SAVED *for* GOOD

A Study in Titus



NORTHEAST
BIBLE CHURCH

Saved for Good: A Study in Titus

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This study guide was created to accompany the *Saved for Good* message series and is intended to encourage deeper engagement with the book of Titus through personal and group study.

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INTRODUCTION



"The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people."
– Titus 3:8

"God does not need your good works,
but your neighbor does."
– Martin Luther

Every parent has experienced that moment when their child chooses to follow the crowd instead of their conscience. We all long to see our children lead instead of follow, to influence their world for good instead of simply going along with it. And when it comes to spiritual parenting, that desire is no different.

The New Testament book of Titus offers us a glimpse into God's heart for His people and His desire for us to live as a holy and faithful presence in the world. Written by the Apostle Paul to Titus, this letter brings formation and faithful presence together, urging us to be formed by the truth of the Gospel *and* faithfully devoted to doing good toward others (Titus 3:14). Simply put, our beliefs cannot be divorced from our behaviors; we must live out our faith through our presence.

The church in Crete, however, was failing to live into this calling. Amid a distinctly unchristian culture, the church in Crete had adopted the habits and behaviors of the world. They professed to know God, but their lives showed no discernible difference from those of their neighbors. They were not holding tightly to the truth of the Gospel, nor were they living as a faithful presence among the people. Instead of drawing people to the Gospel, they were driving people away with their conduct and causing division in the church (Titus 1:11, 3:10).

It is in this context that Paul leaves Titus on Crete with the charge to *"set in order what remains"* (Titus 1:5). His job is to raise up

leaders who were faithful to the Gospel, committed to the work of discipleship, faithfully passing on the doctrines of the faith (Titus 2:10), and teaching them to be "zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14). Paul desperately wanted the church in Crete to know that they had been saved for good, to be partners with God in the work of the Gospel. To do that, they needed to love the Gospel more than they loved the world. They needed to stand out instead of blending in.

Sadly, the context of Titus isn't unique to the first-century Church. We see the same struggle in the Church today: Christians who profess the truth of the Gospel with their mouths but behave just like the world in their day-to-day living. Consequently, instead of being a force for Gospel-driven good in the world, our presence makes little difference in the lives of our neighbors.

God's desire is that the Church would have an impact on the world. Our calling is not to hide from the world, nor blend into it, but instead devote ourselves to sound doctrine (Titus 2:1) *and* to good works (Titus 3:14), so that we might introduce the lost and broken to Jesus. It is a call to embrace the truth of the Gospel not just with our lips but with our very lives, living as a faithful presence in the midst of the public square.

Titus reminds us that the Gospel is not simply a message of individual salvation but also an invitation into the redemptive work that God is doing in the world. In a culture driven by empty pleasures, the Church is called to offer a compelling alternative: to reveal the life,



hope, joy, and peace that can be found only in Jesus. Together, we are called to live as a faithful presence in the world, being zealous and ready for every good work (Titus 2:14, 3:1-2).

The Church is called to be a faithful presence in the midst of a watching world so they might see our good works and give glory to our Father in Heaven (Matt. 5:6). Changed by the Gospel of grace, our lives should look distinctly different. We were rescued by God not so that we could hide out with the truth, but instead so that we might devote ourselves to good works so as to help in cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful (Titus 3:14). This was God's intention for His people. But the question Titus forces us to consider is this: if the Church were to disappear today, would anyone in our city even notice? Does our presence make any difference in the lives of our neighbors? And if not, why not?



BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK

Author & Audience. The book of Titus was written by the Apostle Paul to one of his closest and most trusted ministry partners, Titus. Although little is known about him, Paul's epistles mention Titus thirteen times, highlighting his faithfulness and importance. According to Galatians 2:1–3, Paul brought Titus and Barnabas to Jerusalem to defend his ministry to the Gentiles, making Titus one of Paul's earliest ministry companions. His partnership with Paul also preceded Timothy and lasted beyond Barnabas, making Titus one of Paul's longest partners in the Gospel.

Titus worked with Paul in Ephesus during his third missionary journey and then went to Corinth, where he helped correct the church and take up a relief offering for the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:16-24).

The Culture of Crete. First century Crete was an island deeply marked by its roots in Greek mythology. According to Greek mythology, Crete was the birthplace of Zeus, and many other gods in the Greek pantheon resided there. These "gods", though revered, had deeply human flaws: deceiving and warring against one another while indulging in all kinds of immorality. Consequently, these behaviors were embraced by the culture.

Cretans were known for their violence and were frequently commissioned by Rome as paid mercenaries to help fight their wars. They were indulgent and self-serving. They were deceitful and manipulative. So well-known were these facts that Paul even references a popular saying about the Cretans in the book of Titus, calling them "liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12). Such was the culture of Crete. Yet, at some point, the Gospel had taken root in Crete and churches had been planted.

This led Paul to direct Titus to "put what remained into order" (Titus 1:5); to ensure that the Church in Crete looked more like Christ than it did culture; and to ensure that they also faithfully devoted themselves to good works rather than just learning the truths of Christ in an academic way.

Structure of the Book. Titus can be loosely broken down into three main movements, sandwiched between an introduction and conclusion.

1:1-4 *Introduction*

1:5-16 *How leaders impact the culture by their lives and example*

2:1-15 *How doctrine leads to good works inside the church*

3:1-11 *How doctrine leads to good works outside the church*

3:12-15 *Final Greeting and Instruction*

Themes. As we read the book of Titus together, we will encounter several key themes that shape the message of this book:



Truth & Doctrine. Paul repeatedly emphasizes the importance of "sound doctrine" as the foundation for godly living in the book of Titus (see 1:9; 2:1, 10). In a culture marked by false teaching and moral ambiguity, Paul charges Titus to ensure that the church and its leaders are firmly grounded in the truth. Right doctrine is not merely intellectual; it shapes behavior, strengthens our witness, and guards the Church against division.

This connection between belief and behavior reflects a broader New Testament theme where sound teaching is essential not only for spiritual maturity but also for missional living (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 1 Thess. 4:12). The truth of the Gospel should transform us and transform the world around us as we live out its teachings in the public square.



Good Works. As one of the book's central themes, Paul calls our attention to good works six times in this short letter. Biblically speaking, good works are never a means of earning salvation (Titus 3:5); they are always the natural result of God's saving grace in our lives (Titus 3:8). Once again, this connection between belief and behavior reflects a broader New Testament teaching: true faith always results in action (Matt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10; James 2:17). In short,

good works are the result of doctrine rightly applied, and they are a central part of the church's mission to embody the Gospel for the good of the world.



A Communal vs. an Individual Gospel. Titus is a radically communal book. In it, Paul emphasizes the communal nature of our calling. We are brought into a family and called to live communally as a faithful presence in the world—allowing our collective lives, worship, and compassion to reveal God's Kingdom embodied in this new community. We change the world together as we pursue Jesus fully and love others deeply as His body in the midst of a local community.



Christian Leadership. Titus offers us a peek into what leadership should look like in the Church. Paul outlines the qualifications for elders and emphasizes the importance of sound doctrine and godly living. Leaders are to shepherd God's people, protecting them from error (Titus 1:9) and equipping them for living as a faithful presence in the world (Titus 2:10).

Both in the book of Titus as well as throughout the rest of the New Testament, we see that leadership is not about authority for its own sake, but rather about servant-hearted stewardship. Leaders are called to lay down their lives for the church and ensure that the truth of the Gospel advances the Kingdom through the lives of its members.

Place in the New Testament Canon. Titus is the last of three "pastoral epistles" in the New Testament. The word "epistle" simply means "letter" or "message." Although there are twenty-one epistles in the New Testament, only three are considered pastoral epistles—letters written by Paul to a young pastor in order to encourage and equip him in his ministry to the church. Although these epistles read like a letter written to a particular pastor (in this case, Titus), it is clear that Paul fully intended this letter to be shared with the church. In this way, Paul was not simply writing to coach Titus individually but also to challenge and admonish the church corporately.

GOSPELS

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

HISTORY

Acts

THE LETTERS

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
TITUS
Philemon
Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude

PROPHECY

Revelation



Scan for a video with more background info on the book of Titus.

1

TRUTH THAT LEADS TO GODLINESS

Titus 1:1-4



We are all products of our environment. Whether it is the places where we have lived or the people we have lived with, each of us has been shaped by family and friends, environment and experience. We are influenced by our environment from the way we speak and think, the things we believe about ourselves and others, and where we're from.

As we come into the book of Titus, we come face-to-face with a group of Christians who have been influenced by their environment. The first few verses of Titus not only introduce us to the author of the letter (Paul) and its recipient (Titus), but they also introduce us to the cultural issues influencing the church in Crete.

Though now under Roman control, Crete had been deeply influenced by its Greek roots. Greek mythology held that Crete was the birthplace of Zeus, a god known not just for his power but for his cunning. Zeus was a womanizer, who lied to get what he wanted and was underhanded in his dealings with others. Consequently, the island had a long-standing reputation for loose living and lying tongues; so much so that Paul himself would go on to reference one of their own poets who said: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12).

This is the cultural climate for which Paul writes to Titus and the church in Crete, specifying that he writes for the sake of "their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness" (Titus 1:1). There is no mistaking Paul's aim: in a culture driven by distortion, Paul wants the church to be anchored to the truth and not just paying lip service to the Gospel. He knows the truth should cause them to live in godliness. Instead of walking in the footsteps of Zeus, Paul calls the church to pursue the God "who never lies" (Titus 1:2).

Everything in Paul's opening words calls us to live in contrast to our culture. Where the world calls us to be self-indulgent, the Gospel calls us to be servants (v. 1). Where the world invites us to revel in the here and now, the Gospel calls us to live in light of eternity (v. 2). And where the world tempts us to think only of ourselves, the Gospel invites us into a family (v. 4). For Paul, the Gospel is more than a message to be believed: it is a life-changing truth that should reshape how we live, calling us to stand out from the world instead of blending into it.

The Gospel calls us to godliness. Let us walk in that calling.

BEGIN

Share something that you thought was "normal" until you grew up, got married or moved away? For example: you may have grown up calling soda "pop" or "coke." Or you may have grown up with a certain family tradition that you now realize nobody else had. Share your experience.

READ

Read Titus 1:1-4. Pay close attention to key words, themes, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. How does Paul describe himself in verse 1? What does this tell us about the role we play to those around us?

2. What do you think Paul means by "truth which accords with godliness" in verse 1? How does this relate to Christian living?

3. How would you define "godliness"? How is it different than holiness?

4. How does Paul's description of God in verse 2 impact your understanding of God's character? How does it impact your understanding of the reliability of Scripture?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 1:1-4 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes:

Truth and the Moral Perfection of God. The Scriptures reveal that, as the Creator of all things, God is the source and the standard for truth. Being holy and morally perfect in every way, God doesn't just speak the truth: He is truth. Because He is holy in nature and character, it is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18). His Word is infallible and His promises reliable (Ps. 33:4; Isa. 55:11; Heb. 10:23). Because God is truth, we as His people are to walk in the truth. We must not lie or join in with speculation; we must walk as people who are honest, trustworthy, and faithful to our God of truth.

Truth that Leads to Godliness. The Gospel is more than just a truth we are called to believe; the Gospel demands change in who we are and how we live. Paul's argument in the book of Titus is that a right belief about God should lead to a change in our behavior. Our lives should look different because of what we believe. As believers, we are called to "adorn" ourselves

with the truth (Titus 2:10) and live in a radically different way as a result, doing good so that the world might see and glorify God through us (Matt. 5:16). It is orthodoxy (right belief) and orthopraxy (right behavior) coming together in the lives of those who have committed themselves fully to Jesus.

REFLECT & APPLY

1. Where do you still struggle with godliness in the Christian life? Find a verse from Scripture related to this area and write it below.[1] Commit to memorizing that verse this week as you seek to walk in the truth.

2. Paul writes to Titus as "my true child in a common faith" (Titus 1:4). How has Christian community helped you walk in the truth? What can you do this week to ensure that you are not walking alone?

[1] If you need help finding a verse, try **openbible.info/topics**

2

PUT IT IN ORDER

Titus 1:5-9

The people we choose to follow can have a profound impact on the things that we do and the people we become. Just ask Luis. Raised on the southside of Los Angeles, Luis watched his mom work three jobs just to support the family. With no father in the picture and his mother always at work, Luis grew up on the streets. His friends were his family, and by the age of fourteen, Luis had been introduced to crystal meth by this "family."

For the next sixteen years, Luis' life would be defined by addiction and run-in's with the law until, one night, he sought shelter at the Union Gospel Mission. He entered a men's recovery program which, in turn, introduced him to Jesus and to a whole new family that would forever change his life. Luis is living proof: the people we follow can have a profound impact on the people we become.



Knowing that truth, Paul leaves Titus in Crete with a very simple charge: to "put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town" (Titus 1:5). By following their culture, the church in Crete had strayed from the Gospel. They were following their passions and failing to live as a faithful presence where God had placed them. The solution was to offer the church a better influence, leaders who were trustworthy and able to instruct the church in sound doctrine (v. 9). Paul knew that godly leadership mattered and that the quality of these leaders would determine the character of the church.

In these five short verses, Paul defines for us both the character and the calling of an elder. In contrast to the sexualized culture of Crete, these elders were to be "above reproach" and "not open to the charge of debauchery" (v. 6). In contrast to the greed and violence, the elders were to stand apart, not to be arrogant or quick-tempered or violent or greedy for gain (v. 7). In contrast to a culture that loved self, the elders were called to be lovers of good and self-

controlled (v. 8). And in contrast to a culture driven by every whim and desire, these leaders were to "hold firm to the trustworthy word" (v. 9).

God's call to His people is to stand apart and "be holy as I am holy" (Lev. 20:26; 1 Pet. 1:16). Paul's hope was that these leaders would help the church do just that. But far more than just standing apart from the world, these leaders were to be deeply rooted in sound doctrine. Our anchor point is the Gospel, and it is not enough just to believe it. We must know the Gospel deeply for ourselves and have leaders who are able to instruct us and correct us in it faithfully.

Who we follow shapes who we become. This is why godly leadership in the church is so essential.

BEGIN

Talk about a leader who profoundly shaped you because of the way that they conducted themselves. What made them stand out and how did their example influence your life?

READ

Read Titus 1:5-9. Pay close attention to key words, themes, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. What does the term "above reproach" mean? Is Paul expecting an elder to be sinless? If not, how would you describe the standard?

2. Read Acts 20:28. How does this verse help you understand the role of an "overseer" (v. 7)? What does it mean to "shepherd" the flock?

3. Define "debauchery." Why do you think God cares so much about our sexual purity as believers?

4. What do you think is meant by "sound doctrine" (v. 9)? Is this a standard only to be held only by the leaders of a church or by the whole church?

5. What are the potential consequences of appointing unqualified leaders within the church? How might this impact the health and growth of a church?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 1:5-9 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

Elders as Leaders. From Moses to the Prophets to the Apostles, God has always used qualified leaders to shepherd His people. New Testament teaching calls these leaders "elders," and the qualifications for the role are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Elders are called to provide leadership and oversight to the church; to give spiritual guidance and care to the body; to govern the teaching and preaching of God's Word, ensuring its integrity and protecting against heresy; and to resolve conflict and address sin in the church while serving as examples of

godliness. Our job is to pray for our leaders and submit to them so their work is not a burden (Heb. 13:17), knowing that God will hold them accountable for their leadership.

Purity vs. Debauchery. Many of Paul's writings in the New Testament call believers into a Gospel-shaped life instead of a culture-shaped life; and Titus is no different. In chapter 1, Paul draws attention to certain false teachers who claimed to know God with their lips but denied Him by their lifestyles (Titus 1:16). In contrast, believers are called to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives, marked by purity in both our doctrine and behavior (Titus 2:11-12). The call to reject worldly passions and pursue holiness is a consistent theme in the New Testament and an essential ingredient to living out the Gospel in a broken culture. In short, we cannot claim to live solely for Christ in public while pursuing our own desires in private. As Christians, we are called to be holy and set apart.

Sound Doctrine. In Titus 1:5–9, sound doctrine is presented as a non-negotiable for those who are leading the church. Paul instructs Titus to appoint elders who are not only morally upright but also "able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (v. 9). This highlights the need for leaders to be grounded in the truth, not merely for their own sake but for the sake of the entire church. This theme sets the tone for the rest of the letter, where right doctrine is expected to result in godly living (Titus 2:1, 2:10, 3:8). In short, sound doctrine is the foundation on which faithful presence rests. We cannot live out a truth we have not personally embraced.

REFLECT & APPLY

1. Reflect on the importance of "sound doctrine" in your own life. Where could you grow more fully in your understanding of the essentials of the faith? What could you do to grow in that area?

2. Take a few moments to pray for our Elders: for their marriages, their continued growth in godliness, and for God's wisdom and discernment as they lead our church.



3

TURNED AWAY FROM THE TRUTH

Titus 1:10-14

Truth is an all-familiar term. Regardless of a person's religious or philosophical background, we all have a "truth" that grounds and guides us. But truth isn't merely the possession of knowledge; it is so much more. Truth requires not just *our heads* (what we know), but *our hearts* (what we love) and *our hands* (what we do). What we believe ultimately influences how we live. And as Christians, this is especially true. The truth we profess is meant to do far more than just influence our lives—it is meant to transform our lives.

In Titus chapter 1, we are given a glimpse into the importance of godly leadership in the Church and why their commitment to the truth is essential for the health of the body. If the Church in Crete was going to flourish as a faithfully present beacon of hope, Titus would have to establish faithful leaders committed to the truth of the Gospel to guide this young community of believers. The problem was there were false teachers within the community who had used their influence to lead people away from the truth of the Gospel. Their teaching, proclaimed as "truths," were keeping the church from being effective as a faithful presence in Crete.

The task for Titus was twofold. Firstly, he needed to silence these false teachers in order to protect the flock (Titus 1:11). Secondly, he needed to correct those who had been listening and were influenced by these "insubordinate, empty talk[ing] and deceiv[ing]" teachers (Titus 1:10). The Church in Crete hadn't been intentional or proactive in who they allowed to speak into their lives as new Christians. As a result, instead of being raised up as holistic disciples of Jesus Christ, they were being led to follow a false version of Jesus, one void of the lasting power to transform them.

For Paul, "truth" was validated by the fruit it produced in the lives of both the teacher and the listener. The messages of these

teachers were clearly empty, as seen by the kinds of fruit it produced in the church. Instead of producing counter-cultural, devoted followers of Jesus, it was producing people who looked and acted just like the surrounding culture, embodying the Cretan stereotype: deceitful, lazy, and self-indulgent (Titus 1:12-13).

As Jesus followers today, Titus chapter 1 begs the question: who are we listening to and what "truths" have we believed? The answer to those questions will have a profound impact on the type of disciples we become: those who stand out for our love of Jesus and our care of others, or those who simply blend into the world—a world marked by selfishness and consumerism. Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, speaks to us almost 2,000 years later about who we should listen to and what truths to embrace. Since he's shared this with us, let us not become like those who "turn away from the truth" (Titus 1:14).

BEGIN

Has there been a time in your life where you were influenced to believe something contrary to the truth (this can be nonreligious)?

READ

Read Titus 1:10-14. Pay close attention to key words, themes, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. Paul uses strong language to describe these teachers. What are some of the words he uses (see Titus 1:10)? Consider using other translations to help shed light on these words. What do these words reveal to us about these teachers?

2. Paul gives us a clue into the motivation for why these false teachers were teaching what they did: for shameful gain. What do you think that means? Why is this important for Paul to highlight?

3. Verse 12 of this passage is difficult to understand without context. In this verse, Paul uses a common Cretan stereotype and applies it to the false teachers to clarify just what kind of fruit their teaching produces. What words would you use to characterize the kind of teaching our culture produces today?

4. These Jewish false teachers were likely teaching the Church a form of legalism—"do this and you'll be approved by God." This shallow teaching doesn't ground obedience in Jesus' grace toward us. How does grace better motivate us to obey God?

5. These early Christians were falling prey to charismatic and gifted orators. How can we guard ourselves from falling into that same trap today?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 1:10-14 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

Belief Shapes Behavior. The Scriptures teach that a genuine embrace of the Gospel will lead to godliness. Essentially, our beliefs influence our behaviors. As James notes, "as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is

dead…" (James 2:26). While salvation is not earned through our works, good works serve as the inevitable fruit (proof) of a saving faith (Titus 3:3-8). This is why Paul's instruction to correct false teachers was so important: their corrupted truth was producing corrupted fruit in the lives of their listeners (Titus 1:11-13). So while doctrine matters, we cannot be committed to doctrine alone. We must concern ourselves with both doctrine and devotion; conviction and compassion; orthodoxy (right belief) and orthopraxy (right behavior). The two are inescapably connected.

Formation as Counter-Cultural. The world excels at making disciples in its own image. Lives aligned with the world will always be marked more by self than by service, autonomy more than community, indulgence over discipline, and consumption over compassion. But the Gospel calls us away from cultural-formation to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the midst of a watching world (Titus 2:11–14). The New Testament consistently echoes this theme, calling us to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16); to put off the old and walk in the new (Eph. 4:22-24); and to live as a people set apart for God's purposes (1 Pt. 2:9). This work of deeper formation to Jesus comes as we daily surrender ourselves to God to be transformed by the power of His Spirit.

REFLECT & APPLY

1. After some honest reflection, would you say your life is reflecting Jesus or the world more? However you answer this question, rest in the truth of the Gospel—that you're forgiven in Christ, and that the Spirit of God longs to help you look more like Jesus.

2. Assess what voices you're listening to in your life (i.e. books, entertainment, music, sermons). Are they helping you grow in godliness? Are there certain voices you need to stop listening to for your own spiritual health and maturation?

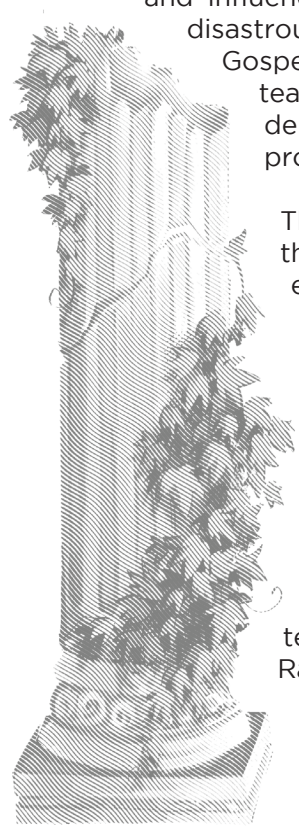
4

UNFIT FOR ANY GOOD WORK

Titus 1:15-16

Have you ever encountered a person who was unfit for their job? Maybe it was a waiter who lacked the necessary people skills for good service, or a salesperson who knew little about the product they were selling. I'm willing to bet we all have stories about times when we needed something done, only to realize that the person we chose didn't have the skills to competently do the job. What's even more frustrating is when someone is overly confident in their knowledge or ability—they insist they can handle the task, but the end result tells a different story!

We find ourselves in a similar situation in Titus as we come to the conclusion of chapter 1. The false teachers whose teaching and influence had infiltrated the Church in Crete were having disastrous effects on the believer's understanding of the Gospel. These teachers were crafty in their tactics and their teachings, professing to know God with their lips but denying Him by their living (Titus 1:16). And, for Paul, the proof was in the pudding.



The teachers taught a "Gospel" that was rooted in the "commandments of men" (Titus 1:14). Rather than embracing a Gospel of grace through faith in Christ, they taught doctrine rooted in tradition and ritual. They focused on external works as a means of purity and righteousness before God, proving that their doctrine was not pure and their hearts and minds were defiled (Titus 1:15).

Paul here alludes to Jesus' own teaching that purity is a matter of the heart (Matt. 15:10-20). We are made right with God not through the external (works), but through the internal (faith). The doctrine of these false teachers wasn't rooted in grace leading to good works. Rather, it was rooted in works themselves in an attempt

to earn grace. In Paul's eyes, since the root of their teaching was rotten, so too was the fruit it produced.

Paul closes by highlighting the irony of their teaching: though these teachers professed a superior knowledge of God, the fruit of their lives proved that they did not know Him. Their teachings promoted strife rather than unity (Titus 1:11), and though they boasted in their outward works, they were actually "unfit for any good work" (Titus 1:16). Simply put, the fruit of their lives proved that they weren't truly walking with Jesus.

Paul's indictment of these teachers is a warning for us too. It is easy to profess to know God, but are we truly committed to walking with Him? If we are to be people fit to carry out the good works that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10), then we must first root ourselves in the Gospel of God's generous grace and then allow that grace to lead us to be devoted to good works. The fruit of our faith will be evident in the kind of lives that we live.

BEGIN

Describe a time when you discovered that you were "unfit" for something.

READ

Read Titus 1:15-16. Pay close attention to keywords, themes, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. How would you define the term "pure"? Why do you think Paul would use that word when discussing false teachers?

2. Paul links the terms “unbelieving” and “defiled” with impurity. What does that teach us about what Paul means when he labels people as “pure” in verse 15?

3. What is the difference between a person’s mind and their conscience (v. 15)?

4. These teachers “professed” to know God yet denied Him by their works. What is a profession of faith? What does this passage teach us about the link between a profession of faith and good works?

5. What do you think Paul means when he says someone can be “unfit for good works”?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 1:15-16 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

You will know a tree by its fruit. Throughout the first chapter of Titus, Paul condemns the ministry and teaching of various false teachers in the Church in Crete. The method he uses reflects Jesus’ own words to His disciples about false prophets (Matt. 7:15-20). Jesus taught that we will recognize false teachers by their fruit (Matt. 7:16) because a bad tree cannot produce good fruit and a good tree will not produce bad fruit. For Paul, the fruit lies is the virtue and character of these

teachers' lives, not the size or scope of their ministry. In a day when we have access to so many voices, many of whom have large followings and broad influence, Paul's teaching calls us to carefully consider who we are following and who we are allowing to shape us spiritually.

Profession vs. Transformation. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. But Titus reveals to us that it is possible to profess the truth while not being transformed by the truth, proving that not every profession is genuine. Paul holds back nothing when declaring these false teachers to be unbelievers who are detestable and disobedient (Titus 1:15-16). If God is light, we ought to be people of the light (1 John 1:5-9); therefore, the call for Christians is to be a people whose walk matches up with their talk. The good news is that God promises that as we surrender ourselves in obedience to Him, He will work in us and conform us more and more into the image of Jesus (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 2:12-13).

REFLECT & APPLY

1. Name an area of your life where you've seen transformation since becoming a follower of Jesus. How does reflecting on your growth encourage you to continue to pursue a deeper life with Jesus?

2. **Read Philippians 2:12-13.** Spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit for strength to walk in the good works He has prepared for you this week.

5

ROOT TO FRUIT

Titus 2:1-8



"80 percent of all plant disorders are caused by root [and] soil problems."[1] Jesus' agricultural parables take on extra dimensions with this realization, that most of our spiritual growth gets stunted by poor nourishment. We're meant to flourish with spiritual fruit in Christ, but that requires us to have strong roots first. For the early church in Crete, that meant beginning with the basics.

Paul's first order of business for Titus in chapter 2 was to "teach what accords with sound doctrine" (v. 1). The Greek word here for "sound" denotes the idea of something being *in good health*.[2] Paul knew that sound, healthy doctrine treats the "root" problem—hearts that don't know Jesus or walk in His ways (Mark 2:17). In order to see the Church in Crete shored up against the faulty doctrine of false teaching, Titus needed to plant the Church in better soil.

But Paul does more than just point us to sound doctrine for the sake of our roots. He goes on to reveal to us the kind of fruit that sound doctrine should produce in our lives. The older generation (addressed first out of a customary respect for elders) are to live out a "dignified" (v. 2) and "reverent" (v. 3) faith, preparing themselves to teach the younger generations what it looks like to walk in the way of Jesus. Younger men and women alike are urged to be "self-controlled" (v. 5, 6) and to conduct themselves with "integrity" and pure character.

Living out these truths would have left any Cretan believer looking very different from the rest of their culture: a culture famously known for pagan worship, deceitful trading, and a coldblooded pursuit of wealth.[3] But when we choose to walk in the way of Jesus, we must also choose to separate ourselves from the former things we had once held onto (Phil. 3:13-16). We cannot be planted in both kinds of soil.

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[1] "The Mysterious and Fascinating Life of Roots." Blue Moon Acres, accessed February 19, 2025.
[2] "5198. Hugiainó," Bible Hub, accessed February 19, 2025.
[3] Polybius, "Book 6" in Histories (London, New York: Macmillan, 1889, 1962).

Paul's expectation is that the decision to embrace sound doctrine results in a Church that is "a model of good works" (v. 7) and "cannot be condemned" (v. 8). The fruit in a believer's life should speak for itself, leaving opponents of the Gospel with little to criticize (v. 8).

Paul's message still rings true today. The health of our spiritual lives rests on our roots being planted in the sound doctrine of Scripture. Regardless of age or occupation, we are all called to bear fruit and be a model of good works. Though we have been rescued from sin and replanted in the soil of the Gospel, we are not called to bloom away from the world. Instead, we're meant to be a faithful presence and bear fruit in the midst of this world so that others might see our good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

BEGIN

Think about a time when your beliefs shaped a major decision you were making. How did your beliefs inform that decision and how was your decision viewed by those who were watching?

READ

Read Titus 2:1-8. Pay close attention to key themes, words, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. What stands out to you about this passage?

2. Why do you think it means to be "rooted" in sound doctrine? What might that look like, and what practical steps can we take to root ourselves in God's Word?

3. How does Paul describe the specific qualities that should characterize older men and women in the Church? Why might these virtues be especially important in the life of the church?

4. What traits are shared by every group in this section of Scripture? What does that say about the importance of these things to our pursuit of Jesus and our witness in the world?

5. How does Paul tie sound teaching to the credibility and witness of the Church in the midst of the world? Where have you seen this in your own life?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 2:1-8 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

Young Women and "Working at Home." Paul's charge to young women to be submissive and tend to their own homes can sound patronizing and paternalistic by today's standards. In the Cretan context, however, a new philosophy was taking root and making its way into the Church. The idea of the "New Roman Woman" emphasized a woman who was free of sexual

constraints; it embraced promiscuity and encouraged lavish dress and lounging all day in luxury. But these standards went against the Gospel. Paul's words, then, are not an indictment against working but rather a call away from idleness and promiscuity. The broader story of Scripture reminds us that a woman worthy of honor is productive, making and selling "sashes to the merchants" and "does not eat the bread of idleness" (Prov. 31:24, 27); but all of this is rooted in her fear of the Lord (Prov. 31:30). Such women supported Jesus' ministry both administratively and financially. Paul's charge for us all is to avoid idleness and, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men…" (Col. 3:23). Whether in the office with coworkers, at home with young children, or at school with peers: work as though you're directly serving the Lord!

The Church as a Discipling Community. Titus 2 depicts the local church as a spiritual family where discipleship is both generational and communal. Older men are called to disciple younger men, and older women are called to "teach" and "train" the younger women (v. 4-5). Paul had a multi-generational, gender-specific strategy for discipleship modeled by his own spiritual investment in Timothy and Titus. Paul's vision of the Church was not just a corporate gathering of individuals for worship but a mentoring body in which lives were shared, maturity was cultivated, and faith was passed down from one generation to the next.

REFLECT & APPLY

1. Spend some time reflecting on this passage and its call to be a model of good works. Then take time to pray and ask God what that looks like for your life.

2. How does this passage inspire you to become more like Jesus? Write down three attributes (for example, “kind,” “self-controlled,” etc.) that you’d like to improve and model in your own life.

6

SAVED FOR GOOD AT WORK

Titus 2:9-10



"Time theft" is an expression for employees getting paid for time that they were not working. It can include running personal errands during work or spending hours on social media; taking breaks beyond what is given or arriving late and leaving early. There are even case studies about time theft *by nap*! According to a study by Sleep Doctor, one in three workers nap *every week* while on the job![1]

Overstepping the rules at work shows a disregard for both obedience and excellence, subverting the "integrity" and "dignity" to which we are called (Titus 2:7). After describing the fruit of sound doctrine in our lives, Paul now goes on to show how it should look in our work.

In Titus 2:9-10, Paul addresses "bondservants" and the quality and integrity of their work. Scholars estimate that slaves made up to 40% of the population in the first-century Roman world. Paul's use of the word "bondservant" here in Titus 2 (*doulos* in the Greek) denoted the most prevalent form of servitude in the Roman world: one where men and women voluntarily entered the service of a particular family in order to pay a debt or obtain physical or economic protection. They had Roman citizenship, they enjoyed legal rights, and they were considered a part of the Roman *familia* and a household's dependents.[2] By addressing "bondservants," Paul would have been speaking to a large percentage of the people in any room.

It is for this reason that Paul calls bondservants to be "submissive" (think "willing") and well-pleasing in their work. Paul's encouragement here is universal. He uses this very word, *doulos*, not only to describe His own service to Jesus (see Rom. 1:1) but also how we ought to

[1] Dave Rubin, "1 in 3 Workers Regularly Nap during Work Hours," Sleep Doctor, March 26, 2024, sleepdoctor.com/features/1-in-3-workers-nap-during-work-hours.
[2] Richard P. Saller, "*Familia, Domus*, and the Roman Conception of the Family", Phoenix 38:4 (1984), p. 343.

serve the Lord. Regardless of our rank or authority, we are all called to be willing and well-pleasing in our service to Christ and to others.

Paul's language gives us cause to reflect. Even if we are not argumentative or pilfering (like with time theft), can it be said of us that we are "well-pleasing"? That we show all "good faith" and in everything "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior"? How faithful is our presence at work?

We are never truly "off the clock" when it comes to our faith. The way we work serves as its own witness to a watching world. God has a divine purpose in where He places us, and He has saved us not just for good works, but also to do good *at* work.

BEGIN

Have you ever witnessed "time theft" or someone sleeping on the job? How did it make you feel?

READ

Read Titus 2:9-10. Pay close attention to keywords, themes, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. What stands out to you about this passage?

2. Now that you know the meaning of "*doulos*" (bondservant) and how often it is used to describe believers in Scripture, how does that influence your mindset about being a servant for Christ?

3. What does it mean to be "well-pleasing"? What might that look like in the workplace or at school?

4. Read Proverbs 15:1 and 2 Timothy 2:24. How do these Scriptures add to the command in verse 9 not to be "argumentative"?

5. How does our behavior at work reflect our faith and faithfulness to Christ? How has your demeanor at work opened doors for conversations about what you believe?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 2:9-10 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

Behavior Unbecoming. In Titus 2 we get a glimpse of what an ideal bondservant is not: "not argumentative, not pilfering" (v. 10). Being argumentative and insubordinate are self-explanatory qualities, but the richness of the Greek points to the idea of active cheerfulness and quick obedience. Pilfering, by definition, is stealing in small, often unnoticeable amounts. Stealing violates one of the Ten Commandments ("you shall not steal," Ex. 20:15), but it also reflects a deeper issue of the heart; one that affects relationships and betrays trust. Whether it is pilfering small amounts of money or small amounts of time, the Gospel calls us to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called (Eph. 4:1). We are to be holy in all we do because He is holy (1 Pet. 1:16). At work our witness is not just with words but with lives that reflect all that we say we believe.

Servants and Submission. The idea that Scripture would ask slaves to submit to their masters is unsettling to our modern ears. Bondservants in first century Rome, however, differed greatly from the chattel slavery of Colonialism in later eras. Roman bondservants willingly entered service in order to repay a debt or serve a family. This is why Paul calls himself a bondservant of Christ—because he understood the debt of his sin and the price that Christ paid to redeem him. Submission is not about quietly accepting abuse; it's working to "adorn" and reflect the Gospel (Titus 2:10) because Christ has changed our hearts and it must show in our behavior. Consequently, we are not to be argumentative in the face of authority but instead respectful to all those whom God has placed over us (1 Pt. 2:13-17). Our ultimate allegiance is to God, and if human authority calls us to contradict God's Word, we must respectfully resist (Acts 5:29). But even in such circumstances we are to be respectful and not argumentative (Titus 2:9), serving Christ and not ourselves.

REFLECT & APPLY

1. Spend some time reflecting on where God is calling you to *submit*. Is He calling you to submit more to Himself? To authority in your life? Think about it.

2. Write a prayer asking Him to show you what submission looks like in your life right now. Even more, pray for how you can be doing good in your work to reach others for the Gospel.

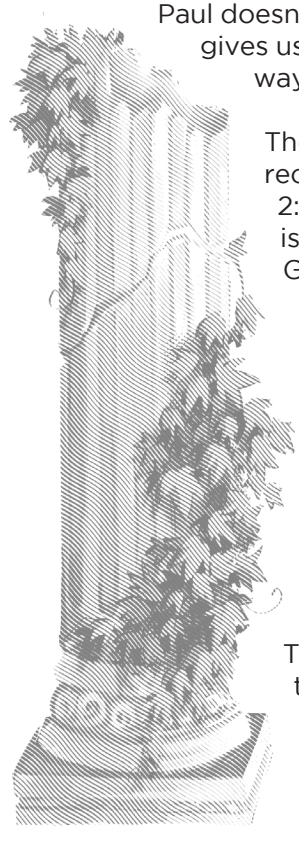
7

THE POWER FOR GOOD WORKS

Titus 2:11-15

Every parent can remember the stage when their young children repeatedly respond to their requests with the question, "Why?" It's one of the first questions a toddler learns to ask, not because they're trying to argue or avoid doing what they're told (most of the time), but rather because they want to understand the reason behind the request. The truth is that habit doesn't disappear with age. We all want to understand the reasoning behind a request; and nowhere is this more true than in our walk with God.

Paul begins the second chapter of Titus by defining the kind of life we are expected to live (Titus 2:1-8). Christians ought to live differently, knowing that our lives make the Gospel more appealing (or unappealing) to a watching world (Titus 2:9-10). But Paul doesn't simply call us to blindly embrace these behaviors; he gives us the foundation and rationale for why this is the better way.



The Gospel is our foundation. The truth that God has reconciled us to Himself by grace through Jesus (Titus 2:11) serves as the basis for every aspect of our lives. It is the reason we should seek to be people who live how God calls us to live. Because Christ gave himself for us, we should give our lives for Him. Simply put, grace is our why.

The Gospel also serves as our instructor. God's grace teaches us to reject or put away our old way of life, one marked by ungodliness, all the while putting on or embracing our new lives, marked by righteousness (Titus 2:12). The Gospel declares us to be new people (2 Cor. 5:17), and part of our growth is to live into what God already declares us to be—holy.

This is what Paul says in this portion of Titus. It is grace that has changed us and is training us to live different

lives (Titus 2:11-12). The Gospel is both our reason and our power. God's grace empowers us to live in a new and better way. Paul says that it does so in two ways: first, by teaching us to look forward to when Jesus will come and finish what He began in us (Titus 2:13). Second, the Gospel teaches us to look back at our redemption from all lawlessness (Titus 2:14). God's grace strengthens us and should be the catalyst driving our Christian living.

Because of God's grace, Christians should be "zealous for good works," not as a means to earn God's love or acceptance but in response to it (Titus 2:14). As an expression of our gratitude for God's generous and liberating grace, we are called to live as a faithful presence in the world. Then others might see what God has done in us and long for it in themselves.

BEGIN

Can you share an example of a time when you were asked to do something without knowing the reason or the "why" behind it?

READ

Read Titus 2:11-15. Pay close attention to key themes, words, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. Why do you think Paul follows his instructions for Christian living (v. 1–10) with this reminder about God's grace and the Gospel (v. 11–15)? What does this order teach us about the relationship between grace and godly living?

2. How would you explain the word "renounce" (v. 12)? How does your understanding of that word help interpret what Paul is communicating in this passage?

3. How should our future hope (Jesus is coming again) shape how we live in the present (v. 13)?

4, Read Ephesians 1:7-8. What does it mean that Jesus has redeemed us from all lawlessness (v. 14)?

5. In what ways can ignoring our identity as God's redeemed people (v. 14) hinder our pursuit of good works? How have you seen this happen in your own life or in the lives of others?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 2:11-15 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

The "Already" and "Not Yet" of the Gospel. The New Testament consistently calls us to live in the tension of the "already" and "not yet." Because of Christ's redemption we already have every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3-14), even though we are not yet experiencing all those blessings in their fullness. We are already seen as holy (1 Peter 2:9), pure (Titus 2:14), adopted (Rom. 8:15), and raised to new life (Eph. 2:6) by God.

But while this is the case, we still live trapped in corrupted, broken, and sinful bodies that are crying out for final and complete restoration. We live in the tension between the two comings of Christ: the first to inaugurate the Kingdom (Mark 1:15) with all of its blessings for any who would trust in Him; and the second when He comes again, bringing the Kingdom in its fullness and completing what He began in us (Phil. 2:6). Our job amid these two tensions is to live lives daily marked by surrender, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit for today while clinging to the promises of tomorrow.

Redemption. One of the key motifs for our understanding of the Gospel in the New Testament is redemption. Redemption is the act of buying a captive's freedom out of slavery. It is a word that has depicted God's great salvation for His people since the very beginning when He freed Israel from their slavery in Egypt (Ex. 6:6, Deut. 7:8). In the same way, Jesus, through His sacrificial death on the cross, has freed all those who have placed their faith in Him, releasing us from our bondage to sin (Rom. 6:20-23, John 8:34). Therefore, we are not only forgiven of our sin through Christ's sacrifice, but we also are freed from its power and rule over us. And because we are free from sin's rule, we are now able to pursue obedience and good works through the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

REFLECT & APPLY

1. Is there anything ungodly in your life that you need to renounce or say "no" to because of Christ's redemption? Confess and renounce it now in prayer.

2. How does the truth of God's redemption motivate you to pursue greater obedience to Jesus today?

8

GOOD TO ALL

Titus 3:1-2 & Daniel 1



As we read Titus 3, we are met by another list to process: "be submissive to rulers and authorities," "be obedient" (v. 1), "speak evil of no one," "avoid quarreling," and "show perfect courtesy toward all" (v. 2). Biblical obedience to human authorities can be complicated. Consequently, as a part of this week's assignment, take a moment to read Daniel 1 in light of Paul's words here in Titus chapter 3.

In Daniel chapter 1, Daniel and three other young men from Judah are taken captive and placed into the service of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. What follows is a story of attempted cultural assimilation: Jewish artifacts are confiscated and placed in Nebuchadnezzar's pagan temple; Daniel and his friends are educated in Babylonian literature and language; they are renamed to commemorate Babylonian gods and lore; and then they are commanded to eat from the king's table, jeopardizing their Jewish dietary restrictions. Refusing the king would have been extremely risky.

Even still, Daniel refuses to "defile himself" with the king's food or wine. His resistance, however, is careful and considerate. Daniel asks his supervisor for an exemption and is respectful and gracious when his request is met with resistance. Instead of being argumentative, Daniel proposes a test. He and his friends would eat only vegetables and water for ten days, and then the chief could compare their appearance against that of the other servants and decide for himself. By God's grace, at the end of the ten days these men "were better in appearance… than all the youths who ate the king's food" (Dan. 1:15). And so the steward granted them their request permanently, and Daniel and his friends found favor with the King.[1]

[1] David Guzik, "Daniel 1 – Keeping Pure in the Face of Adversity," Enduring Word, accessed April 9, 2025. (The Enduring Word Commentary on Daniel 1 generously informed the writing of this section, and we highly recommend reading it if you want to learn more!)

When we read Paul's call in Titus 3:1-2 to "be submissive to rulers and authorities" and to "be obedient" to them, our natural inclination is to fear being asked to do something that is contrary to our beliefs. But the Scriptures reveal countless examples of Bible figures respectfully resisting authority out of faithfulness to God, just like we find in Daniel. Paul's charge is not to blind obedience, but rather to be ready in every situation to do good and uphold the Gospel through our gentleness and courtesy to "all people" (v. 2).

Daniel serves as an example of what Paul had in mind for the Christians living under the authority of Rome, the very empire that had crucified their Savior. His call was to live as a reflection of the Gospel, to respond without quarrelling (v. 2). We're meant to approach turmoil with gentleness and respect so that our presence will be faithful and our witness might win over those who are curious about the Gospel of Jesus.

BEGIN

Think about a person you know whose character and reputation you really admire. What is it about them and the way they carry themselves that has caught your attention?

READ

Read Titus 3:1-2. Pay close attention to keywords, themes, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. What stands out to you about Titus 3:1-2?

2. What stands out to you about the story of Daniel 1? Can you think of another Bible story where faithfulness to God called for respectful disobedience to man?

3. What parallels do you see between the instructions in Titus 3:1-2 and the way Daniel graciously refuses King Nebuchadnezzar's orders?

4.Why do you think it is important for Christians to be submissive and obedient to rulers and authorities (v. 1)?

5. Why is it important to "speak evil of no one" and "to avoid quarreling" (v. 2)?

6.What do you think it looks like "to show perfect courtesy toward all people" (v. 2)?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 3:1-2 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

Perfect Courtesy Toward All. It may seem as though courtesy has been largely forgotten by society, but the Scriptures call us as Christians to carry it on as we live out our faith amid our culture. "Perfect courtesy toward all" leaves no exceptions. We are never given license to be ugly or cruel to anyone—not a politician, a corrupt authority, a difficult coworker, or an impatient family member. Our treatment of others should reflect awareness of God's treatment of us: that while we were still sinners, Christ laid down His life for us (Rom. 5:8). But true courtesy is a matter of the heart, not just our manners. We are called to love and serve those who are imperfect, and we can only hope to hit this mark if we are following Jesus and submitting ourselves to His Spirit. How we treat others, especially when we are stressed or struggling, is one of the loudest testimonies of God's work in our lives.

Blessed are the Peacemakers. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9). As believers, we are called to what can feel like a balancing act: living "set apart" from the world while simultaneously being called to love and live peaceably, even with those who may be working against us (Rom. 12:18; 20). We miss the full meaning of being a peacemaker if we assume it only refers to resolving conflicts. True peace is found in the reign of God in any situation, not the absence of conflict. Being a peacemaker means submitting to God in each moment to usher in His reign wherever you are—doing so with love, kindness, gentleness, and respect. It is the peacemaker who does not retaliate but instead turns his cheek; who, if forced to go one mile, will humbly walk two (Matt. 5:38-42).

REFLECT & APPLY

1. Take some time to reflect on how you treat others. Then take some time to reflect on how you feel you're being treated by others. Is there anything in these reflections you need to submit to God? Ask for His help and His grace "to show perfect courtesy toward all people"—even those you struggle with.

2. Look for an opportunity to be a servant and be ready for every good work this week. Write down some potential ideas of what that might look like.

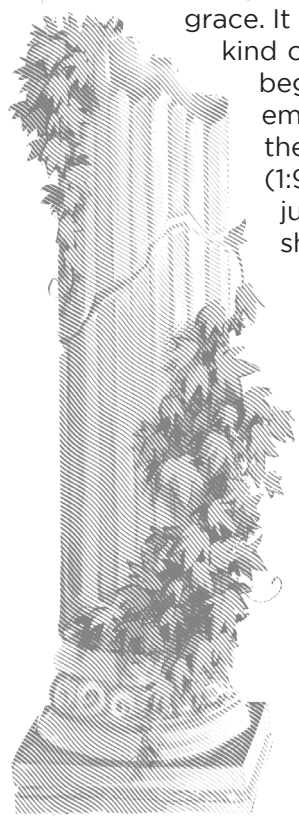
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SAVED BY GOD'S GOODNESS

Titus 3:3-7

The world is hungry for good news. We live in a time when bad news sells—scandal, corruption, hypocrisy, evil, and death flood our screens daily. Whether someone believes in Christ or not, it's hard to deny how constantly we're reminded of the brokenness and impact of sin on our lives. Yet the Scriptures reveal that God doesn't leave the story there. He enters into the chaos to bring about redemption. Though the bad news may be loud and overwhelming, it is not the final word in God's grand story. Through Christ, good news breaks in, offering hope to a world desperate to hear it.

In Titus 3:3-7, Paul gives his readers a short and succinct glimpse of the good news: news of God's incomparable goodness and grace. It is this good news that serves as the foundation for the kind of lives Paul has been calling us to embrace since the beginning of chapter 2. In other words, unless we truly embrace the depths of this Gospel, we will never become the kind of disciples who are marked by sound doctrine (1:9) and devoted to good works (2:7). The Gospel is not just the starting point of faith—it's the ongoing fuel that shapes who we are and how we live.



Embracing the good news must begin with an honest admission of the bad, so Paul begins by calling his readers to acknowledge who they were before they were met by the grace of God. All of us were once foolish, disobedient, and slaves to our own passions and desires (Titus 3:3). This sin not only separated us from God, but it also distorted our relationships with others. In Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul describes this same reality—that before salvation we were spiritually dead and helpless on our own.

But while it is important to acknowledge who we were prior to grace, Paul's aim isn't to magnify our brokenness but to highlight the mercy of God. While we were still sinners, God chose to reveal His grace and loving kindness to us (Titus 3:4-5). He didn't leave us stuck in our sin, but stepped in to rescue us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:3–4).

From beginning to end, the good news of the Gospel is entirely a gift of God's grace (Rom. 6:23). We bring nothing to the table but receive everything through faith (Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8–9). The moment we place our faith and trust in Jesus we are washed clean, released from sin's grip, and given the Holy Spirit who now dwells in us and makes us new (Titus 3:5–6). Forgiven and justified, we are no longer considered strangers but heirs—welcomed into the Kingdom and given all the privileges of heavenly citizenship. Fully known and deeply loved, we are transformed from the inside out as the good news of the Gospel takes root in us; sustaining our faith, fueling our pursuit of Jesus, and empowering our love for others. This is the message we never outgrow and the good news we must remember. Every morning, let us renew our response to God's incredible grace and mercy toward us.

BEGIN

Think of a time when you received unexpected mercy or extravagant kindness from someone. What was that like?

READ

Read Titus 3:3-7. Pay close attention to key themes, words, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. What words does Paul use to describe us in verse 3? How do those words contrast the words he uses in verses 1 and 2?

2. What do you think Paul means when he says that the "goodness and loving kindness of God *appeared*?" What or to whom is this referring?

3. Paul emphasizes we don't work to be made righteous (v. 5). What does the word "righteousness" mean?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. How are we made righteous before God?

5. Read Ezekiel 36:25-27. With that text in mind, what do you think Paul is referring to when he mentions our "regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (v. 5)?

6. What does this passage teach us about God?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 3:3-7 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

Regeneration and Renewal. Titus 3 points to the role of the Holy Spirit when it comes to our salvation. "Regeneration" is the supernatural act of God through the Spirit where we who

were spiritually dead are given new life in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). It is the work that Jesus explains in John 3:5 when He says a person must be "born again" to inherit the kingdom of God. In the Old Testament, Ezekiel describes it as God removing our hearts of stone and giving us hearts of flesh (Ez. 36:26-27). While regeneration describes the work of the Spirit to bring us to life, "renewal" describes the ongoing work of the Spirit in our lives to transform us and renew us day by day (Rom. 12:2). Regeneration points to the Spirit's work in us to bring about new life, and renewal invites us to partner with the Spirit's work by surrendering our hearts to Him as we put off the old life and walk in the new (Ps. 51:5; Eph. 4:22-24).

Justified by God's Grace. The Scriptures are clear that we are justified by God's grace alone through the finished work of Christ alone (Tit. 3:5-7; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:8-9). Justification simply means "to be made right with God." It is a legal term referring to the declaration that, because of Christ, we are found "not guilty" before God and stand no longer under condemnation before Him (Rom. 8:1). It is the work of God's free grace in forgiving our sin and declaring us righteous. Again, this happens not through any work on our part, but solely through the work of Christ on our behalf when received by faith (Rom. 3:23, 4:5; Eph. 2:8-9).

REFLECT & APPLY

1. Take a moment to reflect on your own brokenness and sin. How does this deepen your sense of gratitude and awe for the Gospel?

2. Who in your life has yet to receive the good news of God's grace? Write down their names and spend time praying through that list, asking God to reveal Himself to them and draw them to salvation.

10

DEVOTED TO GOOD WORKS

Titus 3:8-11



"Now what?" It's the question we ask after graduation, retirement, or any other major life transition. But it's also a common question we ask on our faith journey. "If I am saved by grace through faith in Christ and promised an eternity with Him in heaven, what do I do until then?" The answer is both simple and profound: until heaven, we live with purpose in the here and now—joining God in the good work that He is doing as He builds His Kingdom.

As disciples of Jesus, the Scriptures invite us to join in the work of the Kingdom for the glory of God. Paul writes in verse 8 that believers should "be careful to devote themselves to good works." Our faith should result in an outpouring of good works that flow from transformed hearts. We're meant to live in service to others intentionally and faithfully in the places we live, work, and play.

"Doing good" is not just a missional expectation in the Christian life—it is intended to be a joyful response to the grace that we have received. As Paul writes in Ephesians 2:10, "...we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Our purpose is woven into God's design.

As Paul notes, the good works that have been prepared for us are both "excellent and profitable for people" (Titus 3:8). They meet real needs, encourage others, further our sanctification (make us more like Christ), and open doors for the Gospel. In this way good works are not for personal recognition, but ultimately for divine reflection (2 Cor. 5:17) to point others to the One who is truly good. As Jesus stated in the book of Matthew 5:16: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Paul understood that this foundational principle had the power to transform not only the Christians in Crete but the very culture around them. That's why he contrasts the call to good works with a warning: "...avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless" (v. 9). The early church, like ours today, was easily sidetracked by division and debates, ruining its chances of reaching other people far from God.

Good works are not a means to earn God's favor—they are a response to what we have been given. Christ came precisely because we could not keep the Law. But in Christ's hands, our works demonstrate the power of the Gospel to transform broken sinners into ordinary saints; making every act of kindness and selfless service a quiet sermon proclaiming what the love of God can do.

So let us devote ourselves to good works, because He is good and He is worthy of our worship.

BEGIN

Think of a time that someone served you intentionally. What did it mean to you?

READ

Read Titus 3:8-11. Pay close attention to key themes, words, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. What stands out to you about Titus 3:8-11?

2. Where have you seen God's attributes represented or shown through the good works of others?

3. Why do you think Paul warns Titus to avoid "unprofitable and worthless" controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law?

4. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. How does this passage connect to Titus 3:10-11?

5. How did Jesus model doing good? What examples come to mind?

6. How does Paul instruct Titus to handle a divisive person in verses 10–11, and what rationale does he give for this approach? What does this reveal about leadership and the importance of a healthy church?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 3:8-11 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

We never graduate from the Gospel. In Titus 3:8, Paul instructs Titus to "insist on these things," referring to the grace of God that saves and transforms (v. 4–7). The essentials of the Gospel are the very foundation for a life of ongoing obedience and good works based on our faith. The New Testament consistently calls Christians to remember and remain rooted in sound doctrine because these essential truths shape every part of our lives (2 Tim. 3:14–17; 2 Pet. 1:12–15). We never outgrow our need to receive, revisit, and rest in the Gospel. It is both our foundation and our fuel for a life rooted in godliness and good works.

Dealing with Division. Titus 3 outlines a specific process for addressing division. Paul acknowledges that there will be people in the Church whose pride, ill intentions, or unrepented sin results in division and discord. The Scriptures call us to actively fight for unity in the body of Christ by teaching sound doctrine and quelling division. Paul's heart is correction, not condemnation. Equally, however, Paul understands that the Gospel is too precious to compromise with bad behavior, so he calls us to have nothing to do with those who refuse multiple attempts at correction. All of this is intended to protect the Gospel and preserve the Church's mission to a lost and dying world.

REFLECT & APPLY

1. Are you actively seeking opportunities to "do good" for others? How can you do so this week as an act of worship to God because of what Christ has done for you?

2. Write a prayer asking God to open your eyes to see the opportunities to be His hands and feet this week for the sake of the Gospel. Surrender your week in prayer to Him.

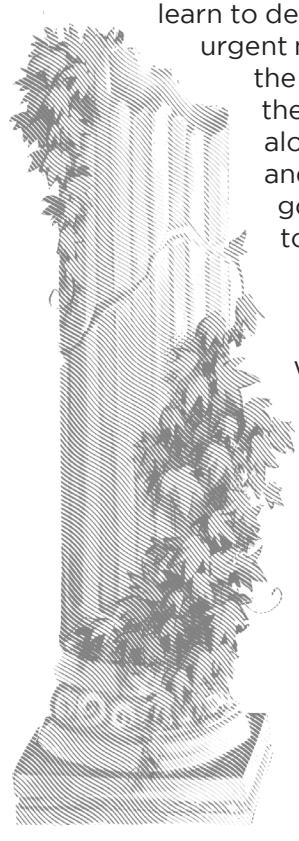
11

A FAITHFUL AND FRUITFUL PRESENCE

Titus 3:12-15

Some of the richest farmland in the world is found within the continental United States. Iowa, for example, boasts more than 40 inches of black topsoil, dubbed "black gold" by those who farm it. The Central Valley of California produces a quarter of the nation's food and 40 percent of the nation's fruits and nuts. Driving through these areas, it is easy to see that there is something special about the soil, but soil alone is not enough to bear fruit. Every farmer knows that crops must be cultivated, gardens must be tended, and land must be tilled. The truth of the matter is that fruitful gardens belong to faithful gardeners.

The Apostle Paul concludes his letter to Titus with a seemingly simple yet profoundly significant statement: "And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful" (Titus 3:14). Paul knew that the church possessed the truth of the Gospel in the soil of their hearts; but he also knew that possessing the truth alone was not enough. The Gospel must be cultivated and grown in our everyday lives if it is ever going to bear good fruit. For Paul, this meant that the church needed to "learn to devote themselves to good works."



The idea of learning to devote oneself to something suggests a deliberate process. In Paul's eyes, good works were a cultivated discipline and a learned practice. Because of sin, we do not naturally think of others more than ourselves. We need the work of the Spirit to change us, but we must partner in this work by surrendering to the Spirit daily and devoting ourselves to good works. Compassion and mercy are not spiritual gifts given only to some in the body; rather, Paul says that good works should be the aim of *every* believer ("our people") in the body.

In contemporary terms, Paul calls the church to missional living—to move beyond the walls of our church buildings and to live as a faithful and fruitful presence where we live, work, and play. We are to live as ambassadors, with feet planted on foreign soil, bearing the message of reconciliation wherever we go (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Far more than just random acts of kindness, God invites us to take up the posture of a servant and involve ourselves in "cases of urgent need" (Titus 3:14). It means showing up when our neighbors are ill or grieving. It means delivering food or groceries when times are tough. It can be as simple as mowing a yard or as solemn as driving someone to chemo. Wherever we live, God calls us to devote ourselves to doing good.

A garden left untended yields no harvest, and a faith devoid of good works remains unfruitful. Titus calls us to cultivate a life of fruitful service so that the Gospel will bear more fruit in us and in others. As Paul says in Ephesians 2:10, good works are what we were made for. Let us, therefore, go and walk in them.

BEGIN

Share an experience when someone's good works had a profound impact on your life and faith? What did they do to serve you and how did it encourage or challenge your faith?

READ

Read Titus 3:12-15. Pay close attention to key themes, words, repetition, actions, and contrasts.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

1. Paul provides final instructions and mentions several individuals by name. What do these personal details reveal about the relational and communal nature of Gospel ministry?

2. In verse 13, Paul instructs believers to "speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way" and to "see that they lack nothing." What insights does this offer about the role of the church in supporting Gospel work?

3. How does verse 14 connect to Paul's broader concern for the church's public witness?

4. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How does the call to "good works" here in Titus 3 relate to the works spoken of in Ephesians 2? How are they different? How are they the same?

5. What does Paul's closing greeting in verse 15 tell you about the importance of community in mission?

PRINCIPLES TO PONDER

Consider the message of Titus 3:12-15 in light of the rest of Scripture and how it supports and reveals the following themes.

The Necessity of Good Works as a Fruit of Faith. The Scriptures consistently teach that one of the byproducts of faith is a life characterized by good works (see James 2:14-26). Though salvation comes only by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:8-9), the result of a heart truly changed by grace is a life that overflows with good works (Titus 2:11-14). Just as a baby will grow and become active after

birth, a believer *will* grow and take up the activities of Jesus by letting our light shine before others "that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

The Role of the Church in Supporting Gospel Ministry. Paul closes the book of Titus by instructing the church to partner in the work of ministry by supporting Zenas and Apollos and ensuring "that they lack nothing" (Titus 3:13). The Scriptures are clear that the Church is more than just a community of mutual support, it is also a place of missional partnership. Paul's ministry was supported by the church in Philippi (see Phil. 4:14-16); Jesus' ministry was supported by faithful women (Luke 8:1-3); even the Levites in the Old Testament were supported by the gifts of those who came and worshiped (Deut. 18:1). When we partner in ministry, the Gospel grows and we are credited as "fellow workers for the truth" (3 John 8).

REFLECT & APPLY

1. What pressing need do you feel God prompting you to address? Think about your neighbors, family members, and co-workers. What steps can you take this week to respond?

2. How can you cultivate a lifestyle of good works that is both intentional and sustainable, rather than sporadic or overwhelming?

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