a missionary campaign to add new Christians to the local assemblies there. Titus and his congregations were being asked to act as their hosts and see to their needs.

Then, as a final word of instruction, Paul wrote, "And let those who are ours learn to busy themselves in good works for necessary uses in order that they not be unfruitful." "Those who are ours" would refer to Christians. God's people are not to be idle. They are to "busy themselves in good works" (works that glorify God) earning their own necessities and carrying on a testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a part of their testimony.

Paul closes his letter with words of Christian fellowship. "All those with me send greetings to you. Greet those who are fond of us in the faith. The grace be with you. Amen."

A Summary of the Epistle

The entire epistle is a letter of practical instruction to the young pastor Paul left on the island of Crete. Paul had dealt with the broad subject of godly living. He brought out the pastor's responsibility for teaching the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ, which deal with the Christian's walk in this life. Qualifications for "elder/bishop" are stated in detail, and specific instructions on teaching godly living and principles of the Christian faith are given. The apostle also dealt with discipline in the local church.

A careful look at this book shows how far some, who profess

to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, have strayed from the teaching given this first-century pastor and those under his care. May every spirit-filled believer in our day read these words, with their convicting power, and pray that the Holy Spirit will impart the divine message to each yielded heart.

The End