

Titus Devotionals & Sermon Illustrations

TITUS 1 DEVOTIONALS

Titus 1:1 F B Meyer Our Daily Homily

THESE seem to have been the two guiding stars of the apostle's life--faith and knowledge. Some are afraid of the conjunction. The men of faith are afraid of science, and the men of science often despise faith. But they are not antagonistic.

Faith.--The faith that inspires all elect souls is one and the same. In some there may be more, in others less; but its attitude toward God and its phases of experience, trial, and triumph, are the same in all who believe. In addition to this, the general facts and truths on which our faith lays hold, and from which it extracts its nourishment, are the same: and it is a comfort to know that these have been passed on from age to age from the earliest days, and that we are called to believe in them, and hold them fast.

Knowledge of the Truth.--We need not fear or shun knowledge, which is simply the exploring and discovery of the ways and thoughts of God. "Let knowledge grow from more to more." Only let her always concern herself with the great facts and methods of God's universe, rather than with human speculation and fancy. There is a distinction between knowledge and wisdom. The one may be only intellectual; the other is always moral. Those who pretend to know are not always wise; but the wise always know.

Godliness.--True knowledge will make you godly, reverent, devout; filling you with the Spirit of God within, and with likeness to God without. It is only as you are godly, that you will really be wise and know things that are hidden from the wise and prudent. True knowledge leads to godliness, and godliness back to knowledge.

Titus 1:1-4

The hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time. - Titus 1:2

TODAY IN THE WORD

Did you know Chicago is called the Windy City not because of its gusty Lake Michigan wind chills, but because of the "windy," blustery oratory of the politicians? The old expression "full of wind" was applied to Chicago lawmakers because they often couldn't stand behind their boasts. The city's nickname was given in the late 1800s (around the same time Moody Bible Institute was founded). The notion that politicians often twist words, lie, or make "blustery" promises they can't keep is certainly not new!

Today's passage is the beginning of a letter from the apostle Paul to a church on the island of Crete. The church, originally started by Paul, was now being led by a pastor named Titus. The problems facing the church were, in part, due to the godless society surrounding it. Paul feared the church would turn from its original foundation on truth and begin to be influenced by the persuasive lies of that culture.

Paul suggests ways believers can avoid being held captive by lies. First, they must remember in whom they believe. In the first sentences, Paul turns their attention away from himself and toward God. He is one, Paul declares, "who does not lie" (v. 2). This is an incredible promise! Our God does not promise more than He can deliver. Every word spoken by God can be counted upon with our lives, because we trust in a God who does not change and cannot lie. His Word, like His character, is completely true and reliable.

It is worth noting Paul's chosen title: "servant." This first verse sets the tone for our study this month of the books of Titus, Philemon, and James. Paul doesn't present himself here as the esteemed apostle, but as a man whose life has been taken captive, a servant who does the will of his Master.

Paul explains that God's message has been "promised before the beginning of time" (v. 2). We, like Titus, share a "common faith" (v. 4) with the apostle. We, too, have been called to follow God. We can count on this One in whom we believe, a God who is faithful, not "full of wind."

APPLY THE WORD

The three letters we will study this month are meant not only to encourage us in our faith but also to challenge us to live in a way that shows we are held captive by God. Pray today that God will use this study to reveal any areas of your life that are outside of God's boundaries. How would your life change if you truly recognized your role, as Paul does, as a "servant" of the Almighty God? Give thanks today that our Lord is faithful and gracious.

Titus 1:2 Reserved In Heaven By David H. Roper Read: 1 Peter 1:3-12

An inheritance incorruptible ... reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God. —1 Peter 1:4-5

A friend of mine spent several months rebuilding an old Ford Bronco and turning it into an off-road vehicle for use here in Idaho. He kept it in his garage under lock and key. When Christmas came, Gary thought, What better place to hide my daughter Katie's present.

Shortly before Christmas, someone asked Katie what she was getting for Christmas. "Oh," she replied, "I already have it. It's a bicycle in a box under the Bronco in the garage!"

I don't know what methods Katie used to discover her present. But I do admire her unshakable confidence that the bike was hers even though she did not yet have it in her hands.

That confidence reminds me of the apostle Peter's words: "[God] has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5).

What is reserved for us? Our inheritance—heaven, and a legacy beyond description that rests on the certainty of eternal life, "which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began" (Titus 1:2).

I am living for the moment
When before His feet I fall,
And with all the host of heaven
Own Him Lord and King of all.
—Christiansen

A Christian's future is as bright as the promises of God.

Titus 1:5

I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking (Titus 1:5).

Golf teaches us, among other things, that we can't always take the easy way out of a difficult situation. When a ball rolls off the fairway and into the rough, the golfer isn't permitted to pick it up and place it where it will be easier to play. He must hit the ball from the rough.

Young Titus found himself "in the rough." He had been left in Crete, charged with the task of building up the Lord's work there. But he encountered problems. The Cretans were generally deceitful, immoral, and lazy, and this spirit had invaded the churches. Problem people were causing division. Paul realized that his friend needed encouragement, so he wrote to him. He began his letter by saying, in essence, "Yes, things are bad in Crete. But that's exactly why I left you there. God can use you to bring about great and necessary changes." Titus listened, and he succeeded. Although the Bible doesn't record the results of this encouraging letter from Paul, archeologists have found the remains of stately churches that had the name "Titus" inscribed on their cornerstones.

Whenever we are in a difficult place, we don't help ourselves by looking for the easy way out. Instead, by exercising our faith in God and facing the challenge, we can battle our way through the problem. We'll become better people, and we'll discover that God can make us victorious. —H. V. Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The greater the problem, the greater our opportunity to tap God's power.

Titus 1:5-9 (See more related devotionals below)

Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless. - Titus 1:7

TODAY IN THE WORD

The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and Foreign Language Learning, by David Smith and Barbara Carvill, proposes hospitality as the foundation for our "encounters with strangers," that is, for cross-cultural relationships. We should view a short-term missions trip, for instance, as an opportunity to receive hospitality, and getting to know an immigrant neighbor as a chance to offer hospitality. Biblical hospitality includes a pattern of showing humility and respect when interacting with others, and Smith and Carvill

apply this pattern to foreign language learning in ways that should encourage and convict both students and teachers.

The virtue of hospitality doesn't get much attention today, yet it is in the list of qualifications for eldership. Neither this list nor the one we'll study tomorrow are exhaustive or definitive. Both were written to pastors at relatively new churches— Titus in Crete and Timothy in Ephesus—so they could organize the local congregations and develop godly leadership teams.

One interesting principle that emerges is that marriage, parenting, and home life are seen as proving grounds for church leadership (v. 6). Elders must be faithful and monogamous (if married), not engaging in any form of sexual immorality. They must have obedient, believing children whose characters have been shaped by their parents' godly training and discipline. And they must practice hospitality, which literally means "loving strangers" (cf. Lev. 19:34). Those who do so might even entertain angels unaware (Heb. 13:2).

Another key principle is the importance of character. Most of the other attributes on this list, whether stated positively or negatively, have to do with moral actions and habits (vv. 7-8). This is instructive, given our culture's emphasis on abilities and achievements. Elders should be upright and self-controlled, not proud, angry, hurtful, dishonest, greedy, or self-pleasing. Spiritually speaking, their faith should be strong and they should be able to teach and defend sound doctrine (v. 9).

APPLY THE WORD - Are you aware of the leadership policies and procedures at your church or in your denomination? If not, try to find out how leaders are chosen. Who is eligible? Is there any kind of leadership development program? How are leaders held accountable or disciplined when necessary? What authority, responsibilities, and privileges do leaders have? What is the history of the leadership structure currently in place? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Finally, commit to pray for the leaders in your church, and for their families.

Titus 1:5-9 The Lord detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose ways are blameless. - Proverbs 11:20

TODAY IN THE WORD

In the early months of the year 1999, the world watched as the U.S. Senate deliberated the fate of former President Bill Clinton. Although the impeachment charges against the President were controversial, the real question had to do with whether character had anything to do with national leadership. No doubt the discussion of character will continue to be raised in future political campaigns, but the matter should be settled once and for all when it comes to the leadership of the church. God's Word is very clear that those who provide spiritual direction in our congregations are to be people of excellent character.

You will recall from our study on Friday that the character trait of "goodness" refers first of all to thinking about things that are excellent, especially as it relates to people. Then we learned that those "most excellent things" that we ponder in our minds are to be put into practice (Phil. 4:8-9). Although the word translated as "goodness" in 2 Peter 1:5 is not found in our reading for today, it seems obvious that Paul wanted Titus to be on the lookout for individuals whose lives demonstrated excellence. They were to display this pursuit of excellence in their family life, their interpersonal relationships, and their emotional stability.

One might ask why Paul didn't just ask Titus to find good managers or successful businessmen to help operate the church in Crete. But the text is clear that "goodness" must characterize church leadership, especially those who are elders, for two reasons. First, goodness (or in this case "blamelessness," v. 6) should be the pursuit of a leader because such individuals have been entrusted with the Word of God (v. 7). If they haven't shortchanged people and possessions in other areas of life, there is a great possibility that they will not distort what God is saying in His Word.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Maybe you are not a church leader right now, but you might be one day. Take an inventory of your present situation. Are you pursuing excellence in your family life? If not, try to determine why that is not a pursuit right now. At the same time, are you pursuing excellence in your relationships with people in your church? If not, why not?

Titus 1:5-9 Encourage others by sound doctrine. - Titus 1:9

TODAY IN THE WORD

A recent survey published by Training Journal revealed a dwindling trust in leaders after surveying approximately 300 employees. Leaders destroyed trust by 1) being out of touch with what is happening with employees, and 2) by saying one thing and doing another. One employer said, "Trust is crucial in the workplace ... Leaders need to focus on what they do, only then will they truly win the hearts and minds of their people."

Paul's letter to Titus quickly turns to the organizational structure left behind to manage these fledgling churches. Paul reminds Titus that he must "appoint elders in every town" (v. 5). Leadership, good leadership, would be crucial to the successful growth of the church. And these leaders must be carefully selected. They must reflect the God whom they are called to serve. Bad leadership

would harm the church and its followers.

The verses outline the qualities these leaders should have, and the words chosen paint a portrait of the highly selective qualifications: “blameless, hospitable, holy, and disciplined.” There are also specific guidelines on what a good church leader should not be: “quick-tempered, violent, dishonest, or over-bearing” (vv. 6-8).

It is clear that a negative leader will cast a dark shadow on the truth of God’s Word. As noted in other epistles of Paul (1 Tim. 1:6), false leaders would creep up and threaten to destroy the young church. “Command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer” (1 Tim. 1:3). These false prophets would mislead others, twist truth, and cause others to fall away. Paul’s warning throughout his epistles is strong and without subtlety. Good leaders were (and are) vital!

As the survey about leadership reminds us, a leader’s life and actions must be consistent with his words. We cannot say one thing and do something else. Our lives, once taken captive by God, must now be fully in His control. A good leader will also know Scripture and doctrine, holding firmly to truth and encouraging others to be grounded in God’s Word (v. 9).

APPLY THE WORD

While the list of godly qualities in today’s passage applies to specific leadership roles, it is good to take a quick personal inventory of the characteristics that Paul identifies. How does our own life match up with this list? Would people identify us with the positive or the negative characteristics listed here? Is our life a good witness for Christ? Or, are our personal negative traits threatening to overshadow the message of God’s love?

Titus 1:5-16 An elder must be blameless. - Titus 1:6

TODAY IN THE WORD

Most people are careful in choosing fruit from grocery store displays. They don’t just grab the ones closest to hand and throw them in the cart. Instead, they examine the color and firmness of peaches and plums. They check the size and appearance of grapes and oranges. They scan the bananas for ones that are neither too brown nor too green. They examine the strawberries to make sure there are no brown spots or mold. They might even knock on a cantaloupe or watermelon shell. No one wants to take home bad fruit.

If one takes care in choosing fruit at the grocery store, how much more care should be taken in choosing church leaders! Today’s passage parallels yesterday’s in listing qualifications for church offices. Both readings stem from very practical situations, as Paul offered counsel to pastors he had mentored (Timothy in Ephesus, Titus in Crete). He had commissioned Titus to go throughout the island and appoint elders in every town (v. 5), a task for which more guidance was apparently needed. The point is that Paul’s teaching on leadership was not theoretical or abstract, but immediately relevant and practical to local churches.

The standards for church leadership are high because “an overseer is entrusted with God’s work.” As yesterday, the qualifications emphasize personal righteousness, family management, and an ability to teach and defend sound doctrine. They are phrased both negatively, such as “not quick-tempered,” and positively, such as “loves what is good.” Communication and interpersonal skills are implied by such characteristics as “not overbearing” and “hospitable.”

Teaching friends and refuting enemies of the faith was so important that Paul expanded on this point (vv. 10-16). Especially since the written canon of the New Testament was not yet complete, false teachers were a real and present danger. The legalists or “circumcision group” were corrupting the gospel and needed to be rebuked. Titus was responsible to appoint godly church leaders to safeguard the purity of the faith.

APPLY THE WORD - Church leaders need to be able to defend the faith. In Christian theology it’s called apologetics. To brush up your skills in apologetics, try to obtain one or more of these DVDs: The Case for Christ, The Case for Faith, or The Case for a Creator. Based on the bestselling books by journalist Lee Strobel, these films present compelling and thoughtful arguments for the truths of Christianity. In addition to helping you develop your own witnessing skills, they could be loaned out to friends and family.

Titus 1:1-9 Cupcake Self-Discipline By Herbert Vander Lugt

Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls. —Proverbs 25:28

An old adage says: “Next time you want a cupcake, eat a carrot.” The saying is good advice for dieters, but those who framed it may have had all of us in mind. By disciplining our desires when no moral principle is at stake, we prepare ourselves for those moments when we face a temptation to sin.

This kind of discipline is what Paul referred to when he used the term self-controlled in his list of qualifications for church leadership

(Titus 1:8). We need this reminder today. Many people think they can live immorally now and suddenly stop when they want to. Because they do not consider the addictive power of sin, they find that living up to their good intentions is far more difficult than they had anticipated.

Proverbs 25:28 tells us that if we lack self-control we are as defenseless as a city with broken-down walls. Consistent self-discipline will build up our spiritual defense system against the forces of evil.

When we discipline ourselves to keep our ordinary desires under control, we make a habit of virtuous living and practice the reality of Paul's words in Romans 6:18, "Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

For Further Study: Are you facing struggles in your walk with the Lord?

To gain self-control, give Christ control.

Titus 1:7 Marching Into A Dead End

Stuart Briscoe writes about a funeral for a war veteran in which the man's military buddies had a role in the memorial service. The friends requested that the minister lead them to the casket for a moment of silence. They would then follow the pastor out a side door.

The plan was carried out with military precision--until the minister marched them into a broom closet. The soldiers had to make a disorganized retreat.

That pastor made an honest mistake, but it illustrates that leaders must know where they are going. As go the leaders, so go the followers.

The apostle Paul left Titus on the island of Crete to establish a witness for Jesus Christ. Titus was to appoint leaders for the growing band of believers. Except for preaching the gospel, nothing Titus did for the Christians on Crete was more important than finding them the right leadership.

Church leaders are to meet the standards set forth in Titus 1:6-9 and to guide others to greater maturity in their relationship with Christ. And followers must lovingly hold their spiritual leaders accountable to those goals.

Whether you're leading or following, know where you're going. Don't march into a dead end. --H W Robinson [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Before you follow a leader,
Check his beliefs, and pray;
Be sure he's following Jesus,
And that he knows the way. --Hess

The only leader worth following
is the leader who is following Christ

Titus 1:10-11

They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach. - Titus 1:11

TODAY IN THE WORD

The old cliché says that silence is golden. The truth of this statement, however, depends upon the nature of that silence. When false doctrine is being taught, the silence of those who know the truth leads to immeasurable damage. That's why Paul says that it's the false teachers who "must be silenced." In our age of religious pluralism and ethical relativism, Christians may find it hard to confront those who disagree with the basic truths of the Christian faith. Yet if we ignore false teaching, Paul warns that it will spread from individuals to families to entire churches. We can't afford to be silent.

Our responsibility to contend with those who oppose the faith raises an important question. How do we discern between false doctrine and the legitimate differences that exist between believers? Not every difference in doctrine falls into the category of heresy. Some doctrines, like the doctrine of the deity of Christ or the doctrine of the Trinity, are so essential to the faith that without them we no longer have true Christianity. There are other issues, such as the order of worship services or the method of baptism, about which we can disagree amicably. The fact that we do so, however, does not mean that our differences are insignificant. We are simply acknowledging that we do not have perfect understanding of biblical truth. Based upon what we know, we believe our position

is the right one. But we are willing to allow others to hold a different view without calling their faith into question.

APPLY THE WORD What are the “non-negotiables” of Christian doctrine? Write “The Trinity” and “The deity of Christ” on a sheet of paper. Now add all the doctrines that you feel should be considered essentials of the Christian faith. Once your list is complete, ask your pastor or a Sunday school teacher to look it over. Do they agree with you? Or are there any doctrines that they would add or subtract from your list? If there are points of disagreement, use them as a starting point for your study of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith.

Titus 1:10-16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. - Titus 1:16

TODAY IN THE WORD

If you plan to vacation in a new city and are looking for a hotel, you probably read travel reviews. Websites like Hotels.com and Travelocity offer photos, maps, and reviews about specific properties. Some are scathing: “This hotel is nothing like the pictures. It was the smallest room I have ever stayed in!” Travelers use these reviews to protect themselves from deceptive hotel ads that do not live up to their promises.

In today’s passage, Paul continues to advise Titus about the leadership of the church. He warns that not all members of the church have the best intentions. Some, he says, are “full of meaningless talk and deception” (v. 10). These people, he insists, “must be silenced” (v. 11).

Paul explains that when individuals begin teaching false things, or when they teach with dishonest motives, they cause havoc in the church. The church should be like a family, a “household” (v. 11). One rebellious member could affect the others and destroy the sense of community. This links closely to other teachings about the body of Christ. If one part of the body suffers, the rest of the body becomes weak and far less effective (see 1 Cor. 12:26).

Being silent or simply ignoring these individuals was not an option. Paul instructs Titus to “rebuke them sharply” (v. 13). This was crucial to the growth and reputation of the body of Christ.

How did these individuals get into the early church? How do such individuals get into our churches today? Paul suggests here that in part, they make promises that they don’t keep. On the surface, they seem to know God and to proclaim His truth, but they are “liars” (v. 12). He states it even more strongly, saying that “both their minds and consciences” are corrupt. They may claim one thing, but they do another.

This should challenge all believers that it matters how we live and how we relate to our fellow servants of God. Followers of Christ are called to practice what they preach. Believers are encouraged to hold true not to their own motivations and intentions but to God’s.

APPLY THE WORD

“Say what you mean!” Do your words match your actions? People of God are called to be true to His Word and also to be true to their own. Make your words count. Hesitate to overpromise something that you can’t—or won’t—deliver. Be sure to stand by your words and to act in a manner worthy of your calling. One bad action can cast a negative light on not just your own testimony but also that of your fellow believers.

Titus 1:12-14

TODAY IN THE WORD

A British ambassador was reporting to Queen Elizabeth II about a head of state he had been having difficulty with. The ambassador tried to approach the subject delicately, using large words and complicated language. However, the more he spoke, the less clear he became. Finally, the exasperated queen interrupted and said, “Are you trying to tell me that the man is just bonkers?”

Paul was just as blunt in his assessment of the false teachers that Titus had to refute. Quoting the philosopher Epimenides, Paul declared, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” Epimenides was a religious teacher who lived in the sixth century B.C. Aristotle and Cicero referred to him as a “prophet.” Paul quotes him because Epimenides was from Crete and because of his strong criticism of his own people. Although his assessment was harsh, his opinion was widely shared. So much so, in fact, that in Greek culture, to call someone a “Cretan” was synonymous with calling that person a liar.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - When are “sharp words” warranted in dealing with another believer? Paul’s directive to Titus provides a helpful checklist that can be used when we are considering a possible rebuke. First, how serious is the offense? These false teachers required a sharp rebuke because of the nature and impact of their teaching. Others were being seriously damaged by their

false doctrine. Second, what is our motive? Is the goal redemptive? Do we want to sound off, or do we want them to be sound in the faith? ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Titus 1:15-16 (See devotional below)

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. - Titus 1:15

TODAY IN THE WORD

The British poet Lord Byron was invited to the home of Samuel Rogers for a dinner party. During the meal he was asked if he would like some soup. "No," he replied, "I never have soup." "Would you like some fish?" the host asked. "No," the poet answered, "I never eat fish." Next the host offered Byron some mutton. Again, his guest declined, saying that he never ate mutton either. "Would you take a glass of wine then?" the host asked. "No" Byron answered. "I never drink wine." Finally his exasperated host asked, "What exactly do you eat and drink?" "Nothing but hard biscuits and soda water," Byron replied. Having neither, Rogers served Lord Byron potatoes in vinegar. Later he asked a friend of the poet, "How long will Lord Byron persevere in his present diet?" "Just as long as you continue to notice it," was the answer.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

True righteousness is the result of faith in Christ's finished work and is reflected in one's character. However, when we think of people who are "detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good," we hardly think of those who are religious. We associate these terms with murderers, thieves, and immoral people. Yet in God's eyes, those who trust in their own efforts for righteousness are as condemned as notorious sinners. Praise God today for giving true righteousness to all those who trusted Him in Jesus Christ.

Titus 1:15 A Searching Test = [Click Here for Pdf copy of Spurgeon's sermon entitled "A Searching Text"](#)

Titus 1:16 Isaiah 1:1-23

They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. - Titus 1:16

TODAY IN THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah received visions from the Lord during the reigns of four kings of Judah (approximately 740-698 B.C.). His visions are recorded in the book of Isaiah. Presumably, Isaiah 1 was written after the Assyrians ravaged the countryside of Judah, leaving only Jerusalem standing in 701 B.C. (vv. 7-9). By this point in Judah's history, those in power had developed a system of heavy economic burdens imposed upon the weak. Vulnerable people were denied justice and the religious practices of the day legitimized and perpetuated the injustices.

As we read Isaiah 1, we become like observers in a court of law. Today's reading is the Lord's indictment upon Judah. Pay attention to the emotions and tone of the passage: anger, displeasure, hostility, and intense frustration. Judah is sinful and estranged from God. They have rebelled against their Father (v. 2); they are shamefully compared with animals (v. 3); they instinctively do evil and have completely turned against the LORD (v. 4). The "survivors" were the only hope of redemption from this sober situation (v. 9).

Why is the Lord so outraged with His people? Let's look at verses 10 through 17. The people of Judah think they're fulfilling worship; but the Lord charges them with hypocritical worship (vv. 13-14). Their sacrifices, prayers, and rituals are meaningless to God because their behavior does not match up. Their "evil deeds" are identified as injustice, exploitation of the oppressed, and denying support to those without social safety nets (vv. 16-17). God does not mince words. This behavior disgusts Him, reflects a sinful heart, and results in hollow worship.

It is not simply that seeking justice is a bonus to worship. Rather, pleasing worship is impossible apart from seeking justice. God calls for repentance and change and warns of the consequences of further disobedience (vv. 18-23).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Today's reading is a solemn reminder that God looks beyond church attendance and daily prayer. We cannot claim to worship God and then ignore—or participate in the oppression of—the vulnerable members of our society. True worship reflects His heart by seeking justice on their behalf. As you reflect on Isaiah 1, repent for ways that you and your Christian community might be like Judah. Ask God to reveal injustice in your midst and align your heart with His through tangible action.

Titus 1:13-16

Throughout history, Crete has been a difficult place in which to live. Epimenides, a Cretan poet who lived in the sixth century before Christ, wrote, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (quoted in Titus 1:12). In Greek literature, to "cretanize" meant to lie. Morally and spiritually, Crete was bankrupt.

Yet Paul established a church there and asked Titus to organize it and appoint leaders.

The people on this island were known throughout the Mediterranean world as lazy and dishonest. Titus had to be a rock in a hard place. Through his teaching he was to expose error and proclaim truth; through his life he was to be an example of what it means to live for Christ (2:7-8).

God expects some of us to represent Him in neighborhoods where people laugh at the slightest mention of God. He expects others of us to be His representatives in workplaces where Christ's name is a curse word.

To do this, we must not only know God's truth, but also be convinced that it is the best way to live with others in this life and the only way to live with God in the life to come.—H W Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

TITUS 2 DEVOTIONALS

Titus 2:1-10 (see also devotionals below)

In everything set them as an example by doing what is good. - Titus 2:7

TODAY IN THE WORD In May 2011, the United Kingdom celebrated a royal wedding. Prince William and his bride Catherine Middleton wed amidst pomp and circumstance that reminded many of William's parents. In 1981, the marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana drew unprecedented publicity. Viewers watched a "fairy tale" marriage that began with a horse-drawn carriage. Unfortunately, the union ended with allegations of cheating, depression, divorce, and a tragic death. The "fairy tale" crumbled before our eyes.

In today's passage, Paul turns the spotlight from the church to shine on the home. How is the quality of a believer's faith reflected in relationships? How should belief in Christ affect our daily lives and those with whom we live and whom we love?

Paul examines each member of the household, outlining individual duties and responsibilities. To older men, he encourages them to be "worthy of respect" and to exhibit "self control," among other qualities (v. 2). Older women are to live reverently and teach good (v. 3). Notice how both are called to consider others more important than themselves. Older men and women are called to live exemplary lives for younger people to follow.

The letter next encourages a pattern of discipleship for older adults to teach the things they have learned. "In everything set them an example by doing what is good" (v. 7). Whenever you teach, Paul notes, be mindful of the example you are setting so that nothing you do can discredit your message. For old and young, he encourages believers to live lives so that opponents have no opportunity to make credible charges of wrongdoing (v. 8).

We should not assume that the mention of slaves in verse 9 provides any justification for slavery, even granting that slavery in the first century often looked different from chattel slavery or contemporary labor bondage. But the text here reminds us that no matter our situation, we can still have the dignity of bringing glory to God. We can still extend honesty and respect to others.

Why must we subject ourselves to others? Why should we treat others with respect? This seems counter-cultural in a "me-first" generation. Yet, Paul firmly reminds believers that our lives are a direct reflection upon God and His Word. Our lives are to be held captive by Him. We must live exemplary lives so that "in every way [we] will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive" (v. 10).

APPLY THE WORD

Today, take a moment to pray for those who live in the closest relationship to you: your spouse, your children, or your siblings. You can also pray for a parent, a boss, or a neighbor. Ask God to strengthen these key personal relationships. Ask Him to help you hold your tongue when necessary, and to honor your loved ones with the respect they deserve. Ask God to guide and strengthen you to make your relationships a positive, selfless reflection on His name.

By Dave Branon

Older women ... [are to] admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children. —Titus 2:3-4

Grandparents are great bridge-builders. My grandparents, farmers on both sides of the family, were children of the 19th century and relayed an important heritage of both history and faith through the years.

Today, my children benefit from their grandparents' faith because they can see that my wife and I have personally accepted the faith modeled for us. And our children have seen and heard their grandparents' testimonies of faith for themselves.

In a sense, it seems strange that grandparents can have such far-reaching influence. After all, they can be separated in age from their grandchildren by 40 to 70 years. Yet they have an uncanny ability to bridge that generation gap—sometimes even better than parents can.

Older Christians, including grandparents, have a unique responsibility and opportunity—that of example and instruction—which either directly or indirectly keeps the heritage of faith alive from generation to generation.

Let's be thankful for the strong heritage of faith, love, and family that grandparents can leave to those who come after them. And grandparents should seize every opportunity of relating to their grandchildren, so that their faith will become the faith of their children's children.

I do not ask for mighty words

To leave them all impressed,

But grant my life may ring so true

My family will be blessed. —Anon.

The richest inheritance a grandparent can leave is a godly example.

Titus 2:1, Titus 1:5-16 Smooth Talkers

Richard De Haan

Speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. —Titus 2:1

A man who was trying to explain the meaning of the word oratory commented with tongue in cheek, "If you say black is white, that's foolishness. But if while you say black is white you roar like a bull, pound on the table with both fists, and race from one end of the platform to another, that's oratory!"

We can quickly be swept off our feet by the way people express themselves, even though we have some questions about their message. Jude warned us about those whose mouths speak "great swelling words" (v.16). The masses are often moved more by style than by content.

According to Paul, the time will come when people will turn away from the truth of sound doctrine and tolerate only those who entertain and make people feel good (2 Tim. 4:3-4). So we must carefully analyze and evaluate in the light of the Scriptures everything we hear—even what is taught and proclaimed by the most eloquent of speakers. We must not allow ourselves to be swayed by mere oratory—especially in the church! We need to be sure that the Bible teachers we listen to are "speaking the truth in Christ and not lying" (1 Tim. 2:7).

Don't let "idle talkers and deceivers" (Ti. 1:10) confuse you. Eloquence is never a substitute for truth.

We must beware of speakers who

Distort and twist God's Word;

They'll entertain and motivate,

And call the truth absurd. —Sper

To recognize Satan's lies, focus on God's truth.

Titus 2:1-8

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. - Titus 2:12

TODAY IN THE WORD

William Tyndale learned the doctrine of justification by faith by reading Erasmus's Greek edition of the New Testament. Though denied permission to translate, it then became his lifelong passion to make the New Testament available in his native language of English. He completed his translation in Europe and had it smuggled into England, where it faced fierce opposition from the government and established church. Living in Antwerp, Belgium, he began translating the Old Testament as well, but in 1535 was betrayed into the hands of the law. Condemned as a heretic, he was strangled and burned at the stake.

Tyndale paid the ultimate price for his devotion to God and His Word. As we've read, obedience is an essential response to the Bible. The complementary truth is that our obedient actions verify and exalt the truth and power of Scripture.

Paul wanted sound doctrine taught (v. 1), but interestingly he elaborated on this idea not in terms of propositions but rather virtues. While there's no reason to think the virtues are exclusive, he presented them in categories appropriate to specific groups—older men (v. 2), older women (v. 3), younger women (vv. 4-5), and younger men (vv. 6-8). Addressing specific audiences is not meant to divide but to unite. The older women should teach the younger women, for example, and Titus should be a model for the younger men.

Verse 5 is our key: "so that no one will malign the word of God." When younger women live godly lives as described here, this promotes the gospel; otherwise, godless actions speak louder than any words. The virtues listed include love, self-control, purity, kindness and submission. Similarly, Titus is to live righteously so that outsiders will have "nothing bad to say about us" (v. 8; cf. 1 Tim. 3:7). This principle applies across the board, that is, when we live to please God, He uses our obedience to bring honor to His Word and glory to Himself (v. 10).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

In which season of life described by Paul are you? "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).

Take another look at the verses in this passage written specifically about you. How would you apply them to yourself? Pray over them, asking God the same question. As He leads you into what steps you should take, tell someone to whom you'll be accountable, and go do it!

Titus 2:1-10

Surprise and Astonish Them

MARK Twain took delight in exposing the follies of human behavior. He once said,

"Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest."

People are often surprised when someone does what is right. That's why it made national news a few years ago when a high school basketball coach turned in his state championship team after discovering that he had unknowingly used an ineligible player. He and his team had achieved the dream of every coach and every prep athlete—one that carries with it a lifetime of cherished memories. But they gave it all back—the trophy, the glory, the pride. They gave it back so they could keep something more important—their integrity.

Doing what's right is not a new idea. David realized what it took to walk in integrity. He knew that to do right he would have to avoid hypocrisy and dishonesty. Integrity was worth more than anything he could gain by sacrificing it.

Doing right has a price tag. It may cost money if we refuse to cheat; it may cost time if we refuse to cut corners; it may cost pleasure if we refuse to compromise a moral standard; it may cost relationships if we refuse to support unethical behavior.

But none of these is worth more than integrity.—J D Brannon

Titus 2:1-10

TODAY IN THE WORD

As you read the last two days' studies on the qualifications of church leaders, the thought may have occurred to you, ""That's wonderful. But what about the rest of us?""

These few important verses of Scripture answer that question admirably. But Paul's instructions to the church through Titus are more than a series of good ideas. As you read these directives in light of the personal, family, and society-wide meltdown happening in American life today, you'll realize the divine wisdom built into the church.

The Bible's admonishments to older men should sound familiar. These personal and spiritual qualifications are many of the same qualities required of elders. While the elders are charged with specific leadership responsibilities in the church, all of the older men in Christ's body need to be examples of godly maturity.

Older women have an incredible mentoring and teaching role to fulfill toward the younger women in the congregation. The New Testament consistently highlights the home as the incubator for the church--a church in miniature, as a matter of fact. The pivotal place of a wife and mother is obvious here, but God knows that being a good spouse and parent doesn't happen automatically. Someone needs to show the way.

Young men are told to be self-controlled, a command that covers an awful lot of territory. Titus himself probably fit in that category in the church on Crete, so young men can read in Paul's words to Titus a spiritual challenge to themselves.

The last group to be addressed is workers with the hardest "job description" ever: slaves who were obligated to serve their masters. Even in this situation, a Christian slave was to show good faith and integrity.

Notice how often Paul refers to our testimonies as the reason for being faithful in our actions. No one should be able to "malign the Word of God" because of what we do (v. 5). Our behavior should be so blameless that even our opponents can't make any charge against us (v. 8). And workers can make the gospel "attractive" by their faithful service (v. 10).

In other words, there is much at stake spiritually in the way we live. The world is still watching.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - The days when our culture reflected Christian values and moral standards have gone the way of black-and-white television.

The guidelines for Christian behavior in Titus 2 are not only missing in the culture at large; they are absolutely counterculture today. But then, God has called His people to avoid being conformed to the world. Romans 12:2 addresses this issue of a counterculture commitment. Read this powerful verse as your prayer to the Lord today.

Titus 2:1 BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR - J R Miller - It makes no difference what a man believes, or what doctrines he holds - "It makes no difference what a man believes, or what doctrines he holds — it is only his conduct that counts." That is the way some people talk, as they sneer at Bible doctrines. But it **does** matter what one believes. Wrong believing leads to wrong living. The heathen worships a god conceived of as lustful, cruel, and unholy. The Christian worships a God, who is revealed as holy, righteous, pure, and good, and becomes holy, righteous, pure, and good. Beliefs shape our lives. It is important, therefore, that we know the truths about the character and will of Christ, as our conception of Christ will imprint itself upon our life. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" Colossians 3:16 "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." Titus 1:9 "You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine." Titus 2:1

Titus 2:1-2

Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. - Titus 2:2

TODAY IN THE WORD

The humorist Art Linkletter once observed that there are four stages of humankind: infancy, childhood, adolescence, and obsolescence! Although he was not being serious, his comment reflects the view of many today.

Our culture is biased toward youth. Television programming, clothing styles, and even popular music styles often seem to be tailored to the young. This bias is sometimes reflected in the church. Popular worship styles often favor new music over traditional hymns. This youth-oriented bias could easily give the impression that people become obsolete after a certain age. However, this is not the Bible's perspective.

According to the Scriptures, age brings wisdom. "Gray hair is a crown of splendor," the author of Proverbs declares, "it is attained by a righteous life" (Prov. 16:31). Proverbs 20:29 says: "The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old."

The apostle Paul shared this view. He considered older believers to be one of the church's greatest assets and he depended upon them to train younger Christians. Because of their important role as instructors and models in the faith, Paul wanted Titus to

encourage older men to live lives that reflected their faith in Christ.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Can you name the spiritual leaders in your church who meet the requirements described in these verses? The next time you see them, make it a point to tell them how much you appreciate their godly example. Find time during the week to pray for leaders in your church, as they shepherd God's people. If you are one of the elders in your congregation, reflect on your service as a spiritual mentor. Ask God for wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit to help others grow spiritually.

Titus 2:1-12

An Eye On You

YOU wouldn't think that a bunch of hard-driving hockey players would fear someone as non-threatening as a Christian. But when the Washington Capitals, a National Hockey League team, acquired Jean Pronovost, players were warned, "Keep an eye on the new guy."

Two teammates, Mike Gartner and Ryan Walter, did just that—and were surprised by what they saw. As they observed Pronovost's life, they saw something they liked—his Christian testimony. Soon Mike and Ryan were attending Bible studies with Jean. And in time both players turned their lives over to Jesus.

What is it about genuine Christians that some people find offensive and others find irresistible? Paul talked about the irresistible qualities in his letter to Titus. He mentioned traits like sober-mindedness (Titus 2:6), good works, integrity, reverence (Titus 2:7), and lives about which no one can speak evil (Titus 2:8).

Unbelievers are suspicious of Christians. Many of them are watching us to find a reason not to believe in Jesus. Others are keeping their eyes on us to find out if there's anything genuine about our faith.

Our lives say one of two things to unbelievers: "Jesus is real," or "Jesus is phony."

Each of us must choose which message we will send. —J D Brannon ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Titus 2:3-5

TODAY IN THE WORD

In his book entitled *The Weight of Glory*, C. S. Lewis tells the story of an old woman who met an enemy on her way out of church. When her opponent began to speak ill of her and to abuse her verbally, the old woman replied, "Isn't it a shame for ye to be talking to me like that, ye coward, and me in a state of Grace the way I can't answer ye? But you wait, I won't be in a state of Grace long!"

Ideally, age and growth in grace ought to coincide. The older we get, the more spiritually mature we should become. Yet this is not always the case. Just as there are some temptations that are especially common to youth, age brings with it its own set of trials. In these verses the apostle Paul highlights some of these temptations and points to a more godly alternative.

First on Paul's list are sins of the tongue. He urges Titus to warn older women not to be "slanderers." The root idea of this word is that of accusing or bringing charges against someone. It's the term from which we get the word devil. Whenever we slander or gossip, we are speaking the language of the devil. No wonder the Bible calls him "the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10). The second pitfall Paul mentions is the sin of drunkenness. The abuse of alcohol was a problem for many in the New Testament times. In Titus 2:3 Paul warns older women not to be "addicted," or more literally "enslaved," to wine. Frequent use can lead to bondage. This is true of many things, not just alcohol. Perhaps in our day, Paul would also warn about the danger of being enslaved to the Internet or to television.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Paul's advice is a valuable tool for women's spiritual growth in today's society. "Older women"—not necessarily in age, but more mature spiritually—can still help "younger women" meet the challenges of everyday life and to grow in faith. Younger women, on the other hand, have a lot to glean from the experience of those "who have been there." If you're a woman equipped to minister to younger sisters, or the one who needs ministry, ask God to show you how to expand the spiritual scope and efficiency of interacting with other women. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Titus 2:4

Reach Out And Teach

By Dave Branon

Read: Psalm 78:1-7

... telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord. —Psalm 78:4

I met Paul, Steve, and Tom when they were each about 14 years old—just a trio of guys who weren't interested in much except basketball. As their coach and English teacher, I taught them what I could about those two things—and about how to live the Christian life.

We all have opportunities like that. Even if we are not teachers by occupation, we all influence younger people. We can strive to be a good example, to encourage, to motivate, to teach, to influence for godliness.

Scripture suggests how important this is. The apostle Paul took the youthful John Mark with him on his missionary journey (Acts 12:25). And Titus 2:4 calls for older women to teach "young women to love their husbands."

If we want to transfer our legacy of faith to the next generation, we must take it upon ourselves to instruct the young people in our lives—one person at a time.

Today, many years after we met, Paul, Steve, and Tom are all married and living for the Lord, passing their faith along to a new generation—including their own 12 children. What a thrill to have had a part in guiding their lives!

Look around. There are young people you can help. Reach out and teach them how to live for the Lord.

Putting It Into Practice

Do you know a young person you can influence?

How can you encourage him or her to live for God

and to share the gospel with others?

When we teach young people, we're not just spending time, we're investing it.

Titus 2:4-5

The Tattered Rug

A preacher tells how he was once entertained by a teacher and his wife who had two boys in their middle teens. He writes, "Immediately on entering, I felt the home atmosphere. They were evidently a fine Christian family. However, I noticed that the carpet in the living room was tattered, and that there were actually holes in it. Nevertheless, the family was without doubt self-respecting. Before I left, the mother told me a story that helped me to understand about the rug. She said that one day when she was ready to sweep and dust, half a dozen boys were in her home. 'Now,' she had said, 'you fellows will have to go out for a while for I have some things to do in the house this morning.' 'But where shall we go?' they had asked. 'How about your aunt's?' she then suggested to one. 'Do you think she would have us in her place? Not much!' the boy had replied. Then she said to another, 'Why don't you go over to your house?' and he had answered quickly, 'Oh, Mother would never allow six of us in her fancy home!' A few more questions and she found that hers was the only place where the boys were allowed to come in at will and have fun. She confided that now they always gathered at her place, and that was why they would soon have to buy a new car-pet. After hearing her story, her tattered rug was transformed in my estimation! It became to me the most beautiful one I had ever seen — for it was worn out in keeping and making good boys."

We all like to see a house that is neat and well cared for, but not at the expense of human values. Mothers, if it is not absolutely necessary for you to go out to work, think twice before you do. Your first duty is to be good "keepers at home." Only thus can you honor the great privilege that God has given you of being a companion and friend to your children. If you have a "tattered rug" in your house, it may well be more of a badge of honor than an eyesore! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O blest the parents who give heed
Unto their children's foremost need,
And weary not of care or cost;
That they to Heaven be not lost. — C. Von Pfeil

Titus 2:6-15

Who Do They See?

IN 1977, Frank Tanana was struggling. He was a young major-league pitcher with a sore shoulder, and his promising career in baseball was in trouble. His anything-goes lifestyle threatened his very existence. He told one reporter, "My contract goes through 1981. I'll be lucky to be alive then—let alone pitching."

Then he saw someone who made a difference—John Werhas, the chaplain for the California Angels. "He cared for people," Frank recalls. "He had something special about him." That something special was a personal relationship with Jesus that had changed his life. It wasn't long before Frank had accepted Christ as his Savior. Although Frank's pitching days have ended, he has begun a new life of demonstrating how Jesus has transformed his life.

Our friends and loved ones may not be worried about career-threatening injuries, but they do feel the strain of living in a pressure-packed society. They too are worrying about their future. They need to see someone who has found peace—the peace with God that comes through faith in Jesus.

When people look at us, do they see a warm smile, hear a genuine word of greeting, experience a kind gesture of selflessness? That's the something special that could lead them to the Savior.—J D Brannon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Titus 2:6-8

TODAY IN THE WORD

Somerset Maugham, the British author, once wrote that the only thing that makes life tolerable in this world is the beauty that men create out of chaos. In "The Painted Veil," he said that things like painting, music, and literature make it possible to regard the world we live in without disgust. "Of all these," he declared, "the richest in beauty is a life well lived. That is the perfect work of art." In Titus 2:7-8, the apostle Paul expresses a similar sentiment. Only in this case, he says that a life well lived is the best defense of the Christian faith.

As Titus encouraged young men to be self-controlled, it was important for him not to forget his own responsibility in this area. Titus was to be an example to them in everything. The Greek term translated "example" originally referred to the hollow imprint that was used to make a mold of something. Later it came to signify a prototype or a model.

Titus himself was to be a model for the kind of self-control he commanded others to exhibit. He was to live out the principles he taught to others by "doing what is good." Paul also commanded Titus to reinforce his living example with sound doctrine. This kind of instruction would be marked by three characteristics: integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech. Integrity in doctrine referred to the content of his teaching: it enabled others to understand the truth and did not lead them astray. Seriousness referred to the way he taught. He was to teach with the kind of dignity that befitted the person representing the Lord of glory. Soundness of speech, or more literally "healthy" speech, described the effect of his instruction. His teaching would strengthen his hearers.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Actions do speak louder than words. To remind yourself of the importance of being a living example of the gospel, write "The best defense of the truth is a life well lived" on a card and display it where you can see it throughout the day. Consider what your conduct at home, at work, and in the neighborhood says to others about your relationship with God. Remember that when it comes to being a witness for Christ, your actions are as important as your words. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Titus 2:7

The Frosted Bell

Titus 2:7-8 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

Pastor Raymond Biddle shared the following experience with me in a letter. He wrote, "Our church has a good, clear-ringing bell. But yesterday we were ashamed of it. The first dull sound sent me looking for the bell ringer, who soon found out what was wrong. Nearly an inch of snow and sleet had blown on it during a night storm, and it was thoroughly encased in ice. What a poor call to worship it gave! Then the Lord impressed on me the thought that Christians often become sheathed in the sound-deadening things

of the world. As a result, their witness becomes 'ice-encased'.

The devil rejoices when Christians are drawn away from the Lord and their testimony is dulled by an accumulation of worldly attitudes and actions. Some of the "ices" that encase believers are pride, jealousy, materialism, hatred, lying, gossip, envy, and all the other sins that characterize our old nature. The best way to keep from becoming "iced up" is to keep "fired up." This is accomplished through prayer, the study of God's Word, and regular fellowship with other believers.

Do you need a good spiritual "thaw"? Let your testimony sound forth loud and clear! Richard W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Oh, may our lives ring loud and clear
With God's good news for all,
So people who are lost in sin
Will clearly hear His call. --Sper

A cold heart doesn't ring true.

Titus 2:7a

Works Witness

The considerate spirit and quiet good works of believers in Jesus Christ can make a tremendous impact on those who do not believe in Him. A little kindness speaks louder to some than fiery preaching.

A small congregation of believers in Japan put this principle into practice. They were planning to build a sanctuary. After the architect completed the plans, they went to all the neighbors, showed them the blueprints, and asked if anyone had any objections. No one did.

A few months later, however, before construction began, they heard that one man did have some concerns. They paid him a second visit and discovered he was worried that the structure would block the sunlight coming into his yard. Did they argue? No. Did they complain because he didn't speak out earlier? No. The church board went back to the architect and asked for a revision. At quite some additional expense, he redesigned the building with a lower roof. The surprised neighbor was pleased that he would not lose his sunlight.

In our hard-driving, rights-centered world, kind consideration toward others seems out of place. But it's always appropriate for us as Christians (Titus 2). And it can deliver a powerful witness. --D C Egener ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It is not always words galore
Nor brilliancy of speech
That opens wide the gospel door
Within the sinner's reach. --Rotz

A Christian is a living sermon.

Titus 2:7

A Good Teacher

While a student at Bryan College, I came to know Bible teacher Irving Jensen. He was well-known for his course on Bible-study methods, and he has published dozens of books and magazine articles on the subject. He believed deeply in what he taught and was a very effective and influential teacher.

Jensen was so effective because he lived what he taught. His speech was sometimes hesitant, and he didn't use flashy classroom techniques, but he loved his students and taught us to love the Word of God by the way he lived and what he taught. He lived out the words of Titus 2:7-8, "In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."

We are to back up what we say about Christ with a lifestyle that is above reproach and cannot be condemned by our enemies. Our lives are to be so exemplary that people around us are attracted to the truth about Christ (v.10).

Our words and our way of living should exemplify the message of Christ. By words and by deeds—that's how to be a good teacher.
— David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A teacher is more than a person who knows,
He instructs with his words and his ways;
Lord, give us the grace to reveal who You are,
And to model Your truth all our days. —Egner

A good teacher not only knows the way but shows the way.

Titus 2:8

Some Talk About Talk

A man attended a meeting where the guest lecturer was extremely long-winded. When the listener could stand it no longer, he got up and slipped out a

side door. In the corridor he met a friend who asked, "Has he finished yet?" "Yes," the man replied, "he's been through for a long time, but he's not aware of it. He simply won't stop!"

The idea of coming to the point and saying something worthwhile is also good counsel for us as we talk with others each day. If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that much of our conversation is nothing more than empty talk. The Lord Jesus warned, "For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment" (Mt. 12:36).

Pause a minute and think about what your usual conversation is like. What is the subject of most of your discussions? Do you talk too much and not give opportunity for others to speak? Is your speech profitable to others? And above all, do your words glorify God?

The Lord can enable you to speak words that build up others and don't just fill the air. Today, make these words of David your prayer: "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Ps. 141:3). -- Richard W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How easy it is to use many words
And give little thought to the things you say!
So, willingly yield your lips to the Lord
And hearts will be blest by them every day.-- Dennis J. De Haan

If your mind goes blank
don't forget to turn off the sound.

Titus 2:9-10 (See also devotional below)

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters ... so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. - Titus 2:9-10

TODAY IN THE WORD

Clement of Alexandria was a church leader who lived during the last half of the second century and the early part of the third century. In his book on the ethical life of the Christian, entitled *The Teacher*, Clement notes that many of the unbelieving women of his day, belonging to nobility, wore gold jewelry because they were afraid that without such ornaments they might be mistaken for slaves. Clement observed that the Christian, on the other hand, understands that true nobility is found in the beauty and substance of the soul. "For us," he explains, "what corresponds to freedom is not a mere semblance, but a being free because God, who even accepted us to be His children, is our educator. Therefore, we must attain the highest degree of freedom in the way we bear ourselves at rest or in motion, in the way we walk and dress: in a word, in every part of life."

This is also what Paul means when he urges Titus to tell slaves to live their lives in a way that will "make the teaching about God our savior attractive." Their response to the daily challenge of submission and service offered believing slaves an opportunity to use their lives to "adorn" the message of gospel. Paul provides concrete instructions for doing this. Slaves were to submit to their masters, not in a grudging spirit but in a genuine effort to please them. They were also to show respect to their masters by refusing to talk back to them. They were to show their trustworthiness by refusing to steal from their masters. None of these commands was contingent

upon the character of the master. Paul was not condoning slavery in saying this. Elsewhere he urges slaves, if they are able, to obtain their freedom and those who are free not to become the slaves of men (1 Cor. 7:21–23).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Use the categories in today's passage to evaluate your own performance on the job. What kind of attitude do you have toward your employer? Does your work reflect an attitude of respect? How do you speak to those in authority over you? What about the quality of the work you perform? Does it reflect the kind of integrity that would attract someone to the gospel? Choose one area that might need improvement and plan to work in a way that will "make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."

Titus 2:9-10

Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands. - 1 Thessalonians 4:11

TODAY IN THE WORD

Author and Christian financial advisor Larry Burkett writes, "Christian employees need two characteristics in their lives. The first is excellence. The apostle Paul said, 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men' (Col. 3:23). The second is honoring those in authority over you. Proverbs 11:2 says, 'When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.' If you are working for someone, regardless of what his or her personality type might be, God says you are to give that person honor. Pray for and do everything in your power to help that person daily."

Burkett's comments remind us of another important purpose for the work we do every day. It's one form of our witness to those outside the faith, giving us a ready-made platform to show the difference Christ has made in our lives. There are probably many readers of this devotional who can testify to the impact that faithful and honest work, performed with excellence, can have on unbelievers who watch them day by day.

The importance and value of work was an issue Paul had to deal with in Thessalonica more than once (see the August 2-3 studies). Some of those believers were not quietly going about their own work or minding their own business (2 Thess. 3:11). Instead, they refused to work.

The problem wasn't just that these Christians were creating havoc in the church by their laziness. They were also giving God's people a bad name with their pagan neighbors.

Maybe you've heard your pastor or some other teacher say that as Christians, we should be the best employees on the job, giving our employers a full day of productive work.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Often unbelievers have higher standards for Christians than Christians do for themselves.

Titus 2:10 Sermon Notes - Gospel Jewelry

THE apostle greatly values the doctrine of the gospel, or he would not care so much to have it adorned.

The apostle highly esteems the practical part of religion; hence he regards it as the beauty and ornament of the gospel. What a wide range of practical instruction we find in this short letter! With what holy ingenuity is this interwoven with the doctrine!

We are bidden to obey the precept that we may adorn the doctrine.

We have in our text—

I. A NAME OF ADORNMENT FOR THE GOSPEL. "The doctrine of God our Saviour."

1. It sets forth its greatness: "doctrine of God."

- Our fall, ruin, sin, and punishment were great.
- Our salvation and redemption are great.
- Our safety, happiness, and hopes are great.

2. It sets forth its certainty. It is "of God."

- It comes by revelation of God.

- It is guaranteed by the fidelity of God.
- It is as immutable as God himself.

3. It sets forth its relation to Christ Jesus: "of God our Saviour."

- He is the author of it.
- He is the substance of it.
- He is the proclaimer of it.
- He is the object of it. The gospel glorifies Jesus.

4. It sets forth its authority.

- The whole system of revealed truth is of God.
- The Savior himself is God, and hence he must be accepted.
- The gospel itself is divine. God mind is embodied in the doctrine of the Lord Jesus and to reject it is to reject God.

Let us believe, honor, defend, and propagate this "doctrine of God our Saviour." What else is so worthy of our love and zeal?

II. A METHOD OF ADORNMENT FOR THE GOSPEL.

This is a remarkable verse. Observe—

1. The persons who are to adorn the gospel.

- In Paul's day, bond servants or slaves.
- In our day, poor servants of the humblest order.
- Strange that these should be set to such a task!
- Yet, the women slaves adorned their mistresses, and both men and women of the poorest class were quite ready to adorn themselves.
- From none does the gospel receive more honor than from the poor.

2. The way in which these persons could specially adorn the gospel:

- By obedience to their masters (verse 9).
- By endeavors to please them: "please them well."
- By restraining their tongues: "not answering again."
- By scrupulous honesty: "not purloining" (verse 10).
- By trustworthy character: "showing all good fidelity."

All this would make their masters admire the religion of Jesus.

3. The way of adornment of the doctrine in general.

Negatively, it is found:

- Not in the decoration of the building, the priest, the choir, or the worshippers.
- Nor in the attraction of peculiar garb and speech.
- Nor in the finery of philosophical thought.
- Nor in the tawdriness of rhetorical speech.

Positively, it lies in another direction.

- We must adorn it by our godly lives.
- Adornment, if really so, is suitable to beauty. Holiness, mercifulness, cheerfulness are congruous with the gospel.
- Adornment is often a tribute to beauty. Such is a godly conversation; it honors the gospel.
- Adornment is an advertisement of beauty. Holiness calls attention to the natural beauty of the gospel.
- Adornment is an enhancement of beauty. Godliness gives emphasis to the excellence of doctrine.

Let us all endeavor to adorn the gospel, by:

- Strict integrity in business.
- Constant courtesy of behavior.
- Unselfish love to all around us.
- Quick forgiveness of injuries.
- Abundant patience under trials.
- Holy calm and self-possession at all times.

Gems

Yes, and mark you, this is to be done not as the prerogative of a few grandly gifted spirits and on some occasion which may lift them proudly up to the gaze of the universe. As found in the text, it was of the power of the poor Cretan slaves the apostle was writing, of their power, too, not in some tremendous trial, as of torture or martyrdom, to which the cruelty of their masters sometimes subjected their faith, but of their power to do it "in all things": in the daily, lowly, degrading service of a menial; in the small things as well as the great; in the squalid stall and fold as well as in the splendor of the palace; absolutely, in "all things" to adorn the glorious gospel of God. O blessed bondsmen of Crete, going forth under the lash and the chain, yet with hearts of faith under their burdens and smiles of love amid their tears, doing work for God impossible to an angel! — Charles Wadsworth, D. D.

We have all heard the story of the girl who said she had been converted, for she now "swept under the mats." Koba, an Indian warrior, recently gave evidence of his conversion by saying, "I pray every day, and hoe onions. "An Indian could not give a much better evidence of his sincerity than that. Manual labor is not the chief joy or pride of an Indian warrior.

Fox says, "When people came to have experience of Friends' honesty and faithfulness and found that their yea was yea and their nay was nay; and that they kept to a word in their dealings, and that they could not cozen and cheat them; but that if they sent a child to their shops for anything, they were as well used as if they had come themselves, the lives and conversations of Friends did preach. All the inquiry was, Where was a draper, or shopkeeper, or tailor, or shoemaker, or any other tradesman that was a Quaker?"

A Brahmin wrote to a missionary, "We are finding you out. You are not as good as your Book. If your people were only as good as your Book, you would conquer India for Christ in five years."

Light conceits and flowers of rhetoric wrong the Word more than they can please the hearers. The weeds among the corn make it look gay, but it were all the better they were not amongst it. — Leighton

All may of thee partake:
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture (for thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

— George Herbert

Titus 2:11

What's Ahead?

American theologian Carl Henry gave a thought-provoking lecture with these three major points:

1. "The barbarians have come."

Evil forces have entered the gates and are tearing down the values Christians embrace as true and good. Many thoughtful people believe that we are witnessing the moral collapse of Western civilization, and they are afraid.

2. "Jesus is coming."

Christians have lived for 20 centuries with the hope that they will witness the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. The darker the night, the brighter shines that hope. The barbarians may have won a battle, but they will not win the war.

3. "The church doesn't know whether it is coming or going."

Many of those who claim to know God deny Him by their words and actions. A great number of Christians believe that the hands on the clock of history are nearing the midnight hour, but they don't know just how close. Whether our Lord comes today or in a thousand years, Christians must say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present evil age (Titus 2:11).

Let's get our eyes off the barbarians, keep looking for the coming of our Lord, and live for Him today.-- Haddon W. Robinson [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Faithful and true would He find us here
If He should come today?
Watching in gladness and not in fear,
If He should come today?-- Morris

What we believe about the world to come
shapes how we live in the world today.

Titus 2:11-15

While we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. - Titus 2:13

TODAY IN THE WORD

In the Peanuts episode, "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown," Linus is convinced that the Great Pumpkin will appear on the night before Halloween. He convinces Sally to join him for an all-night vigil, but the Great Pumpkin fails to appear. Charlie Brown consoles him: "Don't take it too hard, Linus. I've done a lot of stupid things in my life, too." Linus retorts, "What do you mean 'stupid' Just wait till next year, Charlie Brown. You'll see!" Linus was convinced that his patience would bring great reward.

For believers in Paul's era, the knowledge of Jesus Christ's appearance on earth and the promise of the Lord's return was motivation to change their worldly behavior. This was not imagination or childish fantasy. The Lord had promised to return—and that changed everything.

"The grace of God ... that offers salvation" (v. 11) refers to Christ's appearance, death, and resurrection. Many had been firsthand witnesses to this event. It had radically changed the lives of the Apostles and teachers of the church. The incarnation of Christ instructs believers how to live godly lives.

Living with a focus on Christ's Second Coming will cause believers to adjust earthly priorities. Followers of Christ will be less focused on immediate rewards and more focused on eternal gain. We will be less consumed by "worldly passions" and temporary pleasures (v. 12). We will exhibit self control and avoid wickedness.

Temporal and eternal priorities are contrasted here. What may seem important now becomes temporal in light of His return. As one hymn writer wrote, "Only one life / t'will soon be past. / Only what's done for Christ will last." As believers, we are to be not only grudgingly obedient to Christ's commands, but also "eager to do what is good" (v. 14). The word "eager" suggests a high level of motivation, a willing attitude.

Believers should live mindful that the return of our Savior is imminent. He could appear at any moment, and we must be ready.

APPLY THE WORD

Each year, many people set goals. Some people have lifelong dreams and aspirations. What are you waiting for? What motivates you on a daily basis? While earthly goals are often worthy, our eternal mindset should be our primary motivation for our moment-by-moment choices. Ask yourself: will this count in light of eternity? The great message of our reading today is that Jesus' return matters for our lives today—it inspires our joy, obedience, hope, and testimony.

Titus 2:11-15 It's Late!

By Richard De Haan

Little children, it is the last hour. —1 John 2:18

A young boy was playing in his grandmother's house near a large grandfather clock. Noontime was approaching, and when both hands of the old timepiece reached 12, the chimes began to ring.

As he always liked to do, the boy counted each gong as it sounded. This time, however, something went wrong with the clock's inner mechanism. Instead of stopping at 12, it kept right on chiming—13, 14, 15, 16 times.

The boy couldn't believe his ears! He jumped to his feet and ran into the kitchen, shouting, "Grandma! Grandma! It's later than it's ever been before!" In his excitement, the youngster expressed a truth we all would do well to consider.

It is later than it's ever been before—in the history of the world, in the days allotted to man, and on God's calendar of events. With each passing hour, the words of James 5:8 take on added significance: "The coming of the Lord is at hand."

This fact is both comforting and sobering. It is reassuring to know that the day our Savior will come for us may be near. But at the same time, we must honestly ask ourselves, "Am I living in a way that will bring His commendation?" Think about it!

Remember, "It's later than it's ever been before!"

May I live so that I will be ready

With joy my Savior to meet,

And feel no alarm at His coming

But hasten His heralds to greet. —Anon.

Be ready for the last moment by being ready at every moment.

Titus 2:11-12 (See also devotional below)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. - Titus 2:11

TODAY IN THE WORD

John Newton wrote what may arguably be the most famous hymn ever penned. The opening words of "Amazing Grace" are known and loved by Christians and non-Christians alike:

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound—
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

In this hymn, Newton attributed his salvation and his spiritual growth to the grace of God. What's more, Newton ultimately pinned his hope of enjoying God's presence for eternity on the grace that he had received at salvation. For Newton, God's grace brought salvation and was the key that unlocked all the blessings of the Christian life.

The apostle Paul also considered the grace of God to be the key to transformation in the Christian life. According to Titus 2:11–12, grace is the root of the salvation experience, the grace of God that "brings salvation."

When Paul says that this grace has "appeared to all men," it is likely that he is thinking of Jesus Christ as the embodiment of God's grace. The Greek term that is translated "appeared" in this verse is the word that is the root for the term "epiphany." In some Christian traditions, epiphany Sunday was the date on the Christian calendar when the church celebrated the Magi's presentation to the newborn Christ.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

You probably already know the first verse of "Amazing Grace" by heart. Memorize the rest of the verses and meditate upon them with Titus 2:11–12 in mind. As you do, consider how far-reaching the effects of God's grace have been in your life. Spend some time with your family or friends sharing about God's grace in your life. You may even want to sing Newton's hymn, or some other worship song, as a way of expressing your gratitude to God for His grace.

Titus 2:11-14

[Grace] teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives. - Titus 2:12

TODAY IN THE WORD

British scientists recently invented a kind of glass that cleans itself. Pilkington Activ glass is coated with a very thin layer of titanium

oxide, which absorbs ultraviolet radiation and reacts with light, a process that breaks down organic dirt. In addition, when water hits this special coating, the water droplets are attracted to one another and form a sheet, that also cleans off the dirt—this is called a hydrophilic effect. This innovative and environmentally friendly product is only about 15 to 20 percent more expensive than regular windows.

We might wish our spiritual lives had a similar self-cleaning feature, but that's not how holiness is achieved. According to today's reading, it's achieved by grace. As we see in today's verse, we are able to live correctly through the instruction of grace. This description suggests the process of childrearing, that is, we should picture not so much a teacher and classroom as a parent and child. The training is holistic; the purpose is to instruct and transform all aspects of a child's character. The ideas of chastening or correcting are also included here—the same word is translated “discipline” in Hebrews 12:6-7. We are the children; grace is our family tutor.

“Wait a minute,” you might be thinking, “I thought grace was a gift. This sounds like works.” That's right. Grace is a gift, and it teaches us to do good works. In fact, if grace does not bring forth right actions, it wasn't real grace. Grace proves its genuineness by empowering and motivating us to refuse sin and to pursue holiness. What other fruit could a holy God's grace bear in our lives?

Since we are living in the time between Christ's Incarnation and Second Coming, this is how we live: by grace, toward righteousness (v. 13). We have been redeemed from sin to goodness, purified from unclean to clean, and raised from death to life!

APPLY THE WORD

During your time with God today, think through hymns, praise songs, or choruses you know that reflect on the grace that we've been given. You may choose to sing some of these songs aloud, but even just recalling the words and melody can be a great encouragement in our constant journey by grace toward righteousness. As we live between Christ's First and Second Comings, we can be thankful for what He has done and what He will do!

Titus 2:11-14 When the Grace Period Ends

By Dave Branon

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. —Titus 2:11

It's a good thing our local library gives a grace period before it starts charging for overdue books. My family checks out books by the dozen, and sometimes we forget to get them back on time.

Recently one of my daughters passed the grace period—by more than 3 weeks. When I went to pay the fine, I asked if we could get credit for the grace period and pay just for the days after that. I was told, however, that once the grace period ends, the full penalty is due.

According to the Bible, we live in the age of grace. God is withholding His judgment because He does not want anyone to perish. But someday the period of grace will suddenly be over and it will be time to “pay the fine” for the wages of sin.

During this age of grace, we have to acknowledge our sinfulness to God and put our faith in Jesus Christ, who has already taken the complete penalty on Himself. But if we die without receiving Christ as Savior, or if He returns and we've rejected Him, the “grace period” will be over and we will be judged for our sin.

Have you asked Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and to be your Savior? If not, don't wait. No one knows when the grace period will end.

Don't expect to have tomorrow

What is offered you today;

Jesus asks you now to follow—

Trust in Him and don't delay. —Sper

God's offer of saving grace is available for a limited time only.

Titus 2:12 Barnyard Ducks

Does the following anonymous poem describe how you feel?

- My soul is like a barnyard duck
- Muddling in the barnyard muck,
- Fat and lazy with useless wings;
- But sometimes, when the northwind sings
- And wild ducks fly overhead,
- It ponders something lost and dead,
- Then cocks a wary, bewildered eye
- And makes a feeble attempt to fly.
- It's quite content with the state it's in,
- But it's not the duck it might have been.

Are you haunted by the fear that you'll never be what God meant you to be? That you're preoccupied with the trinkets of this passing world? Are you "living in the barnyard" when you could be soaring?

Do you really want to fly? Do you long to soar above the pettiness and insignificance of the barnyard muck?

You can! Put aside the sin and worldly weights that are holding you down (Heb. 12:1) and get busy with the tasks the Lord has for you. Only in Christ do we find the fulfillment He longs for each of us to enjoy.

Remember that Jesus came to set you free and let you soar as you look for His coming (Titus 2:11-13). Isn't it time you got out of the mud and did some

flying? -- Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

In this world but never of it,
 Help me, Lord, to live this day
 Free from all that would entangle,
 Of the dazzle and array. -- Graves

If your Christian life is a drag,
 worldly weights are probably to blame.

Titus 2:12

Think!

READ: Titus 2:1-15

We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age. --Titus 2:12

Immediately following a soccer game in Athens, Greece, years ago, 21 people died and more than 50 were injured. The tragedy occurred when a wildly excited crowd responded to the victory of their team by blindly rushing out of the stadium. What they didn't realize was that a gate at the bottom of one of the 20 staircases was locked. As the mob reached the gate, many people were trampled by the shoving masses behind them. The fans were celebrating so loudly that they couldn't hear the screams of those who had fallen down.

This kind of mindless activity does not happen just at soccer games. In a subtle and even more tragic way it goes on around us every day. We may not be shouting or blindly running in a crowd, yet we go along, oblivious to the fact that people are dying and entering eternity without Christ. Often we become so absorbed in our own affairs that we fail to hear the sounds of those up ahead who are nearing the end of their lives. In a sense, our lack of love and concern is contributing to their plight.

If we've become complacent, let's think carefully about the words of Paul in Titus 2. He called for good judgment and clear-headed living, without which we'll never hear the cries for help above the noise of the crowd. — Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we drift aimlessly through life
 And live for self each day,
 The lost who often cross our path
 May never find the way. --DJD

**A true Christian is a person who is right-side-up
 in an upside-down world.**

Titus 2:12 Are You Ready?

By C. P. Hia

Read: 2 Peter 3:1-13

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise. —2 Peter 3:9

Many will remember the fall season of 2008 as the beginning of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of 1929. In the months to follow, many lost their jobs, homes, and investments. In a BBC interview a year later, Alan Greenspan, former head of the US Federal Reserve, indicated that the average person doesn't believe it will happen again. He said, "That is the unquenchable capability of human beings when confronted with long periods of prosperity to presume that it will continue."

Assuming that things will continue as they always have is not just 21st-century-type thinking. In the first century, Peter wrote of people who thought that life would continue as it was and that Jesus would not return. He said, "Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Peter 3:4). Jesus said He would come back, but the people continued to live in disobedience as though He would never return. But His delay is only because of God's patience with us, for He is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (v.9).

Paul tells us that Christians ought to live "soberly, righteously, and godly" in the light of Christ's certain return. (Titus 2:12). Are you ready to meet Him?

Faithful and true would He find us here If He should come today? Watching in gladness and not in fear, If He should come today? — Morris

Jesus may come any time, so we should be ready all the time.

Titus 2:12-13

Our Only Hope

An unknown author wrote, "When I was first converted, and for some years afterward, the second coming of Christ was a thrilling idea, a blessed hope, a glorious promise, the theme of some of the most inspiring songs of the church.

"Later it became an accepted tenet of faith, a cardinal doctrine, a kind of invisible trademark of my ministry. It was the favorite arena of my theological discussions, in the pulpit and in print. Now suddenly the second coming means

something more to me. Paul called it world."

From the human standpoint, there is no solution for the problems of the world. Leaders seem to be completely frustrated in trying to deal with the unrest and increasing violence in society. The only complete and permanent solution is found in the return of Christ. When He comes, He will set up His kingdom. He will rule the nations in righteousness, and "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

As we await our Savior's return, let us keep on praying, working, and watching, while "looking for the blessed hope" - our only hope for this world. Richard W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

And for the hope of His return,
Dear Lord, Your name we praise;
With longing hearts we watch and wait
For that great day of days!- Sherwood

**As this world grows darker,
the promised return of the Son grows brighter.**

Titus 2:13b

Are You Looking Up?

READ: Titus 2:1-15

Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of ... Jesus Christ. --Titus 2:13

Are you so eager for Christ's return that you hope it will take place today? I wouldn't be honest if I answered an unqualified yes to this question. You see, I'm enjoying life right now. I love what I'm doing. My wife and I are having fun watching our grandsons grow toward manhood. There are still people and places we would like to visit during our retirement years.

Does this mean that I'm not "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing" of Jesus Christ? (Ti. 2:13). No, it doesn't. I believe that His return is indeed "the blessed hope." Earthly pleasures are only temporary and cannot compare with the joys of heaven. Besides, I am troubled by the sin, sorrow, and suffering all around me.

All Christians are thankful for Jesus' promise, "I will come again and receive you to Myself" (Jn. 14:3). But our own circumstances affect how eagerly we anticipate His return. Whether life for us today is a joy or a struggle, we are to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly" (Ti. 2:12).

God wants us to enjoy life. But He also wants us to live each day as if it may be the one in which He will return. Are you looking up? — Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Take the world but give me Jesus--
In His cross my trust shall be;
Till, with clearer, brighter vision,
Face to face my Lord I see. --Crosby

Enjoy life, but anticipate heaven.

Titus 2:13 The Blessed Hope

By C. P. Hia

So many predictions of the end of the world have come and gone. Those predictions are unsettling and often fill people with fear. Yet the Bible does refer to a time called "the day of the Lord" when He will return. It will happen, but only God knows when.

It's a day that Jesus' followers can look forward to. In light of that time to come, the apostle Peter tells us how the believer can live with a joyful purpose (2 Peter 3:10-18). We can look upward by living Christ-honoring lives (v.11). We can look inward by making every effort to be found at peace with God (v.14). And we can look outward by being on guard so we aren't carried away by the wrong influence of others (v.17).

How do we do this? By "grow[ing] in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (v.18). When we grow in character through His written Word, we begin to relate more closely to Jesus, the Living Word. The Holy Spirit takes God's Word and guides us in the way to live.

The day of the Lord shouldn't be a fearful day for Jesus' followers. Our King will return to make all things right and to rule forever. We wait for that time with great anticipation. It is our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13).

And for the hope of His return,

Dear Lord, Your name we praise;

With longing hearts we watch and wait

For that great day of days! —Sherwood

One day Jesus will return to rule and reign!

Titus 2:13 Coming Soon!

By David C. McCasland

Read: Revelation 22:7-21

"Surely I am coming quickly." —Revelation 22:20

A "COMING SOON!" announcement often precedes future events in entertainment and sports, or the launch of the latest technology. The goal is to create anticipation and excitement for what is going to happen, even though it may be months away.

While reading the book of Revelation, I was impressed with the "coming soon" sense of immediacy permeating the entire book.

Rather than saying, "Someday, in the far distant future, Jesus Christ is going to return to earth," the text is filled with phrases like "things which must shortly take place" (Rev 1:1) and "the time is near" (v.3). Three times in the final chapter, the Lord says, "I am coming quickly" (Rev. 22:7,12,20). Other versions translate this phrase as, "I'm coming soon," "I'm coming speedily," and "I'm on My way!"

How can this be—since 2,000 years have elapsed since these words were written? "Quickly" doesn't seem appropriate for our experience of time.

Rather than focusing on a date for His return, the Lord is urging us to set our hearts on His promise that will be fulfilled. We are called to live for Him in this present age "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Live as if Christ is coming back today.

Titus 2:13-14

"UNTO HIMSELF"

From F. B. Meyer's book **The Gospel of the King**

"Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works.--Titus 2:13-14.

THE two words unto Himself, which may, indeed, epitomise a human life, are closely associated with the words, a peculiar people, which, in the Revised Version, are translated, a people for His own possession. Love longs for proprietor. ship, and the whole object of our Saviour's work for us is to secure the right to call us His own.

"Lives there a man with heart so dead,
That never to himself has said,
This is my own?"

Just because the heart of Jesus Christ is so vitally alive, He wants to be able to say, That is My own--"To purify unto Himself a people for His own possession." Oh, that from to-day, and onward, there might be written upon memory, thought, affections, body, time, business, property, and leisure moments the inscription, Unto Himself!

This expression is deeply rooted in the Bible. It reminds us of a mighty range of mountains, whose rugged ramifications extend for miles of broken country. The thought indeed permeates the Scriptures, and we will refer to a few of the passages, in order to fasten it as a motto on our hearts.

The first trace of God's longing for a people is in Exodus 15:16, in the song of Moses on the shores of the Red Sea--"Terror and dread falleth upon them; ... till the people pass over which Thou hast purchased." As though God Almighty had gone in to the market-place of the world, and out of all the nations had purchased Israel to be His own.

Exodus 19:4-5. Here God speaks from Sinai, beneath which the hosts had just encamped--"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Exodus 22:31, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me; therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs." The thought that they belonged to God must be prevalent even in their meals; whether they ate or drank, or whatever they did they were to do it remembering that they were His--"holy men unto Me."

Deut. 7:6-7. This is the most significant passage--"Thou art an holy people, unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples: but because the Lord loved you,"--the Revised Version gives the reading, "Because the Lord loveth you,"--"and because He would keep the oath which He sware unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God."

Deut. 14:1-2. "Ye are the children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people"--that is, a

people for His own possession --"unto Himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth."

Deut. 26:18. "The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be a peculiar people unto Himself."

Deut. 32:9., "The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

Amos 3:2. A most significant passage! "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities"--showing that directly people come into close fellowship with God they expose themselves to very searching chastisement if they turn right or left.

Then there comes a great chasm, and we no more find God speaking of the Hebrew people as His own. They had backslidden, and He had cast them away. Yet God must have a people, for reasons we shall see presently.

In that wonderful chapter, Ephesians 3., God takes out of the midst of the Gentile His Church, which is born out of the grave of Christ. As our blessed Lord, the second Adam, sleeps, the Eve of His Church is, so to speak, taken from His wounded side; and the Church, as St. Paul tells us, composed of Jew and Gentile, but largely of Gentile, takes the place, during the present era, which was formerly occupied by the Jewish people; they are fellow-heirs and fellow-partakers of the ancient promises of God. This gives us the right, as members of the true Church of God, to appropriate to ourselves what was originally addressed to the Hebrew race in the Old Testament. Ephesians 3. is therefore the necessary link between what we have been considering and what is to come.

Eph. 1:18. Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know"--three things:

(1) What is the hope of His calling:--that you are called to be a holy people unto God, and to occupy to-day the position the Jews were meant to occupy, but failed.

(2) "What the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"--we have been redeemed to be God's inheritance, His possession, His glebe land, out of which He may rear crops for His glory.

(3) "What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe"--carrying us upon eagles' wings, and bearing us to Himself.

1 Peter 2:9. This reference completes the whole wonderful story. "Ye"--that is, the Church, composed of Jew and Gentile, largely of Gentile--"are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession; that ye may show forth the excellences of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

Let us try to understand, so far as we may, God's great purpose. He spoke originally in creation, and thence His words were passed from mouth to mouth, so that Adam spoke to his son Seth, and he to his son, and so on, the holy words which God had communicated in Paradise. But the revelation became blurred and indistinct, and in spite of all that Enoch could do, whom God raised up as His prophet, the world became so bad as to compel him, so to speak, to obliterate His earlier work and begin again. It seemed impossible, moreover, that man could retain God in his knowledge. It therefore became necessary to provide him with a Book, a literature, which should be in his hand, which he could ponder and read, and which should perpetuate for him the true knowledge of God. In order for this permanent record of God, it was necessary that there should be a race of choice men specially trained to receive on the one hand, and transmit on the other, the high purposes of redemption. With this purpose God chose Abraham, then a Gentile, and called him from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan, where he lived in comparative isolation, and became the father of a new race. In order that that race might be able to receive and to communicate Divine revelation, it was taken down to Egypt, where the art of writing was already in vogue, and where every opportunity was provided for acquiring the knowledge of literature. We are told that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt. After two or three hundred years of sojourn, Israel was brought by a marvellous succession of mighty works into the heart of the Sinaitic peninsula, where, amid thunderings and earthquakes, God spake to them.

Finally, they were settled in Canaan, comparatively isolated from the highway of the world, because it was intended that they should exist as a kingdom of priests, worshipping God, interceding for the world, receiving from Him His commands, and scattering them throughout the world of men. This was His holy purpose--to have a people wholly devoted to Himself, by whom He might speak, and through whom His redemptive purpose might issue, and who would be the means of blessing the whole of mankind, according to the ancient Psalm: "And God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

Israel failed in this, and so God chose us in Christ, His well-beloved Son, the Elect. We are the elect in the Elect, chosen in the Chosen, beloved in the Beloved, because our Saviour has undertaken, as His part of the Covenant, to keep us true in our holy obedience to God. He has made Himself responsible, through the Holy Ghost, to perpetuate in us a holy devotion and obedience to our Father. Israel was redeemed by the Paschal lamb; we by the Blood of the Son of God. Israel was brought out of Egypt; we have been brought out of the world; and the Red Sea, which, the Apostle Paul tells us, symbolises baptism, casts a wide and impassable

chasm between us and the world. Israel was settled in Canaan; and we are intended to be a kingdom of priests, interceding for the world, receiving the Divine messages, and transmitting them to the world. We are intended to be holy, that is, given up to God, so that when God wants anything done He may be sure that, in coming to us, He shall find clean channels, meet and prepared for His use.

It is very interesting to notice the parallel there is between the action of the surgeon in the hospital and God's treatment of us. The surgeon keeps his instruments bathed in antiseptic lotion, so that no microbe or germ is able to touch the edge of the instrument by which he probes or cuts the flesh. The greatest care is exercised that even the hand should not touch the patient unless it has been washed in this antiseptic lotion, else it might become the means of introducing microbes into an open wound. Similarly God our Father, who longs to give Himself to men, but will not do it directly, is longing to have in the midst of the world a number of men who not only are spiritually antiseptic, and free from the microbes of moral evil, but whose whole life is antagonistic to evil, who shall live so near Him that they shall hear what He has to say, and go to their congregations, or comrades, with the distinct assurance that they have a message from the Lord. Ah, how absolutely necessary it is for us to be holy, that there may be nothing in our life to militate against the force of the truth we proclaim; that, in all things, we may be to God for a prize, and a name and honour!

Every believer who has been won by the grace of God has been redeemed and saved for a definite purpose. We have been conducted beneath the beetling brow of Sinai, have heard the thunder of the law, have been isolated from the world that we might listen to the Divine message. We have stood beneath the Cross, from which the Blood of Jesus cries, and we are looking for the advent of our Saviour from heaven. All this has been designed, intended, and brought about by God, that we might be "for Himself," not looking right or left to see what men may think or say of us, but pledged to be a holy, separate people, set apart by God for Himself. Woe be to the man or woman who, having been called to so high a vocation, is using for self the powers which were intended to be used only for God!

As we close, let us dwell for a moment on those words--"He gave Himself." As Jesus is led away by His foes, it might be supposed that He is their victim: you discover, however, that He is the one impelling power, and that He is engaged in carrying out His own eternal purpose. He is Master of life, and also Master of death; He gave Himself in His life, He gave Himself also in His death. Men die at random, and because they cannot help it; they have no purpose in their death. Jesus Christ died with a purpose: "He gave Himself for us." He gave Himself in eternity, He gave Himself in His incarnation, He gave Himself in the death of the Cross, He gives Himself for us, to us, through us. For us, because He bore our penalty; to us--every moment He continues to give Himself to us if we will only take Him in; and through us He wants to pour Himself upon the world.

Because Jesus gives us Himself we become constrained no longer to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. You never can root a man out of his selfishness except by his absolute love for some one who loves him beyond count; and Jesus Christ, knowing that by nature we revolve around the self-centre, and longing that we should no longer live to ourselves, but to Him, gave Himself, gives Himself always, in eternity and in time, that we may be decentralised, and may begin to revolve around the pivot of His nature, Himself the centre of blessedness and heaven. He gave Himself for us to redeem us to become vessels beneath the fountain, with our handles towards Him, that at any moment He may use us to give draughts of water to thirsty souls. A vineyard, that from our soil, as we face the sun, He may bring rich and beautiful produce! A farm, which He shall plough, and from which He shall raise crop after crop for His glory!

There is no limit in fact to what Christ will do for us when once we hand ourselves over to Him. Life is full of wonderful surprises for those who, like Joseph, faithfully serve the Lord in dark dungeons, and amid those with whom they have but little sympathy. When they have learnt the lesson perfectly, when the bones of their spiritual manhood are well set and well knit, when by faithfulness in the least they have prepared themselves to be faithful in much, the prison-door will suddenly open and they will go forth into the palace of the King.

Do not fear to hand yourselves over absolutely and entirely to the keeping of Jesus. Commit yourself without dismay into His hands--the hands of a faithful Creator. He made you what you are, gave you those aptitudes and tastes, the peculiar idiosyncrasy which appears to make you different from anybody else, all these were His gift, and we must not think that the Redeemer will contradict the work of His own creation. His one aim and purpose is to deliver us from everything which is marring and spoiling our beauty, that His original scheme may stand out unblemished.

"Look not thou down, but up!

To uses of a cup,

The festal board,

lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,

The new wine's foaming flow,

The master's lips aglow.
Thou, Heaven's consummate cup,
what needest thou
"O Christ, our God, who with Thine own hast been,
Our spirits cleave to Thee, the Friend unseen;
Vouchsafe that all who on Thy bounty feed,
May heed Thy love, and prize Thy gifts indeed!
Each holy purpose help us to fulfill!
Increase our faith to feed upon Thee still!
Illuminate our minds, that we may see
In all around us holy signs of Thee.
And may such witness in our lives appear.
That all may know Thou hast been with us here!
Oh grant us peace, that by Thy peace possess'd,
Thy life within us we may manifest!"

BOULE

Titus 2:13-14

TODAY IN THE WORD

Have you ever heard someone described as being "so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good?" Those who say this usually mean that the person has very little common sense--spiritually minded, but irresponsible in everyday life. But in reality, those who are heavenly minded in the biblical sense know that the hope of heaven has practical implications.

In Titus 2:13-14, the apostle Paul notes that the same grace of God that enables the Christian to say no to ungodliness also teaches the believer to wait for the "blessed hope." This hope is further described as "the glorious appearing" of Jesus Christ (cf. v. 11). In today's verses Paul reminds us that Christ will come again. This future hope serves as a powerful motivation to lead a holy life in the present.

Those who look forward to Christ's coming know that when He first appeared, He came to "redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own." Those who belong to Him are "eager to do what is good." This eagerness springs from a sense of gratitude for what Christ has done. It is also fueled by our awareness that Christ will hold us accountable for the way we have lived.

Scottish pastor and hymn writer Horatius Bonar noted: "The flowers are constant in their growing, the stars are constant in their courses; the rivers are constant in their flowing--they lose not time. So must our life be, not one of fits, or starts, or random impulses, not one of levity or inconstancy, or fickle scheming, but steady and resolute. We must be resolute men and women, those who know their earthly mission, and have their eye upon the heavenly goal."

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Are you looking forward to "the blessed hope?" Do you know for certain that when Jesus Christ appears in His glory, He will claim you as one of His own? This hope can only be obtained as a gift by grace and through faith. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Titus 2:11-3:2 Do All The Good You Can

By David C. McCasland

[Jesus Christ] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed. —Titus 2:14

At the church I attend, the Sunday morning service closes with a song based on John Wesley's words. We sing, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, to everyone you can, as long as you ever can—do all the good you can." I've come to appreciate these words as a fitting challenge to live like Jesus, who "went

about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

In Paul's letter to Titus, there are several references to doing good. We are told that a church leader is to be "a lover of what is good" (1:8). Christians are to be "zealous for good works" (2:14) and "ready for every good work" (3:1). Believers must "maintain good works" (3:8).

People everywhere are hungry for the reality of a personal touch from God, and we as Christians can do something about that. The wonderful gift of the love of Christ, which was given to us when we trusted in Him as our Savior, was never intended to be kept to ourselves. It should break out in acts of love, kindness, help, and healing wherever we are and in everything we do.

It's a great theme song for every Christian every day—"Do all the good you can."

Follow with reverent steps the great example

Of Him whose holy work was doing good;

So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,

Each loving life a psalm of gratitude. —Whittier

Count that day lost in which you've not done something good for another.

Titus 2:14

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

AFTER all that we have professed and learned, how hard it is to believe that God intends just what He says! When the Holy Spirit says all, He clearly means ALL. And we are, therefore, taught that the death of Jesus was intended, not for our forgiveness and justification merely, but for our sanctification, and our deliverance from the power of all our besetting sins. The text does not promise freedom from temptation; but from all yielding to habits, dispositions, and tempers of soul which have ruthlessly tyrannized over us as Egypt over Israel.

Jesus died for thee, O child of God, that having been set free from the bondage of all iniquity thou mightest live soberly as regards the use of the world, righteously toward thy fellows, and godly toward the Almighty, and "looking for that blessed hope." The grace of God has appeared; His glory will appear. There has been an Epiphany of the one; there shall be as certainly an Epiphany of the other. Many awaited the first; more shall await the second. The one was in humiliation; the other shall be in glory: the one was as a Babe; the other shall be in the glory of the Divine Man. But till then we are called to wait with garments unspotted from the world, and hearts delivered from the love and power of human sin.

Let us teach the world that God has something tangible and practicable to give--not for the next life only, but for this. We are taught by that gentle school-mistress, the Grace of God, to live soberly, as regards our personal life; righteously, in relation to others; godly, in our attitude toward God. Wesley says, "Until you press believers to accept full salvation now, you must not look for any revival,"

Titus 2:14

February 13

J C Philpot

From Daily Words for Zion's Wayfarers

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works." Titus 2:14

How can any one who knows anything of the blessedness of atoning blood and redeeming love and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit continue in sin, that grace may abound? Doctrinal professors may do these things, for a mere 'letter knowledge' of the truth brings with it no deliverance from the power of sin.

But the living soul, in whom the God of all grace is carrying on his gracious work--can it trample under foot the cross of the suffering Son of God? It is impossible that a man who knows for himself the redeeming efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, and whose conscience is made tender in the fear of God, can, under the sweet influence of his love, deliberately crucify him again.

Not but what there is a falling under the power of sin and temptation, as David and Peter fell; but there will not be a willful sinning against him, when the blessed Spirit is bringing near his blood and grace and love. May we never forget that the suffering Son of God gave himself to purify unto himself a peculiar people--a people whose thoughts are peculiar, for their thoughts are the thoughts of God, as having the mind of Christ; a people whose affections are peculiar, for they are fixed on things above; whose prayers are peculiar, for they are wrought in their heart by the Spirit of grace and supplication; whose sorrows are peculiar, because they spring from a spiritual source; whose joys are peculiar, for they are joys which the stranger cannot understand; whose hopes are peculiar, as anchoring within the veil; and whose expectations are peculiar, as not expecting to reap a crop of happiness in this marred world, but looking for happiness in the kingdom of rest and peace in the bosom of God.

And if they are peculiar inwardly, they should be peculiar outwardly. They should make it manifest that they are a peculiar people by walking in the footsteps of the Lord the Lamb, taking up the cross, denying themselves, and living to the honor, praise, and glory of God. - **J. C. Philpot. Daily Words for Zion's Wayfarers**

Titus 2:14 All iniquity

J C Philpot

Sins of heart. Sins of lip. Sins of life. There are five things as regards sin, from which our blessed Lord came to redeem us—its guilt, its filth, its power, its love, its practice. By His death, He redeemed us from sin's guilt. By the washing of regeneration, He delivers us from sin's filth. By the power of His resurrection, He liberates us from sin's dominion. By revealing His beauty, He frees us from sin's love. By making the conscience tender in His fear, He preserves us from sin's practice. The blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin. -

J. C. Philpot

Titus 2:15

TODAY IN THE WORD

When George Burns, known for his long career as a radio comedian and film actor, reached the age of eighty-five, he said, "I was always taught to respect my elders, and I've now reached the age when I don't have anybody to respect." Titus, however, faced the opposite problem. For him the challenge was one of earning the respect of those to whom he ministered.

Although we cannot be certain, it's possible that Titus, like Timothy, Paul's other associate in ministry, was a young man. Like Timothy, Paul referred to Titus as his "son" in the faith (1 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4). Also like Timothy, Titus continued in ministry for some time after Paul's death. According to Eusebius, the ancient church historian, Titus was eventually appointed bishop of the church in Crete. If Titus was as young as Timothy, there may have been a tendency for others to look down on his youth (1 Tim. 4:12). On the other hand, Paul's command to Titus not to let anyone despise him, may have been prompted by the nature of his mission. Titus seems to have had the kind of leadership gifts that made him especially suited for mediating church conflicts. Paul sent him to Corinth to help resolve some of the disputes that had threatened to divide the church (2 Cor. 12:18). Titus went to Crete on an equally challenging mission to "straighten out" the church (Titus 1:5). This important work involved two complementary kinds of ministry. He was to encourage and to rebuke.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote: "In religious matters it is holiness which gives authority." We cannot control the way others feel about us, but we do have control over the way that we live. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

TITUS 3 DEVOTIONALS

Titus 3:1-11

TODAY IN THE WORD

Finally, it's easy to tell who the Christians are. They're the ones sporting a witness on their T-shirts or caps, wearing WWJD bracelets, with crosses around their necks. Making a visible statement of belief has come a long way since the days of the ""Honk if you love Jesus"" bumper stickers. Is there anything wrong with wearing a witness for Christ? Of course not--as long as our behavior lives up to its ""advertising."" No wardrobe accessory can take the place of a Spirit-empowered daily life of humility and obedience that wears well in any situation.

Practical is an overworked term to describe certain sections of the Bible--and probably misleading, since it implies that some parts of

the Word are impractical. But having said that, Titus 3 is about as down-to-earth as it gets in helping us understand how to ""work out [our] salvation"" (Phil. 2:12).

Verses 2-3 remind us that we're to be like Jesus for the best reason of all: because He reached down in mercy to save us from a life of sin. And He did it not by reforming us, but by regenerating us, making us alive again. We were dead in sin, not just slightly ill.

If God had done nothing for us except give us eternal life through Christ, we would be eternally grateful. But our loving Father did so much more. After He had rescued us from sin and washed us clean in Christ's blood, God brought us into His house and made us His heirs.

This means all that God has, we now have. Therefore, living to please Him through our obedience to Him and to the human authorities He has established, and through lives of good works and humility, is nothing more than our reasonable service. Anything less would be an insult to the God who appeared in flesh to save us when we were His enemies.

And what about those who are looking to cause trouble and sow discord in the body of Christ? We need to reach out to them in peace. But if they refuse to repent of their sin, we can't afford to let them drain the life from the church.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Actually, the idea of putting on our witness is not new at all.

The Bible tells us to put on a number of things that will protect us against sin and help us live the godly lives God expects of His heirs. For example, we are told to put on the armor God has given us (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 6:11) and to put on ""the new self,"" which is more like God (Eph. 4:24). How complete is your ""witness wardrobe"" today?

Titus 3:1-8 Inspiration To Perspiration

By Julie Ackerman Link

Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only. —James 1:22

My grandfathers were both gardeners and so are many of my friends. I love visiting beautiful gardens—they inspire me. They make me want to create something equally beautiful in my own yard. But I have trouble moving from the inspiration to the perspiration part of gardening. My great ideas don't become reality because I don't spend the time and energy to make them happen.

This can be true in our spiritual lives as well. We can listen to the testimonies of other people and marvel at the work God is doing in their lives. We can hear uplifting music and great preaching and feel inspired to follow God more diligently. But soon after we walk out of church, we have trouble finding the time or making the effort to follow through.

James described such Christians as being like those who look in a mirror, see themselves, but do nothing to fix what is wrong (James 1:23-24). They hear the Word, but it doesn't lead to action. James says we need to do—not just hear.

When we move from the inspiration of simply ""hearing"" about the good being done by others to the perspiration of actually ""doing"" good works ourselves, the implanted Word of God (1:21) will bloom into a beautiful garden of spiritual fruit.

I'd rather see a Christian Than to hear one merely talk; I'd rather see his actions And behold his daily walk. —Herrell

Life works best when we do.

Titus 3:1-7

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. - Titus 3:5

TODAY IN THE WORD

In the novel *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo, a bishop invites a poor man, Jean Valjean, to live in his home. Valjean then steals silverware from the bishop. The police arrest Valjean and bring him back to the bishop's home, but the bishop does something remarkable. He tells the police that he gave the silverware to Valjean, and he adds valuable candlesticks to Valjean's bag. The bishop's mercy changes the man's life.

This was an act of grace—a gift that was completely undeserved. Paul reminds us that ""at one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved"" (v. 3). Even those of us who have never experienced physical imprisonment still know what it means to be ""enslaved"" by sin.

Paul begins this chapter with a focus on our responsibility to ""rulers and authorities"" (v. 1). This relationship, in which we extend

respect to leaders, should be representative of our relationship toward others. We are to be people who treat others—no matter who they are—with consideration, avoiding slander (v. 2). The reason is that we, too, have been shown great mercy by God.

New life in Christ has set the believer free from the power of sin, and instead takes us captive for God. Paul reminds us that God saved us “not because of righteous things we had done” (v. 5). We did not earn salvation. Not one person has ever proven good enough or righteous enough to claim salvation. Instead, we are the beneficiaries of incredible grace and mercy. The Greek word for mercy means to give help to the afflicted, to show kindness toward the wretched. Like Valjean, we are wretched and in need of forgiveness for what we do and for who we are.

Our lives are changed by the extraordinary merciful act of our Lord and Savior who died to set us free. The letter details the act of salvation here, specifically the cleansing through our “rebirth” and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. This change is not one we produce, but it’s a generous gift from God. We are transformed from enslaved into “heirs” (v. 7).

APPLY THE WORD

Once he has been shown mercy, Jean Valjean shows mercy to others. He adopts a poor girl and saves the lives of men who wish to harm him. We have been shown extraordinary mercy by God, and we must be just as merciful to others. Consider how God would want you to treat others based on His kindness and forgiveness in your life. As you pray today, ask the Holy Spirit to show you if you need to extend forgiveness to someone, or treat someone with more respect.

Titus 3:1-2

TODAY IN THE WORD

The eleventh-century German monarch Henry III became tired of his responsibilities and the worldliness of court life and decided to become a monk. When he went to the monastery and explained his intent, the prior warned him that the course he had chosen would be a difficult one.

“Your Majesty,” Prior Richard explained, “do you understand that the pledge here is one of obedience? That will be hard because you have been a king.” King Henry was undaunted and replied, “I understand. The rest of my life I will be obedient to you, as Christ leads you.” “Then I will tell you what to do,” Prior Richard said. “Go back to your throne and serve faithfully in the place where God has placed you.” Henry did as he was told. After he died, he was given this epitaph: “The King learned to rule by being obedient.”

The same might also be said of us. Submission is an important component of the life of obedience to Christ. Not only are we told to submit to Christ, but we also have an obligation to submit to the human authorities that God has placed over us.

The Bible speaks of submission in a variety of contexts. Believers are told to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21). Wives are to submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22). Slaves are told to submit to their masters (1 Peter 2:18). In the book of Titus, believers are commanded to submit to civil authorities. When the church was in its infancy, its status in the eyes of the Roman government was unclear. At times, the Romans viewed it as a sect of Judaism and accorded it a measure of freedom. As the church’s popularity grew, those who opposed the church claimed that it was a threat to Roman peace. Christians were accused of being atheists because they did not worship the Roman gods. Misunderstanding about the nature of the Lord’s Supper and the custom of referring to one another as “brother” and “sister” led some to claim that Christians were cannibals and guilty of incest. Respect for governing authorities and a willingness to do the right thing was the best way to put these rumors to rest.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Some years ago, pop singer Bob Dylan penned a song that declared, “You gotta serve somebody.” Have you ever calculated how many people are in authority over you? Try naming as many as you can. Whether it is to a parent, an employer, or the officer who directs traffic on the corner, everyone has somebody to whom they are expected to submit. To whom do you find it most difficult to submit and why? Remember that, like King Henry, Christians also “learn to rule by being obedient.” ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Titus 3:1-8 Unused Gears

By Julie Ackerman Link

Be ready for every good work. —Titus 3:1

My first bike had one gear. Whether I was going fast or slow, uphill or downhill, that gear did everything. My next bike had three gears: one for level surfaces, one for going uphill, and one for going downhill. My third bike had ten gears, allowing me an even broader range of choices. Even though my last bike had several gears to choose from, I didn’t use all of them every time I rode. Some were best suited for starting and climbing, others were reserved for gaining speed, and others were best for a leisurely pace.

But the thing about gears is this: Even though I wasn't using all of them at the time, it didn't mean I would never need them.

The same can be true in regard to our spiritual gifts and abilities. During times when I feel I am not being used to do certain things I once did, instead of feeling useless and unappreciated I thank God for the "gear" I'm currently able to use. Just because a skill is not needed right now doesn't mean it never will be.

Our spiritual gifts are needed in different ways at different times. Needs and circumstances change in unforeseeable and unpredictable ways. The apostle Paul reminded Titus, "Be ready for every good work" (Titus 3:1). May that be true of us as well.

Heavenly Father, I need to remember that

what I do is up to You, but how I do it is up

to me. Whether I am busy or still, may I be

peaceable, gentle, humble, kind, and loving.

Keep your tools ready—God will find work for you.

Titus 3:1-8 They're Watching

By Dave Branon

Speak evil of no one, ... be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. —Titus 3:2

It's been several decades since a high school event devastated me. Playing sports was hugely important to me. I zeroed in on basketball and spent hundreds of hours practicing my game. So when I didn't make the varsity team in my last year after being on the team since junior high, I was crushed.

Disappointed and confused, I carried on. I became a stats guy for the team, going to games and keeping track of my friends' rebounds and shots as they got within one game of the state championship without me. To be honest, I never thought of how they were viewing my response. I just muddled through. That's why I was surprised recently to hear that several of my classmates told my brother that they saw in my response a lesson in Christianity—a picture of Christ. My point is not to tell you to do as I did, because I'm not sure what I did. My point is this: Whether we know it or not, people are watching us.

In Titus 3:1-8, Paul explains the life God enables us to live—a life of respect, obedience, and kindness that results from being reborn through Jesus and renewed by the Holy Spirit who has been poured out on us.

As we live a Spirit-guided life, God will show the reality of His presence to others through us.

Dear Father, You know how inadequate I am.

Please equip me through the Spirit to show love

and respect in my life so that others will see

through me and see You.

A Christian is a living sermon whether or not he preaches a word.

Titus 3:2 Out Of Chaos

By Julie Ackerman Link

Read: Exodus 8:1-15

Speak evil of no one, ... be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. —Titus 3:2

Everything I observe makes me believe this is true: Order is not natural. When I consider my office, I'm astounded at how quickly it descends into chaos and how long it takes me to restore order. Order requires intervention; it does not happen naturally.

I shouldn't be surprised. God's role in bringing order out of chaos is a prominent biblical theme. He did it when He was creating the nation of Israel (Ex. 7–14). When God said it was time to bring the Hebrew people out of Egypt, Pharaoh objected. His nation's economy depended on the Hebrew workers, so Pharaoh didn't want to lose them. To change Pharaoh's mind, God sent 10 plagues to convince him. Pharaoh's magicians were able to duplicate the first two plagues. But they could not reverse the plagues—any of

them. They could cause chaos, but they could not restore order. Only God can do that.

With effort, we can bring order to our living spaces, but none of us can bring order out of the emotional and spiritual chaos of our lives. Only God can do that. He restores order to chaotic situations when we live as God intended—speaking no evil, being peaceable and gentle, and showing humility to all (Titus 3:2).

Father, our world and our lives do have much chaos

and confusion. We need You to restore our souls.

Help us to live as You want us to live—

loving others.

When we put our problems in God's hands, He puts His peace in our hearts.

Insight - The Egyptian magicians could only mimic three of the miracles of Moses—staffs turned into serpents (Ex. 7:11), water turned to blood (7:22), and the frog plague (8:7). Unable to mimic the remaining plagues (8:16–11:10), the magicians acknowledged that they were from “the finger of God” (8:19).

Titus 3:3-11 Allergic To ...

By Dave Branon

Abstain from every form of evil. —1 Thessalonians 5:22

One of our grandchildren is allergic to several kinds of foods. Milk, cheese, eggs, and ice cream are among the items she has to avoid. Even a small amount of these things is detrimental to her health.

She's not alone in being required to avoid certain things in life. While her allergies are related to her physical well-being, each of us as believers in Jesus has dangers we need to stay away from to maintain spiritual health. Scripture gives us a clear indication of what we are “allergic to” spiritually.

Every kind of evil (1 Thess. 5:22). This should cause us to think about the choices we make, because taking part in what is clearly evil is not good for our spiritual vitality.

Foolish disputes and arguments (2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9). This takes discernment, for some arguments have merit in defending the faith. But those for which there is no answer or which have no bearing on truth only cause dissension.

Sexual immorality (1 Thess. 4:3). The Bible says that any sexual activity outside the boundaries of a marriage between a man and a woman is immoral (Gen. 2:24; Ex. 20:14; 1 Cor. 7:2; Heb. 13:4).

Are we willing to make the effort to steer clear of things we are spiritually “allergic to”?

Today avoid sin's tempting lures

And evil thoughts subdue,

Or sinful things may take control

And someday master you! —Bosch

To avoid sin, nip it in the bud

Titus 3:3,5

Watershed Line

As we crested a gradual rise we saw a sign that read: Watershed line. All waters falling south of here flow to the Atlantic Ocean. All waters falling north of here flow to the Arctic Ocean. We were right at the dividing line. The point at which a drop of rain fell made all the difference as to its final destination.

Accepting or rejecting Christ can be a kind of "watershed line." The moment we receive Him, we begin to enjoy a new life (Jn. 3:7-16). As new creations of Christ, we are on the path that leads to heaven. If we continue to reject Him, however, we are bound for hell.

If you've asked Jesus to forgive your sins, you can look back to the most important watershed line of all. You are a permanent part of God's family, indwelt by the Spirit, and guided by His Word. Praise God for the difference His Son Jesus Christ makes! --D C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The great dividing line in life
Is what we do with Christ, God's Son;
Rejecting Him will lead to hell--
Receiving Him is heaven begun. --Hess

What you decide about Christ
determines your destiny.

Titus 3:3-5

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. - Titus 3:5

TODAY IN THE WORD

Author Mark Twain wrote a humorous guide to etiquette in heaven. In it he lists several "dos" and "don'ts" for the newly departed. Among these are the following:

- Upon arrival in heaven do not speak to St. Peter until spoken to. It is not your place to begin.
- Do not try to show off. St. Peter dislikes it. The simpler you are dressed, the better it will please him. He cannot abide showy costumes. Above all, avoid over-dressing.
- Leave your dog outside. Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay and the dog would go in.
- Stay off the grass.

Twain was not a believer, but here he was correct about one thing. Entrance to heaven is a gift of grace and not a matter of personal merit. Paul emphasizes this fact in today's passage by reminding us of our status prior to receiving Christ. The picture is not a pretty one. We were "foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures" (v. 2). In addition, we "lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another." This reminder immediately follows Paul's command to "show true humility toward all men" and is related to our obligation to submit to those in authority and to be peaceable and considerate of others (Titus 3:2).

It's hard to show respect to those in authority when they don't seem to deserve it. It's also a challenge to be considerate of those who don't honor God, who are malicious, and who seem to be driven by selfish interests.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Certainly, Paul's reminder of what our status was prior to trusting in Christ is a reason to be grateful for the salvation we now enjoy. It's also a reason to show compassion to those who have not yet put their faith in Christ. It can be helpful at times to consider what things might have been like if we had never experienced the grace of God. With the list contained in verses 3 and 4 in mind, what do you think your life would look like now if you didn't receive forgiveness through Christ? Thank God for the difference in your life

Titus 3:3-7; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. - Hebrews 9:12

TODAY IN THE WORD

The concept of redemption is fascinating and has its origin in the marketplace. Recall from Leviticus 25 (see Nov. 9) that extreme poverty could force the sale of one's land or even oneself into slavery. It was the duty of a close relative to buy back, or "redeem," this individual or property. By New Testament times, "redemption" often meant purchasing a slave's freedom.

This background illustrates our own redemption from the slavery of sin. Titus 3:3 gives a sad "before" picture of life prior to salvation. Like a fettered slave, we were bound by "passions and pleasures." Unseen chains ensnared our hearts so that we were disobedient to God and "hated and hating" toward each other.

Scripture teaches God's righteous judgment on this sinful condition, but also shows that God's answer to this depravity is restoration

through repentance (see Nov. 15). Titus 3 describes this in terms of our Savior's kindness and love (v. 4), salvation, and mercy (v. 5).

In fact, verses 4 through 7 provide a clear summary of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Because of God's mercy, He saved us by new birth through the renewal by the Holy Spirit, poured out through Jesus Christ (v. 6) so that we could have eternal life (v. 7). In essence, Christ paid the price of our redemption from sin through His own blood, shed on the cross.

But even more than that, God also made us heirs who have "the hope of eternal life." We will look more closely at our status as heirs in our study tomorrow. By God's grace, your "pre-Christian" life may not have resembled 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Still Scripture says we all were dead in sin before we were saved (Eph. 2:1).

Titus 3:4 A Little Kinder

By Vernon C. Grounds

Read: Ephesians 4:25-32

The kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared. —Titus 3:4

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), one of the world's leading intellectuals, was visiting with Houston Smith, a well-known professor of philosophy and religion. As they were driving to an engagement, Huxley said, "You know, Houston, it's rather embarrassing to have spent one's entire lifetime pondering the human condition and ... find that I really don't have anything more profound to pass on by way of advice than, 'Try to be a little kinder.'"

The apostle Paul saw kindness in a different light. In Ephesians 4:32, he linked being kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving with the way God has treated us. In Titus 3:4, he said that it was "the kindness and the love of God" that provided eternal salvation.

In a world where callous thoughtlessness and selfish indifference are all too common, kindness can make our lives fruitful when motivated by Christlike love. When our walk harmonizes with our words of witness, it will make a compelling impact on others by pointing them to the kind of love God has for them in Jesus Christ. If Huxley had learned what Paul had learned, he would have seen that trying to be a little kinder is one of the most profound truths of all.

What motivates us to try? There's no better reason than the love of God as shown to us by Jesus.

He saw me ruined by the fall,

Yet loved me notwithstanding all;

He saved me from my lost estate,

His lovingkindness, oh, how great! —Medley

Kindness is treating others the way God treats you.

Titus 3:4

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

THE emphasis must surely rest on **appeared**. **Kindness** and **love** toward man were always in the heart of God, but they were not clearly revealed. They might have been perceived in the order of nature and human life; but there are stormy winds as well as zephyrs in the one--and in the other deaths as well as births; knells of hope as well as marriage peals. But in Jesus the true heart of God toward man was manifested. It is thus in human life.

At first God blessed us anonymously.--In Cowper's memoirs we read how Theodora, his cousin, pursued him throughout his sad life with her gifts; but they always came without indication of their source. As the poet unwrapped his new-come treasure, he would say, "Dear Anonymous has come again; God bless him." So, through years of thoughtless childhood, and afterward in opening youth, we were the recipients of myriads of gifts contrived with the most exquisite skill to give us pleasure; but we did not trace them to their source. They were from God.

Since then His grace and loving kindness have appeared.--We have had eyes to see, and hearts to understand. The Anonymous Benefactor is now recognized as our Father and Friend. We no longer praise our earthly loves for our cornfields and vineyards, but our Heavenly Spouse (Hosea 2.). In the breaking of the bread we have recognized the Son of God, and we know now

who it was that walked with us along the path of life, and why our hearts burned.

Oh to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be;
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

Titus 3:5

By Mercy, Not Merit!

A headline in The Grand Rapids Press caught my attention: "Conversion to Hindu Faith Is Torturous." The article stated, "A West German businessman has completed his conversion to the Hindu faith by piercing himself through the cheeks with a one-quarter-inch thick, four-foot-long steel rod, and pulling a chariot for two miles by ropes attached to his back and chest by steel hooks... Others walk through twenty-foot-long pits of fire, don shoes with soles made of nails, or hang in the air spread-eagle from hooks embedded in their backs."

What a contrast to the reality of Christianity. The teaching of salvation by grace, through faith, apart from human works, distinguishes Christianity from all other religions of the world. The conversion experience of a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is not "completed" through acts of self-torture. We may have to suffer for the cause of Christ, and good works should always prove the genuineness of our faith, but neither suffering nor serving save us. Paul wrote, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (see note Ephesians 2:10). Self-inflicted torture is completely foreign to everything the Bible teaches about salvation.

We are not saved on the basis of what we can endure; rather, our hope is in what Christ has already endured for us on the cross. The Christian way is not conversion by torture—it's salvation by grace.—R. W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We are saved by God's mercy, not by our merit—by Christ's dying, not by our doing.

Titus 3:1-7 Anonymous Has Come

By David H. Roper

The kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared. —Titus 3:4

Years ago I received a cylinder in the mail that turned out to be an exquisite, custom-made Jim Schaaf bamboo fly rod and Bill Ballan classic reel—costly fishing gear that I could not have afforded. An enclosed handwritten note said simply, "I wanted to do something for you." To this day I have no idea who sent it.

Poet William Cowper also had an anonymous friend who sent gifts to him but never revealed his name. Cowper's comment on receiving each gift was always the same: "Anonymous has come." I think of that phrase often whenever I fish with that rod: "Anonymous has come." I will always be grateful to my unnamed friend for his kindness and love to me.

All through our lives God showers us with His goodness—gifts of truth, beauty, friendship, love, and laughter, to name but a few—and we behave as if we don't know the source. God has been our anonymous Friend.

But He doesn't wish to remain anonymous. If you want to know more about your secret Friend, read the Gospels, for He is seen most clearly in Jesus. Love has always been in God's heart, but in Jesus it "appeared." God, revealed in Jesus, is your kind and merciful Friend. Will you acknowledge and thank Him today?

With thankful hearts give praise to Jesus

For His blessings without end;

Let's give to Him our full devotion;

He's our Savior and our Friend. —D. De Haan

Our dearest friend is but a shadow compared to Jesus.

Titus 3:1-8 Changed

By Herbert Vander Lugt

He saved us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. —Titus 3:5

When we put our trust in Jesus as our Savior, we are not only forgiven but also transformed from the inside through the renewing activity of the Holy Spirit (Ti. 3:5).

Author Michael Green tells about a man who said that before God dramatically changed his life he was “an embryo gangster, already with a list of crimes which society could level against me, and sins which accuse me of their own accord.” Today that man is a military chaplain.

Here is his testimony: “The living Christ has given me what no court, no psychiatrist, no probation officer could give me—the consciousness of sins forgiven... The joy of a loving wife, two children, and a happy and secure home have shown me that through the living Christ even one who, like myself, was once described by a magistrate as a ‘social menace’ can be more than just tolerable. That is something of the difference that Jesus Christ has made and continues to make in me.”

When we see our need of God’s forgiveness and believe in Jesus, our sins are washed away and the Holy Spirit makes us new people (Ti. 3:5). Then, as we walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25), He continues to work in us to make us more like Christ.

Have you been changed? Are you still changing?

Father, thank You for Your Spirit,

Fill us with His love and power;

Change us into Christ's own image

Day by day and hour by hour. —Anon.

When Jesus comes into a life, He changes everything.

Titus 3:1-8 Watershed Line

By David C. Egener

We ourselves were also once foolish ... According to His mercy He saved us. —Titus 3:3,5

My wife and I were driving east on a remote ribbon of Canadian highway stretching between Wawa, Ontario, and neighboring Chapleau. The scenic northern road cuts through a forest of red pine, jack pine, aspen, and poplar. In the wooded terrain are lynx, wolves, moose, and lots of rocks.

As we crested a gradual rise we saw a sign that read: Watershed line. All waters falling south of here flow to the Atlantic Ocean. All waters falling north of here flow to the Arctic Ocean. We were right at the dividing line. The point at which a drop of rain fell made all the difference as to its final destination.

Accepting or rejecting Christ can be a kind of “watershed line.” The moment we receive Him, we begin to enjoy a new life (Jn. 3:7-16). As new creations of Christ, we are on the path that leads to heaven. If we continue to reject Him, however, we are bound for hell.

If you’ve asked Jesus to forgive your sins, you can look back to the most important watershed line of all. You are a permanent part of God’s family, indwelt by the Spirit, and guided by His Word. Praise God for the difference His Son Jesus Christ makes!

The great dividing line in life

Is what we do with Christ, God's Son;

Rejecting Him will lead to hell—

Receiving Him is heaven begun. —Hess

What you decide about Christ determines your destiny.

Titus 3:1-8 A Complete Salvation

By Herbert Vander Lugt

According to His mercy He saved us, ... that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs. —Titus 3:5,7

John Newton, author of the well-known hymn Amazing Grace, was a miserable man at the age of 23. He had been involved in an immoral lifestyle and was engaged in the heartlessly cruel African slave trade. But he was fed up with his sinful way of life.

A crisis came on March 10, 1748, on board a ship that was caught in a violent storm. Thinking all was lost, Newton cried out in terror, "Lord, have mercy on us!" Suddenly the word mercy struck him with great force. If anybody needed it, he did. At that moment he believed on Jesus Christ as his Savior. God forgave his sins and broke the power of his wicked lifestyle.

The apostle Paul referred to both the mercy and the grace of God in salvation. He declared that it is by God's grace we are justified and delivered from the guilt of our sins (Ti. 3:7). But he also said it is God's mercy that delivers us from a lifestyle which he described as "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another" (v.3).

Let's thank God daily for His grace and His mercy. Together they provide for us a complete salvation.

The fullness of God's matchless love

Shines forth from blessed Calvary;

What grace and mercy came to us

When Jesus died upon that tree! —DJD

Grace and mercy are unearned blessings given to unworthy sinners.

Titus 3:5 The Midwife's Tale

By Dennis Fisher

Read: John 3:1-8

The wind blows where it wishes ... So is everyone who is born of the Spirit. —John 3:8

Historian Laurel Ulrich received a Pulitzer Prize for her book *The Midwife's Tale*. The book was based on the diary of Martha Ballard, who lived during the American Revolution. Martha was a midwife who traveled by canoe, horse, or sometimes on foot to assist women in delivering their babies. At a time when many women died in childbirth, Martha's track record was extraordinary. In more than 1,000 deliveries, she never lost a mother in childbirth.

In God's kingdom, there is a spiritual Helper who produces new life. But His role is to bring about "second birth" (John 3:5-8). The Holy Spirit uses a variety of ways to accomplish this. He convicts the world of sin (John 16:8), empowers the gospel (1 Thess. 1:5), regenerates us from within (Titus 3:5), and places believers into eternal union with Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13). Though He is invisible, His life-changing activity can be clearly seen.

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

The Spirit desires to use us in sharing the gospel so others can experience that second birth.

God sent the Holy Spirit after

Christ ascended from this earth,

And this we know—He's left us here

To share good news of second birth. —Hess

The Holy Spirit is the Christian's source of power.

Titus 3:5

December 24

J C Philpot

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Titus 3:5

To view mercy in its real character, we must go to Calvary. It is not sufficient to contrast the purity of God with the impurity of man. That indeed affords us some view of what mercy must be to reach the depths of the fall—a side face of that precious attribute. But to see its full face shining upon the redeemed, we must go by faith, under the secret teachings and leadings of the Holy Spirit, to see "Immanuel, God with us," groveling in Gethsemane's garden. We must view him naked upon the cross, groaning, bleeding, agonizing, dying. We must view Godhead and manhood united together in the Person of a suffering Jesus; and the power of the Godhead bearing up the suffering manhood. We must view that wondrous spectacle of love and blood, and feel our eyes flowing down in streams of sorrow, humility, and contrition at the sight, in order to enter a little into the depths of the tender mercy of God. Nothing but this can really break the sinner's heart.

"Law and terrors do but harden,
All the while they work alone;
But a sense of blood-bought pardon
Soon dissolves a heart of stone."

Law terrors, death and judgment, infinite purity, and eternal vengeance will not soften or break a sinner's heart. But if he is led to view a suffering Immanuel, and a sweet testimony is raised up in his conscience that those sufferings were for him—this, and this only will break his heart all to pieces. Thus, only by bringing a sweet sense of love and blood into his heart does the blessed Spirit show a sinner some of the depths of the tender mercy of God. **J. C. Philpot. Daily Words for Zion's Wayfarers**

Titus 3:5 John 3:1-21

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. - Titus 3:5

TODAY IN THE WORD

For many years, George Whitefield believed that his salvation depended on his own good works. Eventually, the Lord showed him that the only way to enter the kingdom of God was through new birth in Christ. Following his conversion, his preaching sparked revivals, and when he died in 1790, thousands had been convicted of their sin and had experienced new birth, both in England and the United States.

As we begin to look at the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer, we begin with a passage that deeply impacted Whitefield, especially verse 7. A Pharisee named Nicodemus sought out Jesus at night, probably because he was afraid to be seen with Him. Jesus began by shifting Nicodemus away from focusing on what a person does (v. 2) to the need for rebirth. The expression "born again" is a pun in the original Greek, meaning either "born a second time" or "born from above."

Probably Jesus intended both meanings, but Nicodemus couldn't understand how anyone could possibly emerge a second time from the womb! Jesus then explained that He was speaking of spiritual birth. Being born of "water" and Spirit (v. 5) indicates the need for cleansing as well as rebirth—ideas we saw in Ezekiel 36 (see April 12). Jesus drew upon another Old Testament idea, namely the overlap between wind and Spirit (see April 2), and reminded Nicodemus that the Spirit acts as unpredictably as the wind.

As a teacher of the law, Nicodemus should have understood Jesus' words. What's more, Nicodemus was talking with the very Son of God, who had come from heaven ... He certainly knew what He was talking about!

Jesus then went on to use another Old Testament passage to help Nicodemus understand. Numbers 21:4-9 records how Moses held up a bronze serpent to heal those who had been bitten by snakes in the desert. So too Jesus would be lifted up on the cross as the source of true healing, or eternal life.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

This story of Nicodemus reminds us that salvation isn't about the things we do or how much we know the Bible. Even with all his Scripture knowledge, Nicodemus was still outside the kingdom when he came to Jesus. Instead, the only way to enter the kingdom is to be born again. Even as believers, it's easy to slip back into thinking that our salvation is about what we do and what we know instead of Who has given us new birth.

Titus 3:5 Saved By Grace

By Richard De Haan

Romans 3:21-28

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. —Titus 3:5

Pastor and author H. A. Ironside told about a new convert who gave his testimony during a church service. With joy in his heart, the man related how he had been delivered from a life of sin. He gave the Lord all the glory, making it clear that he had done nothing to earn salvation.

The person leading the service didn't fully appreciate the truth that salvation is by grace through faith alone, apart from works. So he responded, "You seem to indicate that God did everything when He saved you. Didn't you do your part before God did His?" The new Christian jumped to his feet and said, "Oh, yes, I did. For more than 30 years I ran away from God as fast as my sins could carry me. That was my part. But God took out after me and ran me down. That was His part."

We are saved by grace, and by grace alone (Rom. 3:24). We can do nothing to earn it (v.28). Our redemption is a gift from God. Our part is to acknowledge our sinfulness and inability to save ourselves. We must place our trust in Jesus, believing that He died on the cross for our sins.

God has provided salvation for you—that's His part. Receiving it by faith—that's yours. Have you done your part?

Naught have I gotten but what I received,

Grace has bestowed it since I have believed;

Boasting excluded, pride I abase—

I'm only a sinner saved by grace! —Gray

Salvation is what we receive, not what we achieve.

Titus 3:3-8 One Solution

By Joanie Yoder

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. —Titus 3:5

It's the bad news about sin and its consequences that makes the gospel of Jesus such good news. Because it is a message for sinners only, who, then, are the sinners?

The Bible informs us:

1. All are sinners (Rom. 3:23).
2. All people, without exception, are guilty (Rom. 3:19).
3. All stand condemned before God (Jn. 3:18,36).
4. All are under the penalty of spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God (Eph. 2:5).
5. All are helpless to wipe out their own guilt (Rom. 3:20).

This blunt description of sinners presents an urgent need for a life-saving solution. The typical human solution is to try to make sure that our good works outweigh the bad and just hope that we will win God's approval.

Christ's all-sufficient solution, however, was to perform the ultimate good work on our behalf—He died and paid the penalty for our sins on the cross. Now we all have a choice to make—accept or reject His solution.

Which choice have you made? Have you accepted Christ's forgiveness, or are you continuing to reject Him? Accept Him now, for there's no other solution!

There aren't many ways into heaven;

The Bible says there's only one:

Confessing Christ Jesus as Savior,

Believing in God's only Son. —Sper

Christ is the only way to heaven; all other roads are detours to doom.

Titus 3:1-11 The Link To Life

By Jennifer Benson Schuldt

According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. —Titus 3:5

By the time he was 16, Morris Frank (1908–1980) had lost his sight in both eyes. Several years later, he traveled to Switzerland where he met Buddy, the canine who would help to inspire Frank's involvement with the Seeing Eye guide-dog school.

With Buddy leading the way, Frank learned to navigate busy sidewalks and intersections. Describing the freedom his guide provided, Frank said, "It was glorious: just [Buddy] and a leather strap, linking me to life." Buddy gave Morris Frank a new kind of access to the world around him.

God's Holy Spirit gives us access to abundant spiritual life in Christ. When we accept Christ as Lord, God washes our sins away and renews us "by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5-6 niv). Once we know Christ, the Holy Spirit helps us experience God's love (Rom. 5:5), understand God's Word (John 14:26), pray (Rom. 8:26), and abound in hope (Rom. 15:13).

Today, as you think about your relationship with God, remember that the Spirit is your guide to life in Christ (Rom. 8:14).

Holy Spirit, Light divine,

Shine upon this heart of mine.

Chase the shades of night away;

Turn my darkness into day. —Reed

The Holy Spirit guides us into knowledge and spiritual growth.

Insight - In the book of Titus, Paul instructed his younger coworker Titus on how to teach believers in the young church of Crete to live holy lives. Paul emphasized the importance of godly leadership (Titus 1) and of gracious behavior within the church family (ch.2) and in society at large (ch.3).

Titus 3:5,7

A Complete Salvation

John Newton, author of the well known hymn Amazing Grace, was a miserable man of the age of 23. He had been involved in an immoral lifestyle and was engaged in the heartlessly cruel African slave trade. But he was fed up with his sinful way of life.

A crises came on March 10, 1748, on board a ship that was caught in a violent storm. Thinking all was lost, Newton cried out in terror,

"Lord, have mercy on us!"

Suddenly the word mercy struck him with great force. If anybody needed it, he did. At that moment he believed on Jesus Christ as his Savior. God forgave his sins and broke the power of his wicked lifestyle. The apostle Paul referred to both the mercy and the grace of God in salvation. He declared that it is by God's grace we are justified and delivered from the guilt of our sins (see note Titus 3:7). But he also said that it is God's mercy that delivers us from a lifestyle which he described as "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another" (see note Titus 3:3). Let's thank God daily for His grace and His mercy. -- Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The fullness of God's matchless love
Shines forth from blessed Calvary;
What grace and mercy came too us
When Jesus died on that tree!- Dennis J. De Haan

**Grace and mercy are unearned blessings
given to unworthy sinners.**

Titus 3:6-7

TODAY IN THE WORD

English poet Edward Lear, known for his quaint children's poems and accompanying drawings, was asked to give Queen Victoria drawing lessons. After one of the lessons, the Queen showed Lear several of the family heirlooms that were on display in her living quarters in the palace. Lear, taken with the beauty of the things he saw, without thinking cried out: "Oh, where did you get all these beautiful things?" Queen Victoria replied, "I inherited them, Mr. Lear."

In today's passage the apostle reminds Titus of the precious inheritance he received when he experienced the washing of rebirth and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. He says that the Spirit was "poured out upon us generously." These words remind us of baptism and point to the spiritual reality behind baptism. All those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and eternal life have received the Holy Spirit. In Titus 3:5 Paul identified two primary aspects of this experience: the washing of rebirth, which signifies the forgiveness of sins, and the experience of renewal, which implies regeneration. This is possible due to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who has been poured out on us "generously through Jesus Christ our Savior" (v. 6).

Elsewhere Paul describes the Holy Spirit as a "deposit," a kind of down payment on the full inheritance to be received in Christ (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14). The gift of the Holy Spirit is a portion of what we will receive. It does not mean, however, that we have received only a portion of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been poured out "generously." But we do need to be "filled" with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - If you know Christ as your Savior, you don't need to ask God to give you the Holy Spirit. You have already been given the Spirit as the earnest of your inheritance in Christ. You should, however, ask God to fill you with His Spirit and help you walk in His power, to be "strengthened with all power according to his glorious might" (Col. 1:11). You can do it right now, and ask the Lord every day to keep filling you with His Spirit. Rely upon the Holy Spirit for the power to live the Christian life. ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Titus 3:1-11 Restored To Favor

By Dennis J. De Haan

Having been justified by His grace, we [have] become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. —Titus 3:7

Isidore Zimmerman served 25 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit. Because of false testimony at his trial, he was convicted of killing a New York policeman. In time, however, his innocence was proven, and in 1962 he was released. But did he "live happily ever after"? No.

Even though he had been innocent all along, Zimmerman couldn't escape the stigma of being an ex-convict. What few jobs he could get soon ended when employers learned that he had served time. His record was cleared, but society did not fully accept him.

What a striking contrast to our standing with God when we trust Jesus as our Savior! We are guilty. Yet on the merits of Jesus' sinless life and atoning sacrifice, we are not only declared righteous, but we are fully restored to favor with our heavenly Father. He treats us as if we had never broken His law, reconciling us to Himself and adopting us into His family. That's full acceptance.

It's absolutely amazing that through faith, and on the merits of Jesus' death, guilty sinners can be declared righteous by God. It's even more astounding that He would restore us to His favor and want us to work for Him.

But then, that's what salvation is all about. —DJD

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness

My beauty are, my glorious dress;

'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,

With joy shall I lift up my head. —von Zinzendorf

When God forgives, He removes the sin and restores the soul.

Titus 3:1-8 How Gentle Are You?

By Herbert Vander Lugt

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. —Philippians 4:5

During my years as a pastor, I encountered many Christians who were anything but gentle. They had no patience for fellow believers with character flaws or who were involved in sinful practices. They also showed little kindness toward nonbelievers. They thought that gospel messages should always include dire warnings of the torments of hell.

Recently I heard about a company that had decided to open their stores on Sunday. Because they were located in an area with many churches, the corporation received scores of condemning letters from angry Christians. Some even said they were glad there was an eternal hell for those who had made this decision. Christian and non-Christian employees were offended and embarrassed. Lack of gentleness had harmed Christ's cause.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were quick to judge and lacked gentleness. They criticized Jesus because He ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 11:19). They were shocked because He showed concern for these people instead of harshly condemning them. He didn't approve of what they did, but He saw them as sinners created in God's image whom He had come to save.

Let's follow Christ's example.

O to be like Him, tender and kind,

Gentle in spirit, lowly in mind;

More like to Jesus, day after day,

Filled with His Spirit, now and always. —Ellsworth

Nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength. —Francis de Sales

Titus 3:8-11 (See also devotional below)

But avoid foolish controversies ... because these are unprofitable and useless. - Titus 3:9

TODAY IN THE WORD

One of the most famous feuds in American history is the battle between the Hatfields and the McCoys. The Appalachian families began quarreling during the Civil War over a stolen pig. The feud intensified with an illicit romance and ended with murders on both sides. In 1891, after years of fighting, the two families called a truce. In recent years, the families have held joint reunions, and in 2003 they appeared together on television's Family Feud, putting an end to their quarrels.

Quarreling, if unresolved, has a way of leading to destruction. In today's passage, Paul urges believers to devote their lives not to promoting discord, but rather to "doing what is good." Paul links back to the passage before: "This is a trustworthy saying" (v. 8). The word "this" refers to his emphasis on God's mercy. Because of the great mercy God has extended to us, we are to show mercy to others and "devote" ourselves to doing good.

It was important that these new, struggling churches "avoid foolish controversies." Paul particularly emphasizes that quarrels about the law are, in the end, "unprofitable and useless" (9). Note the contrast to the instruction in verse 8: whereas quarreling and controversies about esoteric matters are unprofitable, doing good is "excellent and profitable for everyone" (v. 8).

It is easy to quarrel about things we believe passionately. Even today, believers and congregations quarrel about interpretations of Scripture. The focus of believers, Paul seems to warn, must not be on these types of disagreements. Our priority is not to be on division and asserting our claims on particular minutiae as authoritative. We are to focus on living in a way that glorifies God.

The letter articulates how to handle people who seek out division in the body. Paul says to "warn a divisive person once" (v. 10). Those who do not heed warnings are to be viewed as a threat to the church. Confronting the division within the church quickly is important so that problems don't linger and grow.

APPLY THE WORD

Every family, both our birth families and our church families, seem to struggle with problems of argument, feuding, and division. As believers, we are called to be peacemakers and reconcilers. How can you act as an instrument of God's peace? This doesn't mean avoiding conflict. Consider ways you can help alleviate arguments and reconcile warring factions. How can you speak words of peace into a tense situation? God has called you to this important task today.

By Cindy Hess Kasper

Read: Ephesians 2:1-10

Those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. —Titus 3:8

“What kind of skill set do you bring?” That question, posed in a job interview, was intended to determine if my friend would be a good fit for a position. My friend quickly did a mental review of his skills and talents, hoping to emphasize the unique characteristics he possessed that would contribute to the success of the company.

What if we already had the perfect set of skills required to accomplish what God wants us to do? Well—as a matter of fact—we do! The spiritual gifts we possess, along with our experiences, training, natural talents, and a submissive heart make up a unique individual who has the skills needed for the “good works” that God has “prepared beforehand” (Eph. 2:10). If God has something He wants to accomplish and that you feel He is calling you to do, He will provide what you need to complete the task. Or, as one paraphrase emphasizes, God wants us “to join Him in the work He does, the good work He has gotten ready for us to do” (Eph. 2:10 The Message). The one thing He requires of us is that we “be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2).

Have you found a place in God’s service where you can be used of Him? Let’s “do good” and “be rich in good works” (1 Tim. 6:18).

Think not that you are limited Because of what you cannot do, But think instead of all you have— The talents God has given you. — D. De Haan

Spiritual gifts are meant to be used, not admired.

Titus 3:8-11

But avoid foolish controversies ... because these are unprofitable and useless. - Titus 3:9

TODAY IN THE WORD

John Milton, English poet and author of *Paradise Lost*, was also deeply interested in theology. He believed that theology was a science rather than a matter of speculation. He wrote: “To be still searching what we know not, by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it, this is the golden rule in Theology as in Arithmetic, and makes up the best harmony in a Church.”

For some in Paul’s day, however, theology was a reason for arguing about genealogies and the Mosaic law. False teachers were distorting the meaning of the Old Testament and preaching a gospel of human effort and religious ritual. Their understanding of the Scriptures was shaped by oral traditions that they believed had been passed down from the time of Moses. This oral law was considered to be as authoritative as Scripture itself, although there was a wide divergence of opinion about its interpretation. Because of these differences of opinion, the oral law became as much a subject of study as the Bible itself. In fact, in many instances, it actually displaced the Bible.

Paul condemned this sort of theological speculation and labeled the endless disputing that it generated as “unprofitable and useless,” and ultimately harmful. The church couldn’t afford to ignore this unfounded doctrine, because it threatened to divide the newly planted churches of Crete.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Paul’s directions to Titus provide helpful guidelines when dealing with those who spread false teaching. We should lovingly point out the error in their doctrine. When we do, we need to focus our discussion on what the Bible clearly says and not allow ourselves to be drawn into speculative debate. If those we are hoping to convince prove to be interested only in arguing, we politely disengage from the discussion and pray that the Holy Spirit will open their eyes to the truth of the gospel.

Titus 3:9

C H Spurgeon

Morning and Evening

Our days are few, and are far better spent in doing good, than in disputing over matters which are, at best, of minor importance. The old schoolmen did a world of mischief by their incessant discussion of subjects of no practical importance; and our Churches suffer much from petty wars over abstruse points and unimportant questions. After everything has been said that can be said, neither party is any the wiser, and therefore the discussion no more promotes knowledge than love, and it is foolish to sow in so barren a field. Questions upon points wherein Scripture is silent; upon mysteries which belong to God alone; upon prophecies of doubtful

interpretation; and upon mere modes of observing human ceremonials, are all foolish, and wise men avoid them. Our business is neither to ask nor answer foolish questions, but to avoid them altogether; and if we observe the apostle's precept (Titus 3:8) to be careful to maintain good works, we shall find ourselves far too much occupied with profitable business to take much interest in unworthy, contentious, and needless strivings.

There are, however, some questions which are the reverse of foolish, which we must not avoid, but fairly and honestly meet, such as these: Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I renewed in the spirit of my mind? Am I walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit? Am I growing in grace? Does my conversation adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour? Am I looking for the coming of the Lord, and watching as a servant should do who expects his master? What more can I do for Jesus? Such enquiries as these urgently demand our attention; and if we have been at all given to cavilling, let us now turn our critical abilities to a service so much more profitable. Let us be peace-makers, and endeavour to lead others both by our precept and example, to "avoid foolish questions."

Titus 3:12-15 (See also following devotionals)

Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to ... not live unproductive lives. - Titus 3:14

TODAY IN THE WORD

Many missionaries have found Facebook helpful in raising support and staying in contact with donors. Northern Canada Evangelical Mission reports, "The benefits are obvious—urgent prayer requests can be sent instantly to many homes. Regular prayer letters are also increasingly sent by email. It saves on postage costs." Facebook has enabled missionaries to stay in touch with those they are trying to reach, expand their circle of "friends," and update supporters.

In the manner of first-century Facebook, Paul closes his letter to Titus by introducing new "friends" and commending his current friends for work well done. His friend Tychicus was mentioned earlier in the book of Acts (20:4), as one who accompanied him in his early days of ministry. Here, he reconnects old and new friends.

In these closing verses, he issues a status update of sorts. He tells them that he has decided to spend the winter in Nicopolis and asks them to visit (v. 12). The communion and dependence of believers in the early church was a key to their growth. Believers had a responsibility to one another for encouragement and provision.

To demonstrate this, Paul asks Titus and the church for a favor. He asks them to help friends in need: Zenas and Apollos. He asks the church to extend the hospitality he has been speaking about to these fellow believers and to "see that they have everything they need" (v. 13).

The theme of the book, acting out our faith in Christ, is motivation to "learn to devote themselves to doing what is good." This is to be our life's purpose—not a focus on selfish concern, but on building one another up and helping others in both spiritual and physical ways. Our lives are to be productive (v. 14).

The evidence of love between members of the church is evident in the closing verses of Paul's letter. Greetings are exchanged by "those who love us in the faith" (v. 15). This was a community whose lives had been taken captive by their faith in Christ, and it showed in their love for one another.

APPLY THE WORD

If you use social networking sites, why not view them through the lens of ministry? How can you encourage someone on your "friend" list today? Who needs your prayers? To whom can you extend a hand of friendship? How can you connect or promote ministries in need? If you don't use the Internet, your address book might work just as well. Consider how you can be a minister of networking, connecting those in need with those who would like to give.

Titus 3:13 1 Corinthians 16:11-24

Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. - Titus 3:13

TODAY IN THE WORD

When Chris began raising missionary support, he expected to be on the field in a few months. He finally left for language school three years later, still short of full support by \$70 a month. During those years he worked in a factory during the week and shuttled his family from place to place on the weekends, hoping to be added to the missionary budgets of the churches he visited. Before he left for the field he confessed to a friend, "If I had known all that would be involved in raising support, I'm not sure we would have become missionaries."

What does the church owe to those who minister on its behalf? We usually look at this question from the opposite perspective. We know what we expect of them. But we don't always recognize that they have a right to expect something from us. We have an obligation to support those who serve the church in ministry.

This support takes two forms. One is financial in nature; this is especially true in the area of missions. Paul did not think that it was unreasonable to expect the Corinthians to help Timothy complete his missionary journey. They were to send him "on his way" (v. 11). Paul expected the same courtesy for himself (v. 6). The picture behind the language in these verses is drawn from the ancient custom of a host who, when seeing a traveler off, would go with him on his journey a certain distance (cf. Gen. 18:16).

The other form of support that the church owes its servants is emotional in nature. Paul commanded the Corinthians to send Timothy on his way "in peace" (v. 11). He also urged them to show appreciation for people like Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus who had provided both financial and emotional support to Paul (v. 17).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Draw three columns on a sheet of paper. In the first column make list of all the people you personally know who minister on behalf of the church. When you are finished, add the names of those who are connected with your church. Write the letter "E" at the top the second column and the letter "F" at the top of the third column. Next to each name write at least one practical way you can show either emotional or financial support for each person you have identified. Post the list on your refrigerator as a reminder.

Titus 3:12-15

TODAY IN THE WORD

Jean Louis Agassiz, the Swiss naturalist, was invited to deliver a lecture to a prestigious organization. When he turned down the engagement, saying that it would distract him from research and writing, the organization said that it would pay a large honorarium. "That's no inducement to me," Agassiz said. "I can't afford to waste my time making money."

Certainly, there is more to work than making money. But for most of us, earning a living is a major reason we work. Today's passage indicates that this is a legitimate motivation. In verse 14 Paul reminds Titus of the need to teach others to "provide for daily necessities."

Working in order to meet our daily needs is a spiritual responsibility. We work so that we will not be a burden. "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody" (1 Thess. 4:11-12). Elsewhere Paul tells believers to provide for the needs of their family and warns that the one who refuses to do so "has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8).

Meeting our own needs, however, is not the only reason the Bible commands believers to work. The fact that the command of Titus 3:14 is preceded by a request to help Zenas and Apollos on their journey and "see that they have everything they need" suggests that the "daily necessities" include the needs of others.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - In his book entitled *Leap Over a Wall*, author Eugene Peterson observes that God is first presented in Scripture as a worker and that Adam and Eve were placed in the garden as workers. He notes, "Work is the primary context for our spirituality." How will you approach your work today? Will you view it as a drudgery to be endured, with little value other than the money you expect to receive on payday? Or will you see it as a way of serving God and meeting the needs of others?

EXPOSITIONS OF TITUS C H SPURGEON

Titus 1: Exposition by C H Spurgeon

Titus 1:1-4 . Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior; to Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

While reading this chapter, we must understand that Titus was sent to Crete, to superintend the preaching of the gospel throughout that island. Crete was at that time inhabited by a people who were only partially civilized, and sunk in the very worst of vices. Paul, therefore, tells Titus to speak to them about things which would hardly be mentioned to Christians nowadays.

You have probably noticed that Paul's benediction, when he is writing to a minister, is always, " Grace, mercy, and peace. " Writing to churches, his usual formula is, " Grace be to you, and peace; " but God's servants, called to the work of the ministry, need very special " mercy "-as if the higher the office, the greater the liability to sin, and therefore, in his Pastoral Epistles, whether he is addressing Titus or Timothy, Paul wishes for his sons in the faith, " Grace, mercy, and peace. " Oh, what a mercy it will be for any of us ministers if, at the last, we are clear of the blood of all men! If, having been called to preach the gospel, we shall do it so faithfully as to be acquitted and even rewarded by our Lord and Master, it will be mercy upon mercy.

This " charge " of the beloved Pastor has even more force and pathos now that he has gone " away " to heaven.

Titus 1:5 , 6 . For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife,

For there were many converts there who had two or three wives. Whatever position they might be permitted to occupy in the church, they could not become officers, they must keep in the rear rank.

Titus 1:6-12 . One of themselves, even a prophet of their own,

According to Jerome, this was Epimenides, a prophet-poet, who lived in Crete in the sixth century before Christ.

Titus 1: 12 . Said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

They were a degraded people; and hence, those who would teach them had a most difficult task, and needed great grace. Paul exhorts Titus that only specially fit men, men whose example would have influence, and whose characters would have weight, should be allowed to be elders in such churches.

Titus 1:13-16 . This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

This was bad soil; but it had to be ploughed, and to be sown, and with an Almighty God at the back of the gospel plougher and sower, a fruitful harvest came even in Crete. We need not be afraid of the adaptation of the gospel to the lowest of the low. If there be any quarter of the town where the people are more sunken in vice than anywhere else, there the gospel is to be carried with more prayer and more faith than anywhere else. Depend upon it, God can bless his Word anywhere, among Cretans, or among any other sort of degraded people.

Titus 2: Exposition by C H Spurgeon

Titus 2:1 . But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine;

There are certain things which are suitable to go with sound doctrine; they are meet and fit and appropriate thereto.

Titus 2:2 . That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

Among the heathen, old men often gave themselves up to drunkenness and gluttony; so now, this is the teaching that is to be given to aged Christian men. They need faith, love, and patience, as well as the virtues of sobriety, gravity, and temperance. The infirmities of old age often create petulance, so the grace of God is to make the venerable Christian to be full of faith, love, and patience.

Titus 2:3 . The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

Old women also among the heathen were often addicted to the taking of much wine, so here they are cautioned against it by the Spirit of God.

They are also tempted to spread slanderous reports against people: having little to do in their old age, they are apt to do that little by way of mischief; so they are warned that they are not to be “ false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. ” And how beautifully can an aged Christian woman, by her kindly example, be a teacher of good things! There is no more charming sight under heaven, I think, than that of an elderly Christian lady, whose words and whose whole life are such as becometh the gospel of Christ.

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

There were some women who supposed that, the moment they became Christians, they were to run about everywhere. “ No, ” says the apostle, “ let them keep at home. ” There is no gain to the Christian Church when the love, and the industry, and the zeal, which ought to make a happy home, are squandered upon something else. The young women of Crete appear to have been such that they needed to be taught “ to love their husbands. ” That expression does not occur elsewhere in Scripture. Christian women do not need to be told to love their husbands; but these Cretans, just brought out of the slough of sin, had to be taught even this lesson. Oh, what a blessing is love in the marriage relationship, and what a gracious influence love has upon children! How are they to be brought up aright except the whole house be perfumed with love?

Titus 2: 6 . Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

That exhortation is as necessary in London as it was in Crete. Young men often know a great deal, or think they do; and they are very apt to be intoxicated with the idea of knowing so much, and being able to do so much, so that the exhortation to them is to “ be sober minded. ”

Titus 2:6 . Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

They are full of spirits, they are very sanguine, they are apt to be carried away with novelties; exhort them to have that which is thought to be a virtue of age, namely, sobriety. Let them be old when they are young that they may be young when they are old.

Titus 2:7 . In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good Works:

Titus was himself a young man; he must, therefore, be a pattern to young men; and as a pastor or evangelist he must be a pattern to all sorts of men.

Titus 2:7 , 8 . in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

It is a pity when truth suffers at the hand of its own advocate; and perhaps the very worst wounds that truth has received have been in the house of its friends. You must be careful, therefore, “ that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. ”

Titus 2:9 . Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters,

They were mostly slaves in those days. A sad condition of society was that in which service meant slavery; yet even slaves were “ to be obedient unto their own masters. ”

Titus 2: 9 , 10 . And to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining,

Not practicing petty thefts, as, alas! some servants do even now,-

Titus 2: 9 , 10 . To be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining,

Not picking and stealing, which very naturally was the common habit of slaves; and who wonders at it in their wretched condition?

Titus 2:10 . But shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Is not that a wonderful passage? Here is a slave able to be an ornament to the gospel of Christ! This blessed gospel is not sent to kings and princes only; when Paul preached it, the great mass of the population were in cruel bondage, treated like dogs, or even worse; yet the gospel had a message even for them, it told them that they might, by a godly character, adorn the doctrine of God their Savior.

Titus 2:10 . But shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

The life of the Christian, even if he be a servant, is to be an ornament of Christianity. Christ does not look for the ornament of his religion to the riches or the talents of his followers, but to their holy lives “ that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. ”

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

Christians are not to run out of the world, as monks and hermits sought to do, but to live “ in this present world. ” Yet, while in the world, we are to be godly, that is, full of God. That kind of life which is without God is not for Christians. Those worldly desires, the pride and ambition, which are common to worldly men, are not to have power over us; we are to deny them, and to live soberly. This word relates not only to eating and drinking, but to the general sobriety of a man’s mind: “ Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. ”

Titus 2: 13 , 14 . Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

See what Christ died for, see what Christ lives for, see what we are to live for,-that we should not only be a people purified, but purified unto Himself. We are not only to have good works, but we are to be zealous of them; we are to burn with zeal for them, for zeal is a kind of fire, it is to burn and blaze in us until we warm and enlighten others also.

Titus 2: 15 . These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

As I have already reminded you, Titus was a young man; and people are apt to despise the pastoral office when it is held by a young man. Yet they ought always to respect it, whether it be held by a young man or an old man. God knows best who is most fitted for the work of the ministry: and those of us who are getting old must never look with any kind of scorn or contempt upon those who are commencing their service, for we, too, were young once. You cannot measure a man’s grace by the length of his beard, nor by the number of his years.

Titus 3: Exposition by C H Spurgeon

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

Gentleness was not reckoned a virtue among the Greeks; I do not suppose that the people in Crete had ever heard of it before Paul wrote this Epistle to Titus. Among the Romans and the Greeks, it seemed to be a virtue to stand up for your own, to be like a gamecock, who is always ready to fight, and will never miss a chance of fighting; but this Christian virtue of gentleness is a most amiable one, and greatly adorns the doctrine of Christ. The world has run away with this word gentle, and now calls many a person a gentleman who has no right to the name. I wish that every gentleman were indeed a gentleman. It is very significant that Moses, the type of the Lord Jesus under the law, was the meekest of men; should not Christians therefore excel in gentleness under this milder dispensation?

Titus 3:1 . Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.

You see, they were a rough, wild, rebellious people in Crete, and Christianity comes to civilize, to sober, to sanctify, to save.

Titus 3:2 . To speak evil of no man

Oh, how necessary is this exhortation even to this day!

Titus 3:2 . To be no brawler, but gentle, shewing all meekness, unto all men.

Meekness and gentleness are two of the ornaments of our faith. I would that some professed Christians would understand that unholy contentiousness is not after the mind of Christ, it is not according to that gracious command, “ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ” No, the Christian must be willing to suffer wrongfully, and to bear it in patience; he is never to be one who renders evil for evil, or railing for railing.

Titus 3:3 . For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish,

Well, then, if other people are foolish, we ought to bear with them.

Titus 3:3 . Disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

That is what we were once; and if the grace of God has made a change in us, we must not boast, we must not censure others, we must not set up as self-righteous judges of others. Oh, no! our action must be the very reverse of all this.

Titus 3:3 , 4 . For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

“ The philanthropy of God ” would be a good translation, or rather, a sort of borrowing from the Greek itself. “ After we had seen the philanthropy of God, ”-

Titus 3:4-7 . But after that the kindness and 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, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This is a very practical Epistle. See how closely Paul keeps to the doctrines of grace. He is never like Mr. Legality, he never teaches that we are to be saved by works; but, being saved by the grace of God alone, and being made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, we are then, out of gratitude to God, to abound in everything that is good, and holy, and kind, and after the mind of Christ.

Titus 3: 5-8 . Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying,

It would be worth while for you to turn to the other places in which this expression, “ This is a faithful saying, ” occurs.

Titus 3: 8 , 9 . This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions,

There are always plenty of thorn about, and there are certain professors who spend half their lives in fighting about nothing at all. There is no more in their contention than the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee; but they will divide a church over it, they will go through the world as if they had found out a great secret,-it really is not of any consequence whatever,-but having made the discovery, they judge everybody by their new-found fad, and so spread a spirit that is contrary to the Spirit of Christ.

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They are saved by faith; let them be careful to maintain good works. “ These things are good and profitable unto men, ” that is, to those who practice and observe them.

Titus 3: 9 . But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

There are hundreds of questions, which are thought by some people to be very important, but which have no practical bearing whatever, either upon the glory of God, or upon the holiness of man. We are not to go into these matters; let those who have time to waste take up these questions; as for us, we have not time enough for things that are unprofitable and vain.

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Titus 3: 10 . After the first and second admonition reject;

Just exclude him from the church that is all. Leave him his utmost liberty to go where he likes, believe what he likes, and do what he likes; but, at the same time, you as Christian people must disown him, that is all you ought to do, except to pray and labor for his restoration.

Titus 3: 10 , 11 . A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

When it comes to unbelief of fundamental and vital doctrines, we who are like Titus, set in office over a church, must deal with such deadly evils with a strong hand.

Titus 3: 11-14 .

How the apostle comes back to that point! Let all our people, our friends, our brethren, our kinsfolk, " let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. "

Titus 3: 12 , 13 . When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

Paul had already told Titus to bid the saints in Crete to abound in good works; now he is commanded to take care of certain travelling Christians, and to speed them on their way. It was the custom in olden times, when travelling was very different from what it is now, when the Christians passed from one town to another, to find out the church, and to be entertained and speeded on their journey by their fellow-believers. Thus they kept up a practical fellowship of love to all the saints.

Titus 3:14 , 15 . And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

May that final benediction drop like the dew upon this whole company! " Grace be with you all. Amen. "

Titus 1: Exposition by C H Spurgeon

Titus 1:1-4 . Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior; to Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

While reading this chapter, we must understand that Titus was sent to Crete, to superintend the preaching of the gospel throughout that island. Crete was at that time inhabited by a people who were only partially civilized, and sunk in the very worst of vices. Paul, therefore, tells Titus to speak to them about things which would hardly be mentioned to Christians nowadays.

You have probably noticed that Paul's benediction, when he is writing to a minister, is always, " Grace, mercy, and peace. " Writing to churches, his usual formula is, " Grace be to you, and peace; " but God's servants, called to the work of the ministry, need very special " mercy "-as if the higher the office, the greater the liability to sin, and therefore, in his Pastoral Epistles, whether he is addressing Titus or Timothy, Paul wishes for his sons in the faith, " Grace, mercy, and peace. " Oh, what a mercy it will be for any of us ministers if, at the last, we are clear of the blood of all men! If, having been called to preach the gospel, we shall do it so faithfully as to be acquitted and even rewarded by our Lord and Master, it will be mercy upon mercy.

This " charge " of the beloved Pastor has even more force and pathos now that he has gone " away " to heaven.

Titus 1:5 , 6 . For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife,

For there were many converts there who had two or three wives. Whatever position they might be permitted to occupy in the church, they could not become officers, they must keep in the rear rank.

Titus 1:6-12 . One of themselves, even a prophet of their own,

According to Jerome, this was Epimenides, a prophet-poet, who lived in Crete in the sixth century before Christ.

Titus 1: 12 . Said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

They were a degraded people; and hence, those who would teach them had a most difficult task, and needed great grace. Paul exhorts Titus that only specially fit men, men whose example would have influence, and whose characters would have weight, should be allowed to be elders in such churches.

Titus 1:13-16 . This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

This was bad soil; but it had to be ploughed, and to be sown, and with an Almighty God at the back of the gospel plougher and sower, a fruitful harvest came even in Crete. We need not be afraid of the adaptation of the gospel to the lowest of the low. If there be any quarter of the town where the people are more sunken in vice than anywhere else, there the gospel is to be carried with more prayer and more faith than anywhere else. Depend upon it, God can bless his Word anywhere, among Cretans, or among any other sort of degraded people.

Titus 2: Exposition by C H Spurgeon

Titus 2:1 . But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine;

There are certain things which are suitable to go with sound doctrine; they are meet and fit and appropriate thereto.

Titus 2:2 . That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

Among the heathen, old men often gave themselves up to drunkenness and gluttony; so now, this is the teaching that is to be given to aged Christian men. They need faith, love, and patience, as well as the virtues of sobriety, gravity, and temperance. The infirmities of old age often create petulance, so the grace of God is to make the venerable Christian to be full of faith, love, and patience.

Titus 2:3 . The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

Old women also among the heathen were often addicted to the taking of much wine, so here they are cautioned against it by the Spirit of God.

They are also tempted to spread slanderous reports against people: having little to do in their old age, they are apt to do that little by way of mischief; so they are warned that they are not to be " false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. " And how beautifully can an aged Christian woman, by her kindly example, be a teacher of good things! There is no more charming sight under heaven, I think, than that of an elderly Christian lady, whose words and whose whole life are such as becometh the gospel of Christ.

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

There were some women who supposed that, the moment they became Christians, they were to run about everywhere. " No, " says the apostle, " let them keep at home. " There is no gain to the Christian Church when the love, and the industry, and the zeal, which ought to make a happy home, are squandered upon something else. The young women of Crete appear to have been such that they needed to be taught " to love their husbands. " That expression does not occur elsewhere in Scripture. Christian women do not need to be told to love their husbands; but these Cretans, just brought out of the slough of sin, had to be taught even this lesson. Oh, what a blessing is love in the marriage relationship, and what a gracious influence love has upon children! How are they to be brought up aright except the whole house be perfumed with love?

Titus 2: 6 . Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

That exhortation is as necessary in London as it was in Crete. Young men often know a great deal, or think they do; and they are very apt to be intoxicated with the idea of knowing so much, and being able to do so much, so that the exhortation to them is to " be sober minded. "

Titus 2:6 . Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

They are full of spirits, they are very sanguine, they are apt to be carried away with novelties; exhort them to have that which is thought to be a virtue of age, namely, sobriety. Let them be old when they are young that they may be young when they are old.

Titus 2:7 . In all things skewing thyself a pattern of good Works:

Titus was himself a young man; he must, therefore, be a pattern to young men; and as a pastor or evangelist he must be a pattern to all sorts of men.

Titus 2:7 , 8 . in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

It is a pity when truth suffers at the hand of its own advocate; and perhaps the very worst wounds that truth has received have been in the house of its friends. You must be careful, therefore, “ that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. ”

Titus 2:9 . Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters,

They were mostly slaves in those days. A sad condition of society was that in which service meant slavery; yet even slaves were “ to be obedient unto their own masters. ”

Titus 2: 9 , 10 . And to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining,

Not practicing petty thefts, as, alas! some servants do even now,-

Titus 2: 9 , 10 . To be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining,

Not picking and stealing, which very naturally was the common habit of slaves; and who wonders at it in their wretched condition?

Titus 2:10 . But shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Is not that a wonderful passage? Here is a slave able to be an ornament to the gospel of Christ! This blessed gospel is not sent to kings and princes only; when Paul preached it, the great mass of the population were in cruel bondage, treated like dogs, or even worse; yet the gospel had a message even for them, it told them that they might, by a godly character, adorn the doctrine of God their Savior.

Titus 2:10 . But shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

The life of the Christian, even if he be a servant, is to be an ornament of Christianity. Christ does not look for the ornament of his religion to the riches or the talents of his followers, but to their holy lives “ that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. ”

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

Christians are not to run out of the world, as monks and hermits sought to do, but to live “ in this present world. ” Yet, while in the world, we are to be godly, that is, full of God. That kind of life which is without God is not for Christians. Those worldly desires, the pride and ambition, which are common to worldly men, are not to have power over us; we are to deny them, and to live soberly. This word relates not only to eating and drinking, but to the general sobriety of a man’s mind: “ Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. ”

Titus 2: 13 , 14 . Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

See what Christ died for, see what Christ lives for, see what we are to live for,-that we should not only be a people purified, but purified unto Himself. We are not only to have good works, but we are to be zealous of them; we are to burn with zeal for them, for zeal is a kind of fire, it is to burn and blaze in us until we warm and enlighten others also.

Titus 2: 15 . These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

As I have already reminded you, Titus was a young man; and people are apt to despise the pastoral office

when it is held by a young man. Yet they ought always to respect it, whether it be held by a young man or an old man. God knows best who is most fitted for the work of the ministry: and those of us who are getting old must never look with any kind of scorn or contempt upon those who are commencing their service, for we, too, were young once. You cannot measure a man's grace by the length of his beard, nor by the number of his years.

Titus 3: Exposition by C H Spurgeon

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

Gentleness was not reckoned a virtue among the Greeks; I do not suppose that the people in Crete had ever heard of it before Paul wrote this Epistle to Titus. Among the Romans and the Greeks, it seemed to be a virtue to stand up for your own, to be like a gamecock, who is always ready to fight, and will never miss a chance of fighting; but this Christian virtue of gentleness is a most amiable one, and greatly adorns the doctrine of Christ. The world has run away with this word gentle, and now calls many a person a gentleman who has no right to the name. I wish that every gentleman were indeed a gentleman. It is very significant that Moses, the type of the Lord Jesus under the law, was the meekest of men; should not Christians therefore excel in gentleness under this milder dispensation?

Titus 3:1 . Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.

You see, they were a rough, wild, rebellious people in Crete, and Christianity comes to civilize, to sober, to sanctify, to save.

Titus 3:2 . To speak evil of no man

Oh, how necessary is this exhortation even to this day!

Titus 3:2 . To be no brawler, but gentle, shewing all meekness, unto all men.

Meekness and gentleness are two of the ornaments of our faith. I would that some professed Christians would understand that unholy contentiousness is not after the mind of Christ, it is not according to that gracious command, " Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. " No, the Christian must be willing to suffer wrongfully, and to bear it in patience; he is never to be one who renders evil for evil, or railing for railing.

Titus 3:3 . For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish,

Well, then, if other people are foolish, we ought to bear with them.

Titus 3:3 . Disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

That is what we were once; and if the grace of God has made a change in us, we must not boast, we must not censure others, we must not set up as self-righteous judges of others. Oh, no! our action must be the very reverse of all this.

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This is a very practical Epistle. See how closely Paul keeps to the doctrines of grace. He is never like Mr. Legality, he never teaches that we are to be saved by works; but, being saved by the grace of God alone, and being made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, we are then, out of gratitude to God, to abound in everything that is good, and holy, and kind, and after the mind of Christ.

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May that final benediction drop like the dew upon this whole company! “ Grace be with you all. Amen. ”

Titus 1 & 2

I Need Help With My Self-Control

Robert Morgan

The subject of today’s message is: “I need help with my self-control.” Self-control is the ability to live our lives with proper restraint and discipline.

The self-controlled person rejects the notion that if it feels right it is right. The self-controlled person accepts that fact that we can’t live just the way we feel like living, we have to say learn to say “No” to some things and “Yes” to others. We often have to say “No” to things we want to do, and “Yes” to things we don’t particularly want to do. We have to deny our flesh and walk in the Spirit. We have to put a governor on our own urges, desires, lusts, and passions. Paul said in 2 Timothy 2 that the Christian is like an athlete who is always training for the Olympics. He is like a soldier training in the army. He is like a hard-working farmer tending his crops. It requires discipline, hard work, and self-control.

As I prepared this message, I made a little list of areas in which we need to exercise personal restraint, wisdom, discipline, and self-control as Christians:

- Credit card usage, impulsive spending, and money management
- Anger management
- Tobacco and alcohol usage
- Drug addictions
- Gambling habits
- Our thought lives
- Our emotions and moods
- Our diets and in issues of nutrition
- Exercise
- Profanity and other sins of the tongue
- Pornography
- Sexual immorality in all its various forms
- Laziness
- Television, entertainment, and diversions

This was a major topic in the ministry of the Apostle Paul. In Acts 24, the apostle Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea by the Sea. The governor of Judea, a Roman official named Antonius Felix and his wife Drusilla were interested in what Paul had to say, and they would often send for him. I’m sure the guards would come and say, “Paul, get cleaned up. Get shaved. Let’s find some better clothes for you. The governor’s calling for you. He and the Missus want to see you.” And Paul would be escorted from the prison to the palace to meet with Felix and Drusilla. What do you think Paul talked about? What were his talking points with them? Acts 24 says he discoursed on three things: righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come. I think that’s a very interesting summary of Christianity: righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.

Later, when Paul wrote to Timothy, he warned that in the last days, the world would become increasingly undisciplined, and men and women would be increasingly characterized by a lack of self-control.

Now today I’d like to show you how this topic set the theme for Paul’s letter to his other young colleague, Titus. The book of Titus comes immediately after 1 and 2 Timothy, and it is the third of Paul’s “Pastoral Letters.” Here’s the background: Sometime in the year AD 63 or 64, leaving Timothy in Ephesus, Paul and Titus had traveled together to the island of Crete to do evangelistic work. After a short time there, Paul went on, but he left Titus to continue the work. Some time later, Paul wrote back to Titus, giving him some instructions on how to form and develop churches and church leadership on the island. One of his great concerns was the fact that the people of Crete were much undisciplined in their behavior. It’s summed up in Titus 1:12: Even one of their own prophets has said, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith.

The subject of discipline and self-control, therefore, is paramount in the book of Titus, and it runs all the way through it. Let’s take a

moment to trace it.

In chapter 1, Paul gives Titus the qualifications necessary for appointing elders in the churches. Look at verse 6: He must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

In Titus 2:1: You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled.

Continuing in Titus 2:3 we read: Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled...

Titus 2:6: Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.

Titus 2:11-14

And now we come to one of the greatest passages on this subject in the Bible, and this is where I'd like for us to spend the rest of our time this morning, Titus 2:11-14:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.

The subject of this paragraph is stated at the opening—the grace of God. Now, grace is just about the biggest word in the Bible, and it's impossible to get your arms around it. It's like the Giant Sequoia trees that Katrina and I visited last year in California. You can't imagine how ancient and massive they are, and it's impossible to get your arms around them. I don't think fifty people lined up side-by-side could get their arms around those gigantic trees, and that's the way it is with the grace of God. Grace, as we see it in the Bible, is a forest of Sequoia trees. So let me reduce it to its simplest common denominator. I'll give you a little acrostic that we'll use today as our working definition.

Grace – GRACE – is:

God's
Riches
Available to
Christians
Every day

I developed this definition this week one morning during my quiet time when I read John 1:16: From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another. Grace is God's riches available to Christians every day. Now in our passage today, three of those riches are listed for us.

God's Grace Brings Us Salvation

First, God's grace brings us salvation. That's the way the paragraph begins: For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all people. Our English word salvation is transliterated from the Greek term *sōtērion*, and it simply means to be saved or to be delivered. When the Bible uses this term, it means to be saved and delivered from sin, guilt, shame, death, and everlasting destruction. This is the very heart of the message of the Bible. Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried, and He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures. And if we confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead, we will be saved.

Earlier this year, I was invited to participate on a radio program with Dawson McAllister. A young man called in from East Texas. His name was Gavan, and he described to us his struggles. He had battled drugs and alcohol for several years, and then he went into a three month rehab program. Afterward, however, a friend pulled him back into that world of addiction and pain. Recently that friend, Aaron, had overdosed in Galveston, and since then Gavan had been praying and seeking answers to the problems in his life. I had the opportunity of sharing the Gospel with Gavin, and there on nationwide radio I had the privilege of leading him in prayer to receive Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

There are so many Gavan's out there, and I just want to tell them all about the grace of God that brings salvation to all men, to all women, to all young people, and to all the world. God's grace brings salvation.

God's Grace Brings Self-Control

Second, God's grace brings self-control. Look at the passage again: For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age.

A very important word here is the verb teaches. The grace of God teaches us to say "No" to the bad habits, and to say "Yes" to the upright and godly habits. That means that being self-controlled and disciplined is a learned activity. It is acquired. It must be taught to the new Christian by the grace of God. It's not necessarily something that comes to us all at once the moment we're saved. It is something we must learn, and it's an education that never stops as long as we're on this sod. How does the grace of God teach us to live lives of self-control and discipline? Let me suggest three ways.

The grace of God gives us a new set of motivations. We read in the Old Testament about the young man Daniel that he made up his mind—he purposed in his heart—that he would be not defiled. The young man Joseph in the book of Genesis made up his mind (in advance and before the temptation ever came) that he would not commit sexual immorality; so when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, he knew where he had drawn the line and he said no.

Where do those godly and holy impulses come from? They are God-given. They come by the grace of God. It is God's work in our lives first to last that enables us to live a holy and self-disciplined life. These new impulses toward godliness constitute the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

Look down the page at Titus 3:3ff. Here Paul describes what happens to us before, during, and after salvation: At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passion and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He 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, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

In other words, at one time we were undisciplined people, enslaved by our own passions and pleasures. But when the kindness of God our Savior appeared He saved us and gave us a new set of passions and impulses. He gave us a new lifestyle. He gave us new desires through the Holy Spirit whom God has generously poured out on us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2 says, "Let your salvation work its way out in your life, for it is God who gives us both the will and the ability to do His good pleasure" (my paraphrase). So the grace of God gives us a new set of motivations.

In the second place, the grace of God gives us a new set of models. Look at chapter 2:2: Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the Word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example....

We learn self-discipline and self-control best by being around people who possess those qualities. Today is October 31, Reformation Sunday. It was on this day in 1517 that a German monk and university professor named Martin Luther nailed a list of his beliefs and convictions to the door of the Cathedral at the lower end of the main street of the little village of Wittenberg, Germany, and that began the greatest reform movement in the history of the church. But as a young man, Luther was subject to great extremes, and he badly needed a model and a mentor. And the Lord gave him an older man, a friend, named Johann von Staupitz. And this man had such a profound effect on young Martin, that Luther later said, "If it had not been for Dr. Staupitz, I should have sunk in hell."

Looking back over my life, I realize that most of the disciplines that I have, to the extent that I have any, were picked up by watching people that I admired and respected. I attribute it to the grace of God, and I thank God for His having brought them into my life. So if you need help in a particular area of your life, find someone to watch. Find someone to be your friend in that area. Learn from them. Absorb their example and emulate them.

In the third place, the grace of God gives us a new set of memory verses. The most powerful tool we have in establishing new habits and shoring up our disciplines is in the Word of God. Look at the way we see this emphasized here in Titus:

Titus 2: You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. In other words, if you want disciplined habits, you have to start with sound doctrine. Sound doctrine and biblical truth is the soil that produces godly living.

Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled...

- Titus 2:3: Teach...
- Titus 2:6: Encourage...
- Titus 2:9: Teach...
- Titus 2:15: These, then, are the things you should teach...

Titus 3:8: This 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. It is the teaching of Scripture that gives us the power to overcome our foibles and vices.

I think the middle section of Ephesians provides us with a lot of examples here.

If you need to become more self-controlled in your anger and emotional reactions, memorize Ephesians 4:26: In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

If you need to become more disciplined in your tongue, memorize verse 29: Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up.

If you need to bring to become self-disciplined in areas of sexuality and your thought life, memorize Ephesians 5:3: But among you there should not even be a hint of sexual immorality.

If you need to become more disciplined in your use of alcohol, memorize verse 18: Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit.

The book of Proverbs is also very good, and the book of James. In fact, the whole Bible becomes our resource and an armory full of offensive weapons systems in our fight against temptation. There has no temptation taken us but such as is common to man, but God is faithful who will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape. The Psalmist said, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."

We have to learn the secret of resorting to the power of God's Word to help us resist temptation. I remember how, as a young man in college, I was struggling with my thought life and I took a concordance and looked up every time that the word "mind" occurred in the Bible and then I choose some of those verses and memorized them. And it gave me ammunition against the temptation.

God's Grace Brings the Second Coming

So the grace of God gives us salvation. The grace of God gives us self-control by providing a new set of motivations, of mentors, and of memory verses. And finally the grace of God gives us the Second Coming of Christ. Look at the way the passage in Titus 2 ends:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.

I learned something a week or so ago that I'd never before thought about. In the older translations of the Bible, the final prayer of Scripture in the last paragraph of Revelation says, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." I've sometimes prayed that myself. But I had never thought about the words "...even so..." What does that mean? "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Well, it refers to the words immediately preceding it which are the last red letter words of Jesus in the Bible and constitute the last promise of Scripture. Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly."

"Even so" is a phrase referring back to the adverb "quickly." We're not just taught for Jesus to come again, but for Him to come

again quickly. "Yes, Lord, even so—just as You have said, come quickly." And one day soon, by the grace of God, He is going to do just that. But until then, we are to live holy, righteous, self-controlled lives in this present world.

GRACE, then, is God's riches available to Christians every day. It is grace extended in three tenses—past, present, and future His grace has brought us salvation. His grace is bringing us self-control. His grace will bring the Second Coming at just the pre-ordained moment.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.

**AGING GRACEFULLY:
MATURE LIVERS
TITUS 2:1-3
ROBERT MORGAN**

Our world is becoming more and more bizarre, and I can prove it. The Wall Street Journal recently carried an article titled, "Statistics Confirm It: The World is Getting Weirder and Weirder." The article, datelined London, said:

These are weird times. In fact, the times are a full 3.5% weirder than they were just a year ago. That is the conclusion of the Fortean Times, a London-based magazine dedicated to the study of all things bizarre. The journal (has compared) thousands of zany happenings in 1992 and 1993 and declares that the overall strangeness index has risen. Among the curiosities of 1993: A trash bin belonging to the London borough of Lewisham was found beside the Sea of Galilee. Sixty lambs in Germany were attacked and killed by hundreds of crows. Swedish doctors cured a deaf man by removing a 47-year-old bus ticket from his ear. A Chinese city (became) convinced that a giant deranged robot from America was killing and sucking the blood of people who wore red. "People are more and more erratic," says the editor. "There are just such stupid extremes of behavior." There are early signs that 1994 may be even weirder than 1993...

As if to confirm this story, the same newspaper in a totally separate front-page article discussed a new trend among young people -- toad-licking. It said that a small but growing segment of the drug culture has taken up the bizarre practice of licking toads and ingesting toad venom. The venom contains dozens of chemically active compounds, including enough poison to kill dogs that sometimes catch the "warty little hoppers." Apparently, it gives humans some sort of high. That is, if you don't croak first.

Well, in a world so bizarre that people are licking toads to find some kind of diverting emotion -- who should be the stable ones? Who should be the mature ones? Who should be wise and winsome and dignified and worthy of emulation? Who are the mature liverers?

Titus 2:1-3 tells us:

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.

This passage gives us God's profile for senior adults, a beautiful picture of maturing Christian. These three verses begin with one instruction, then they list nine character traits, and end with one assignment.

Learn

The opening instruction, given three times, is for Titus to teach senior adults -- with the obvious implication that senior adults should learn the things Titus would teach them: You must teach them what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men... Teach the older women....

In other words, older people are teachable, fully capable of learning, of feeding on the words of sound doctrine. The word that Paul used here for sound is the Greek word *hugias* from which our English term hygiene stems. This is a word that primarily means healthy or health-producing or healing. This is the word Matthew used when he said that the crippled man Jesus touched became well. This is the word Jesus used when he told the woman in Mark's Gospel, Your faith has healed you. This is the same term used by our Lord when he said in Luke's Gospel, It is not the healthy who need a doctor....

It's primarily a medical word, so Paul was saying that older people should stay spiritually healthy by regular intake of the Word of God. I recently read a report about cookbooks in America. Nearly 1000 of them are published each year, many of them glossy, full-color, and very expensive. But at the same time, fewer and fewer people are cooking, and increasing numbers are eating in restaurants. The reporter interviewed one lady, a portfolio manager in New York, who has acquired 16 cookbooks in the last four years and who subscribes to two cooking magazines. But the last time she prepared a sit-down meal was four years ago, "and," she said, "it didn't turn out."

Well, there are more Bible translations, study aids and devotional books now than ever. Christian publishing is a big business in America. But for all that, people are reading and studying their Bible less and less. Titus wanted to change that. He wanted to turn the older people of Crete into fresh learners, drawing them into a diet of healthy doctrine. We're never too old to study God's Word.

As we do, what happens? Nine different character traits begin to develop in our lives. The first three are given in verse 2: You must teach what is in accord with (health-producing) doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled.

Temperate, Worthy of Respect, Self-Controlled

A current movie depicts seniors as being "Grumpy Old Men," based on the assumption of older men are irritable and crusty -- though with a tender heart beneath it all. But the Lord tells us here that seniors shouldn't be ill-tempered, but temperate.

What does that mean? It's a tough word to define. In the Greek it originally related to staying sober, of not becoming intoxicated; but it seems to have the broader meaning of being self-controlled and moderate in one's overall lifestyle.

The dictionary defines temperate as: marked by moderation, as keeping within limits; not extreme or excessive; mild, moderate in indulgence of appetite or desire. If you live in a temperate zone, you live in a part of the country that normally doesn't experience extremes of weather. You don't live in the Arctic on the one hand, or in the Sahara on the other.

Well, as we grow older our extremes should level out. We mature, stabilize, learn to be moderate. We learn to get reasonable amounts of exercise and sleep; we watch our diets and eat wisely; we shouldn't over-react to things we don't like; we shouldn't become over-excited about the things we do like. Temperate people take things in stride, and leads a healthy, balanced, moderate living -- being temperate, worthy of respect, and self-controlled.

Sound in Faith, Love, and Endurance

The next three qualities are given in verse 2: We should be sound in faith, love, and endurance. The word sound here is the same term we saw in verse 1 -- hygieia, hygienic, healthy. As we grow older, we may begin to lose our physical health, but it's more than compensated by the fact that our spiritual health is increasing in inverse proportion. The older we grow, the weaker we may become physically, but the healthier we should grow spiritually. Our faith in God has built itself up over a lifetime, and we are healthy in faith, in love, and in endurance.

The word endurance is especially meaningful. It's a Greek word that literally means to remain under, or to remain behind. Those possessing endurance remain under the load, able to remain behind after others have departed, able to bear up, to endure patiently.

In other words, the older we become the tougher, the stronger we are, because we're backed up by a lifetime of faith in Jesus Christ. Several years ago, I read about a man in China that I've never forgotten. They call him Father Jonah, and he's an independent itinerant evangelist, originally from Shanghai who, though in his mid-70's, maintains a killer-schedule. A reporter once met Father Jonah in Shanghai as the evangelist was collecting a 60-pound package of Bibles to take into the interior. The weight almost bent the older man to the ground, but he staggered with it to the railway station and boarded a train for Henan Province.

The reporter watched Father Jonah witness freely throughout the duration of the 20-hour rail trip, pulling out his frayed Bible and taking the passengers through it book by book. When they disembarked, Father Jonah and the reporter mounted old rusty bicycles, and for three hours they pedaled, the older man still bearing his package of Bibles. They arrived at the village, grabbed two tin pots, and started banging them together. When the crowd of 200 villagers assembled, Father Jonah spoke for nearly an hour about the Lord, and about 50 men and women prayed to become Christians. He spent the rest of the day with three converts that he had selected to lead the new little church, giving them a crash course in Christian doctrine.

That evening, he had to flee from the village because someone on the train had reported him as being a Christian, and the authorities were on his trail. They pedaled for four more hours, boarded a bus after a very narrow escape at the station, and continued to another preaching spot.

By the end of the weekend, the reporter was exhausted; but Father Jonah was ready to head out again, one step ahead of the Communists, bearing witness and taking Bibles from village to village, serving as missionary and apostle to new and growing

churches. He had found his seventies the strongest, most effective period thusfar in his life for Christ and his kingdom.

Now that's an unusual example, but it illustrates a true point: The aging process should find us growing increasingly healthy in faith, love, and endurance. And very often, that faith, love, and endurance provides the stamina we need for pressing on physically.

Reverent, Not Slanderers or Addicts

The Apostle Paul then proceeds in Titus 2:3 to give us a final trio of qualities:

"Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine."

In other words, older saints should never lose the wonder of God's power and grace. They should have, as the Greek puts it, a reverent demeanor or deportment, a quiet appreciation for God and his power. They should feel a sense of awe and wonder in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that sense of awe bestows a certain poise and polish, an elegance of spirit.

The Good News Bible translates it: Instruct the older women to behave as women should who lead a holy life.

Teachers

Now, if seniors learn the Word of God, and grow in these nine graces, then they're the world's most eligible applicants to be teachers for God: to teach what is good, as Paul puts it at the end of verse 3. That entire phrase is one, long word in the Greek which is a compound word coming from the terms good and to be a teacher. In other words, the older we grow, the more wisdom we have to share. The more qualified we are to teach. The more obligated we are to minister. It's the prime time in our service to the king.

I'd like to conclude this series by sharing with you the finest picture of the joys of aging that's ever been written (apart from God's Word). John Bunyan wrote a famous Christian classic called Pilgrim's Progress that tells the story of a man -- Christian -- who travels from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. All along the way, he encounters hardships and dangers all along the way until the road winds through it's final territory before reaching the Celestial City, a wonderful place called Beulah Land.

According to Bunyan, the fields and hillsides of Beulah Land are filled with orchards, vineyards, orchards, and gardens, their gates all opening onto the highway. They belong to the King of the Celestial City and are planted to refresh weary pilgrims as they approach the gates of heaven.

The air in Beulah Land is very sweet and pleasant, and the pilgrims continually hear the singing of birds. Flowers bloom across the fields, and the sky is clear, the sun always bright. Pilgrims here are within sight of the Celestial City, for Beulah Land borders heaven, and its occupants rejoice more than those in other, more remote parts of the pilgrimage.

Beulah Land was Bunyan's way of describing the Biblical truth that the best days are always ahead of us, that the path of the righteous grows brighter and brighter until that coming day. In God's scheme of things, the golden years are the best, the richest, the most mature.

The world is growing weirder and weirder, but Christians, as they age, provide stability and wisdom and strength on a planet increasingly bizarre. Christians view aging from an exactly opposite perspective as the world, for Christians know that for us the best is yet to be, and the finest days are still to come.

So let our songs abound and every tear be dry.

We're marching through Immanuel's ground.

We're marching through Immanuel's ground.

We're marching through Immanuel's ground.

To fairer worlds on high.