

Paul's Letter To Titus
Week Three
Titus 3:1-15

Day One

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

v. 1 – This entire letter to Titus provides us with a good overview of what Paul wanted Titus to teach the believers in order to “set things in order,” which is why Paul left Titus in Crete. Paul was obviously concerned that this new church would be undone by outside pressures from its unbelieving culture. Plus, I would think that Paul wanted the Holy Spirit to be able to use the church’s exemplary behavior to attract new believers.

Paul wanted believers to be subject to local authorities, as described in Romans:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor (Romans 13:1-7)

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

The believers were to be obedient, both to God and to rulers. There were obviously no limits to the former but definite limits to the latter, for a believer should never obey rulers when their will is contrary to God’s.

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:18-20).

Paul also wanted the saints to be ready to do what was good to those around them. Notice how Paul had a body of teaching that he imparted wherever he went or to whomever he wrote:

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (Galatians 6:10).

v. 2 – Notice how practical Paul’s instructions included. The believers were to be good neighbors, applying love and grace to all their relationships, whether in or out of the church. This involved

- avoiding slander
- being peaceable
- being considerate of others
- having true humility

Are these your characteristics when you relate to others? Do you need to repent of any attitudes or behaviors that are contrary to those that Paul listed here?

Day Two

³At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.
⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,

v. 3 – Paul did not talk down to Titus or the Cretan saints, for he acknowledged that he too was a sinner at one point, just like those whom Titus was teaching. He identified with the sinful behaviors he was teaching against because Paul had been guilty of those very behaviors. It is good to remember where you came from, for you were not always as mature or godly as you are today. God has worked in your life to produce any godly behavior to which you can lay claim. There can be no room for pride in who you are or what you do, for God has produced it all in and through you by the work of His Spirit.

At one time, you and I were slaves to sin. Now we are to be slaves to righteous living and godly behavior. We are to present our beings as instruments for good since we spent so much time yielding our being to evil. Remembering this in and of itself will keep you humble as you work with immature believers and unbelievers. You were such a person at one time.

I have often prayed, “Lord don’t let me forget where I came from and what I was like. Don’t let me forget what it was to be young. Help me not to have unrealistic expectations where other believers are concerned and to have grace where unbelievers are concerned.”

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his

wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Paul had been a righteous Jew, yet he confessed to having lived in malice and hatred toward others. This proves once again that the Law was powerless to change a man's heart and behavior, but the Law clearly revealed what God's required behavior was and is.

v. 4 – God took the initiative for our changed behavior and lifestyles. In His kindness and love, He appeared in the form of Jesus and revealed His great love for you and me. God is so good! And that is to be an added incentive for your righteous behavior – the love of God! He first loved us so therefore we in return ought to love Him!

When you see the list of our sinful behaviors – hate, disobedience, deception – we see our need for a Savior, to deliver us from ourselves! *Thank You, Lord, that you sent such a Savior in the form of Jesus who saved me from myself!*

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law (Galatians 4:4).

Do you realize the depth of your need for a Savior? Do you thank God for what He did to save you from your futile lifestyle before you knew Him?

Day Three

⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

v. 5-7 – When Jesus appeared, He came to save us from ourselves, as I stated yesterday. And we needed saving! To deny that is to deny the obvious truth that we were addicted to sin, but God in His mercy set us free.

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved (Ephesians 2:3-5).

As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy (James 5:11).

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1 Peter 2:11).

Since you have received such great mercy, you must now be a dispenser of that same mercy, as Jesus indicated in this parable:

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:21-35).

God has lavished upon us His Spirit and made us heirs of eternal life in Christ. An heir does not earn what he or she receives; it is the result of someone else's work. So what we have in the Lord is no reason for pride or arrogance; it is an act of God's mercy. Therefore let us be a source of mercy for all who come in contact with us today and every day.

Day Four

⁸This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. ⁹But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.

v. 8 – **What is a trustworthy saying?** The saying is that God saved us by His mercy and washed and renewed us in the power of the Holy Spirit unto eternal life. Paul wanted

Titus to stress God's required behavior in the context of God's mercy, so that no one would turn away in disobedience once they had been saved by grace.

Paul urged the believers to be "careful" to devote themselves toward doing good. **Are you being diligent and careful to follow through on your right behaviors and attitudes? Are you devoting yourself to good deeds and righteous acts?** These good deeds are profitable to everyone, including yourself, which brings up an interesting point. Every good deed is an act that is in your best self-interest, yet cannot be performed with your self-interest in mind. Your good deeds must be done in God's best interests and for the best interests of others. So your good needs are an act of self-interest but not selfishness.

This means that when you don't operate in kindness and mercy, you are working against yourself and what is best for you. You were created to do good things and when you don't, you are working against yourself. **Does that confuse you?** Then think of Jesus, who acted in everyone's best interests, yet was full of joy and peace because He was in harmony with the Father's will.

v. 9 – **Paul was interested in what was profitable, but profitable for what?** It seems profitable for spiritual growth, for the good of others, and for the profit of God's pleasure. In this verse, Paul urged Titus to avoid all debates and controversies over Scripture that did not contribute to spiritual growth. In my mind, I think about the arguments and debates in my lifetime over the Holy Spirit, the end times and church government. **Have these contributed to godly living?** Hardly!

I think we have so many useless debates because we have positioned ourselves as connoisseurs of the Word instead of doers. We have set ourselves up as judges of the Word and have pegged our righteousness to what we believe instead of how we behave. So if I believed the "correct" doctrine on the Holy Spirit, for example, then I am in right standing with God. At times we are proud of our doctrinal correctness with few attempts to apply it to everyday living.

I am not a judge of the Word; the Word is a judge me. I am not to scrutinize the Word; it scrutinizes me. **Are you a student of the Word or a judge of it?**

Day Five

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

v. 10 – Proverbs warns us of how God feels toward a divisive person:

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet

that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers (Proverbs 6:16-19).

God is interested in those who promote harmony and peace and not those who stir up trouble in His body. **Are you a source of unity or division? How do you know? What kinds of things do you think could take place that would cause this dreaded division?** One of them is arguing about doctrinal issues that don't contribute to holy and righteous living.

Paul instructed Titus to confront anyone who was contributing to division. Titus was not to just leave it alone or ignore it. It had to be dealt with "head-on." **How are you when it comes to confronting someone with a bad attitude or wrong behavior? Do you have the courage to speak your mind, without judging or assuming you are correct?** The latter is so you can still listen to the other person to insure you have the correct assessment of the situation?

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen (Ephesians 4:29).

If the person ignores the rebuke, then that person is to be avoided and shunned. This "shunning" can certainly be abused and applied for any manner of perceived or real sinful behavior. The "shunning," however, should only happen for those causing division, since contact with that person is spreading a virus that must be "quarantined."

v. 11 – I am not sure what it means to be "self-condemned." **Does it meant the divisive person knows they are doing wrong but continues to do it anyway?** Paul was blunt, however, that this person is warped, steeped in sin. It is part of man's fallen nature to create havoc in organizations and relationships by being selfish and argumentative. We can believe we are expressing our individuality, but we simply contributing to a dysfunctional church or organization.

Are there any biblical examples of a man who sowed discord among brothers?

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches (Acts 15:36-41).

While John Mark was a great man and minister, he contributed to tension in the ministry team by departing, probably over an offense taken from the way his cousin Barnabas was

treated. My goal is not to be a source of disunity in any organization in which I serve. **Is that your goal, too?**

Day Six

¹²As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. ¹³Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need.

v. 12 – Paul had some men at his disposal to conduct the work of his ministry. He could send them as needed from place to place. Paul was going to send two men to assist or perhaps replace Titus. **Did that mean that Titus was doing the work of two men?** At any rate, Paul wanted Titus to rejoin him for the winter in Nicopolis. Paul had decided to winter there. Notice Paul did not state that the Lord wanted him or had directed him to winter there. It was a decision he made and he trusted that the Lord was guiding his thoughts.

This reminds me what St. Augustine said: “I pray and then I do what I want.” He was so confident that God was leading his mind and decisions that he would act on his desires. Most people are not that confident but wait for untold numbers of confirmations to make sure they are moving in the right direction. While admirable that they don’t want to miss the Lord, often that desire is born out of an unrealistic perfectionism in decision-making. The Lord is for you and not against, you. He is not trying to trick you, but rather wants you to know His will so you can do it.

Are you confident in God’s ability to speak to you and guide your steps, even when you don’t sense His presence? Is your faith in God’s ability to speak to you or your ability to hear Him?

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God (Proverbs 2:2-5).

If you seek the Lord, you will find him. It’s that simple. **Where you obsessing over some decision when you simply need to trust Him and move on?**

v. 13 – Paul had a doctor (Luke) and a lawyer (Zenas) on his ministry team. He had quite a diverse group of men from which he could draw for the ministry’s work. Paul, like John in his epistles, urged Titus to help his team members to do their work, which required travel and being away from home for periods of time.

Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. It was for the sake of the Name that they

went out, receiving no help from the pagans. We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth (3 John 5-8).

What are you doing to help God’s servants who are traveling and strengthening the Church and God’s people? What more can you do? If someone is doing God’s work, we should see that they have everything they need to get the job done. So Titus has a lot of important work to do, both equipping the people of God and helping God’s servants and leaders.

Paul mentioned five men here including Titus who were part of his ministry team. **Who is part of your team? On whose team are you a part? What are you doing to spread the gospel and strengthen those who have received the gospel? Are you giving as much as you can give to help spread the Word?**

Day Seven

¹⁴Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives. ¹⁵Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

v. 14 – Paul referred to the believers as “our people.” He wanted our people to learn how to devote themselves to doing good, not just not doing bad. Once again, we see how practical Paul was in applying theology to life. He wanted the saints to work hard, lead productive lives and do good deeds. That is a pretty simple strategy for believers. **Are you doing this? Are you devoted to doing what is good? Do you provide for daily necessities for those in need? Do you live a productive life?**

How can you improve in these areas: learning, devotion, doing good, providing for daily necessities, productivity? Does productivity strike you as a strange objective for spiritual people? I hope not. Even Peter wrote about this characteristic:

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins (2 Peter 1:5-9).

Are you effective and productive in your faith and relationship with the Lord?

Another way of thinking about productivity is to focus on bearing fruit. Fruit is not just character traits, but actual good deeds and lives reached for Him.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear **fruit—fruit** that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name” (John 15:16).

v. 15 – Paul had more people with him on his ministry team than those mentioned earlier, and they all sent their greetings. This tells me that Paul’s team was communicating with one another to know what Paul was doing, to whom he was writing and what his future plans were.

Paul instructed Titus to greet those who loved him and his team “in the faith.” I suppose Titus did not greet those who did not love Paul and there were some no matter where Paul had been. Paul was not an easy man to get along with at times and had more than his share of detractors. Yet he persevered and worked hard, and God used him, even though he was not a perfect man.

Are you hung up on being perfect? Do you have a higher standard for yourself than God does for you? Are you waiting for God to change you before He can use you? If you are, you may be waiting for a long time! I have often said that God is more comfortable with your humanity than you are. He is not as interested in changing some things about you as you are, for you perceive them to be unchristian and negative, but they may not be.

What’s more, do you think a gentle, meek man could have done what Paul did? I doubt it. My point is that God made Paul the way he was and then used him as he was. The Lord will do the same for and with you.

So what have you been putting off doing until you were a better Christian? Perhaps it is time to stop waiting and start doing what is in your heart to do?