

Titus 3

Verses 1-2: *Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.*

--(1) **Remind them.** . . infers that this was something they were already familiar with. The believers' relationship to secular rulers had to be addressed regularly in the early church (**Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Peter 3:8-17**). They may have been strangers and pilgrims looking for the blessed hope of Jesus' glorious return as King of Kings, but they still had to live with fallen rulers in the present age. *And they had some pretty cruel and unjust rulers!*

--First, Paul says to remind the Cretans ***to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey.*** . . . A Christian cannot be an anarchist. At the most basic level, obedience to God-ordained authority is obedience to God—be it the authority of parents, husbands, government, etc.

--Of course many of these believers would be confronted with a time when obeying government would no longer be obeying God. But even in acts of civil disobedience, we should be peaceful as Jesus and His apostles were.

Acts 4:18-20: *So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' *

--**Ready for every good work.** . . is also a qualifier. If Caesar commands me to a good work, it should not be a problem. If Caesar commands me to an evil work (evil in God's eyes), I then obey God over Caesar.

--That said, Paul is not dealing with the exceptions here. He is dealing with the basic rule. Christians should benefit their societies and their leaders. Service and humility are in harmony with the tone of the Christian life. They are traits natural to the new nature.

--Now Paul moves on to the general character we should display in society because of who we are in Christ. *Here we have God's rules for Christian political discourse and action!*

--(2) 1) ***Speak evil of no one:*** Christians are not to revile others by insulting language. We can speak the truth in love—pointing out lies, faulty logic, or carnal ideas—but we must not slander people.

2) ***Peaceable:*** Working for peace and not contentious or combative.

3) ***Gentle:*** Means that we are considerate, compassionate, and kind.

4) ***Showing all humility to all men:*** We are not to be haughty or high-minded. A continued display of humility to all types of people—not just those we like—proves our humility is a true part of our character and not a synthetic mask. *Some humility to Some people Vs. All to All*

--This is a description of mature Christian life in public!

Verse 3: *For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*

--Why should we be reminded to treat civil authorities this way? Because we used to be them! Insulting unsaved political rulers is simply insulting our unsaved selves.

--Titus is calling Christians to love and humility with the unsaved world because it was what they once were and what they once needed.

--Notice, Paul says **we ourselves** and not simply *they themselves*.

--Here is Paul's description of those we are not to speak evil of but be peaceable, gentle, and humble to:

1) **Foolish:** Ignorant of God and spiritual reality. The carnal man does not understand spiritual things and cannot know them without the life of the Holy Spirit.

2) **Disobedient:** Noncompliant and stubborn. Rebellious to all authority.

3) **Deceived:** Convinced of what is wrong. Led astray by their own thoughts or the lies of other people. *Sad testimonies of detransitioners in our day!*

4) **Serving various lusts and pleasures:** The slavery of sexual pleasure in our society is frightening! So too the slavery to celebrity, youth, power, money, substance abuse, etc.

--People imagine they are free to do as they like and choose the pleasures they want, but as Jesus said, they soon become slaves to sin. As someone once said: *"Man has become the slave of a mightier rebel than himself."*

5) **Living in malice and envy:** Malice is an evil attitude that enjoys the harm of others. Envy cannot stand to see any good come to others.

6) **Hateful and hating one another:** The world is full of hate and therefore hating. All the bonds of society are breaking in the hate with which we see one another before we even know one another. *Just read the news!*

--Not everyone lives these sins to the same extent, but this is a just description of an unsaved society. We were once a part of it—or maybe we are choosing to remain in it? Sin blunts the mind, twists the will, perverts the hearts, and makes our spirits selfish and shallow.

--That is what we were, but something wonderful happened!

Verses 4-7: *But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

--(4) **But.** . . means something interrupted the current dark cloud Paul was describing. What changed things?

--***the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared.*** . . God's kindness and love were revealed in Jesus Christ being sent into the dark and hateful mess of unsaved humanity! Jesus came to speak the truth, patiently and gently, and show perfect humility to all men. He came to serve and to die for His enemies—those fully contrary in character, action, and heart. *The question is: How could *He* love *them/us*?*

--Jesus still does enter into the mess of lost and sinful human life—praise God!—my mess and your mess. Not just then, but even now, today. All of this was not merely doctrine for Paul—it was his testimony! *He* was that sinner, and Jesus appeared to *him* in kindness, love, and mercy. *Jesus Christ also sends us to do the same thing! This is why we are to be reminded to love and be patient with lost sinners.*

--**(5) not by works of righteousness which we have done.** . . He didn't show up because we did enough good works! In fact, all we had were evil works. There never were, and never will be, enough good works to save sinners. *Paul's point here would be especially important for the religious Jew who imagined that they were different from the wicked, unsaved Gentiles Paul was describing.*

Philippians 3:9: and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

--Jesus appeared in kindness and love, not merely to be nice to sinful man in all his brokenness and shame. He came to complete a merciful work we could not complete on our own.

--**But according to His mercy He saved us.** . . God had mercy, pity, and compassion on our helpless slavery to sin, and because we couldn't work our way toward Him, God came to save us from ourselves. *He could have dealt with sin like the flood or Sodom!*

--What does Jesus save us from? He saves us from our sins. From the nature of a child of wrath as described above, which: ***we ourselves were also once.***

--But that is not what *we* are anymore. Now our salvation includes: ***the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.***

--What is Paul's referring to with ***the washing of regeneration?***

--Many think it is a reference to baptism, but even if it is, it is simply to recognize the thing itself—new life in salvation—which is what the outward and public act of baptism signifies (**Acts 22:16**).

--I don't think Paul is referring to baptism, especially because he just clearly made the point that what he was talking about has absolutely nothing to do with our works. The washing he is referring to here is spiritual (**Eph. 5:26**)—a divine act of mercy accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

--The sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, is now born again, made a new creation.

--**Regeneration** is only used one other time in the Scriptures, in **Matt. 19:28**, where Jesus is referring to a time of total newness when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory.

--New birth happens without our help. It is a divine miracle. We don't see it, but we do see its effects. *Like our own birth, we don't realize what it is in the moment, but we come to understand more in spiritual self-awareness as we mature in Christ.*

--What does Paul mean by ***the renewing of the Holy Spirit?***

--He is speaking of the sanctification that comes with justification. God saves the filthy sinner and cleans him up. He purifies the sinner to make him His own special person.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

--Jesus saved us to be washed, sanctified, and justified.

--**(6) whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.** . . . Because He is kind and loving, God is not stingy with the Holy Spirit.

--Many fear that their sin is too much. Too filthy. Too dark. Too willful. Too strong.

--Some fear God's anger and wrath on their sin. Instead, they need to look at the kindness and love of God in Jesus Christ.

--Some fear they need to change God's mind because their rebellion was too willful. They need to look and see God's mercy in providing the Lamb of God, His own Son.

--What is the sinner's hope? The abundant washing and renewing work of the Holy Spirit **through Jesus Christ our Savior!**

--We need to look away from ourselves and look to God! We are promised that God will abundantly pour out the Holy Spirit on us if we need washing. The same Spirit that moved over the face of the waters when the world was formless and void is given to you and me. He can make us a totally new creation!

--We are to ask for and hope in no other grounds—certainly not on the basis of our own performance!

--We also gain assurance on that ground, because we know God the Father will always honor His Son's work of redemption.

--**(7)** All this being true, we previously described sinners are **justified by His grace** and **become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

--God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit work in our salvation and bring it to its appointed end—eternal life.

Verse 8: This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

--**This is a faithful saying.** . . . a trustworthy saying (**1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11**).

--Here we have a basic summary of the whole book. The work of God as described through the epistle are the things Titus is **to affirm constantly**. What he is to speak, teach, exhort, rebuke, stress, and emphasize with all authority.

--To who? To **those who have believed in God**. Those who believed God. They have taken Him at His Word. *Not *What* do we believe, but *Who* do we believe?*

--The proper motivation for every Christian good deed is the grace of God in salvation, the life of the Spirit in us, and the hope of eternal life and reward.

--Regeneration is the roots, and good works are the fruits. When you look at a tree and attempt to gauge its life, roots are not seen but fruits are. *Works do not matter for salvation but they do matter because of salvation.*

--A Christian should ***be careful to maintain good works*** because there is a real correlation to our own life and goodness. *We begin to question the salvation of others, don't we?*

--How do I know what good works to do? Follow the instinct of God's life in you! He is working out the life and works that most please Him. *Good works include good work.*

--***These things are good and profitable to men.*** What opportunities to love others has the God put in front of you? We are all surrounded by family, friends, strangers, and enemies. We all have time, money, skills, spiritual gifts, and prayer at our disposal.

--We are not to be a people lacking good works but a people zealous and full of them! Look at the contrast of ***1:16 & 2:14: They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. . . Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us for every lawless deed and purify Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.***

--Serving Jesus Christ, led by His Holy Spirit, is the safest and healthiest place for us to live! It is hard to ***maintain good works***. A simple person, with a simple life of good works, becomes something extraordinary at the end. *A man who has faithfully loved one wife, raised children in the Lord, and served God is a rarity nowadays!*

Verses 9-11: But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

--(9) Now, Paul warns Titus what he should avoid after being clear about what he was to continually emphasize. To ***avoid*** means to *turn around and get away!* His avoidance of these things should be continual.

--What was Titus to avoid? Things like: ***foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law.*** . . All of which Paul warns about in other places (***1 Tim. 1:4; 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:14+23***). *Temptations to weird forms of pseudo-intellectualism or ultra-spirituality.*

--Why? Because ***they are unprofitable and useless.*** . . Endless questions and arguments about extrabiblical material that wastes time and does not promote the sound and healthy Christian life Paul was describing.

--(10) What should Titus do with a person who will not respond to ***2:15+3:8?***

--***Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition.*** . . Useless arguments are to be avoided but someone who is divisive in the body of Christ is to be addressed and then rejected if they refuse to repent.

--To be **divisive** is to create divisions based on unbiblical grounds. It isn't just heresy. The describes someone unnecessarily sectioning off the Body of Christ around even foolish things. It is the type of behavior that made Paul tell the Corinthians he was happy he didn't baptize them because of how they were fighting over being followers of his or Apollos. *How many churches have split over something stupid?!*

--These people are *not* to be avoided. They are to be confronted. Even difficult people are to be addressed at least twice. *Pastors can be too heavy-handed if they have not addressed issues directly and given the divisive person a chance to respond with godly sorrow and repentance.*

--What happens then? Clearly, this is a situation where **Matthew 18** comes into play. When a person cannot see the truth of God, and people of God as more important than personal preference or false teaching they are to be rebuked and rejected.

--(11) If they refuse all correction, it simply proves that the issue is in the heart and not the mind—***such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.***

Verses 12-15: *When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*

All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all. Amen.

--(12) Paul is apparently free to travel, so it is likely this epistle is written sometime after **Acts 28**. He asks Titus to meet him in Nicopolis, which would have been a good launching point for him to reach Spain (**Rom. 15:24+28**) and Titus to reach Dalmatia (**2 Tim. 4:10**).

--***Be diligent to come.*** . . means do your best. *No cell phones to communicate then!*

--The one stipulation is that Paul didn't want Titus to leave until someone else could come and take up his duties. He tells Titus he will be sending either Artemas (who we know nothing about) or Tychicus (**Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12**), who was another faithful servant we find often with Paul.

--Paul was most likely waiting for either of them to arrive from somewhere else and would send whoever came first. *Paul never wanted to leave a church unpastored! Beware of anyone who does!*

--(13) It also seems like Paul had Zenas and Apollos carry this letter to Titus on their way to serve the Lord somewhere else.

--Zenas we don't know, but he is either a Jewish or Roman lawyer. *It is easy to make jokes about lawyers until you need one!*

--Apollos we do know (**Acts 18:24-28; 1 Cor. 1:12, 3:5-6**). He was also an apostle (**1 Cor. 4:6-13**) and mighty in the Scriptures.

--It is interesting to watch the apostle Paul like a great spiritual general, sending Christian soldiers on missions all over the world to build up the church.

--These men freely helped him—Apollos chose not to at one point (**1 Cor. 16:12**) but they were still brothers and co-laborers. Paul encourages Titus to help these men any way possible—**Send. . . with haste. . . that they may lack nothing.** *Our service to the Lord isn't the only service to the Lord that matters.*

--**(14) And let our people also learn to maintain good works.** . . We are to learn to become veteran good-doers. Something can only be maintained by effort. *Think of your garden.*

--How do we do this? One way is **to meet urgent needs.** . . What opportunities are in front of you? Don't let them slip away.

--Why? **That they may not be unfruitful.** . . Unfaithfulness (short or long term) leads to unfruitfulness. The emphasis here is clear: **2:7+14; 3:1+8+14.**

**Talmage: "Suppose, in military circles, on the morning of battle the roll is called, and out of a thousand men only a hundred men in the regiment answered. What stir would there be in the camp! What could the colonel say? What high talking there would be among the captains, and majors! Suppose word came to headquarters that these delinquents excused themselves, on the ground that they had overslept, or that morning was damp and they were afraid of getting their feet wet, or that they were busy cooking rations. My friends, this is the morning of the day of God Almighty's battle! Do you not see the troops? Hear you not all the trumpets of heaven and all the drums of hell? Which side are you on?"*

"If you are on the right side, to what cavalry troop, to what artillery service, to what garrison duty to you belong? In other words, in what Sunday school do you teach? In what prayer meeting do you exhort? To what penitentiary do you declare the eternal liberty? To what poor house do you announce the riches of heaven? What broken bone of sorrow have you ever set? Are you doing nothing? Is it possible that a man or woman sworn to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is doing nothing? Then hide the horrible secret from the angels. Keep it away from the book of judgment. If you are doing nothing do not let the world find it out, lest they charge your religion with being a false-face. Do not let your cowardice and treason be heard among the martyrs about the throne, lest they forget the sanctity of the place and curse your betrayal of that cause for which they agonized and died.

*"May the Eternal God rouse us all to action! As for myself, I feel I would be ashamed to die now and enter heaven until I have accomplished something more decisive for the Lord that bought me. I would like to join with you in an oath, with high hand uplifted to heaven, swearing new allegiance to Jesus Christ, and to work more for His kingdom. Are you ready to join with me in some new for work Christ? "**

John 9:4: I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.

--**(15)** If you loved Jesus and the truth, you would have also loved Paul. Which is why many people still love and hate Paul's writings today!