

## Paul's Letter to Titus (Part 2)

### **Sound Doctrine and Good Works**

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As we saw last time in Part 1, the Apostle Paul's brief letter to Titus focuses on Titus' role and responsibility in the organization and supervision of the churches in Crete. Paul wrote his letter to strengthen and exhort Titus to firmly exercise his authority as God's representative to churches that needed to be put in order.

Paul tells Titus to refute false teachers and dissenters, and to direct the brethren to replace immoral behavior with good actions.

The prevailing moral conditions in the congregations of Crete were substandard to say the least. They were naturally prone to be lax and indifferent. In addition, the church was adversely influenced by the prevailing low moral standards in Crete, much like we see today in our society. The existing society was continuing to have its impact on the church, even though they were supposed to have come out of the mindset of the world around them. Therefore, it was a society similar to what we are resisting today. It was similar in areas of morality or immorality, areas of lying politicians, or the extreme paganism that surrounded their lives and influenced them.

Paul uses his letter to remind Titus of some of the details related to his ministerial duties, including the qualifications for elders and the behavior expected of various groups in the church. Paul includes three doctrinal sections in this letter to stress that proper belief, which is understanding and obeying God's truth, is the foundation for proper behavior.

He believed that Titus needed to do four things to stabilize the congregations of Crete, Achaia, Thrace, and Macedonia (which is the area of Greece today). Titus needed to: 1. Ordain qualified elders, 2. Rebuke false teachers, 3. Speak sound doctrine, 4. Maintain good works.

Titus was to instruct and admonish the members to live moral lives twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

In Part 1, we surveyed chapter one. Today we will examine chapters two and three as the final part of this two part series.

All of chapter two deals with Christian character in action. It takes people by their various ages and situations, and lays down part of their responsibility within the church, as well as in their own families.

Chapter two emphasizes developing important virtues, which ensure godly relations within the church. Chapter two emphasizes overcoming negative vices, which cannot be tolerated in the church. In a sense, the things that Paul admonished Titus to explain or tell the church are the minimum requirements of a church of God.

Paul includes all categories of people, instructing them to show loyalty and faithfulness, so that they may give a true and right witness of the doctrine of God.

In verses 1-10 of Titus 2, on Christian character resulting in a sound church, Paul stresses the importance of building up our inner qualities as a defense against the error of the world and the error that false teachers bring in.

Titus is given the mission to "speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine." Paul also defines Titus' role with regard to various groups in the church, including older men, older women, young women, young men, and employees.

Sound doctrine must lead to ethical and moral conduct in the lives of all of these groups in the congregations. Paul places emphasis on the family groups. The false teachers in Crete had apparently done their greatest damage against the family.

There is so much in Titus 2 that we could spend years covering the topics here. This is what I am calling a survey of Titus and we will go rapidly through it rapidly.

Titus 2:1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:

Here, Paul sets the soundness and healthiness of true doctrine against the disease of heresy which was troubling the church. He knows that truth is the best antidote to error.

By saying to Titus, "*But as for you,*" Paul emphasizes that the contrast between God's ministers and false teachers is as different—as sound doctrine and lies—as good health and disease—and, as light and darkness.

The first practical result of sound doctrine is that good behavior is an expression of right belief or, in other words, true faith and right conviction produce good behavior.

Titus 2:2 That the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

The first emphasis is regarding senior men. Older men must act as is appropriate for senior members of the community. Senior men should be the most steadfast and solid pillars in the church.

The first three important qualities are those generally expected from senior men:

(1) They must be sober; and should have learned that the pleasures of self-indulgence cost far more than they are worth. This is something that the younger men quite often still have to learn. This term includes not merely restraint in the use of alcohol, but general moderation in everything, including but not limited to: food, hobbies, sports, entertainment, and work.

(2) They must be reverent; that is, serious. It describes the behavior that is serious in the right way. It does not describe the demeanor of a person who is gloomy, but the conduct of the man who knows that before long he will no longer have the physical opportunity to benefit anyone.

This man is worthy of respect. In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he uses this same word to relate to both deacons and to their wives. A seriousness of purpose suits the dignity of seniors, yet

gravity must never be confused with gloominess. Sincere gravity should produce hope; whereas, gloominess manifests hopelessness and depression.

(3) They must be temperate. Temperate literally means self-controlled, and implies sensible and prudent. It describes the man with the mind that has everything under control, not just some things. Earlier, Paul applied this word to overseers (or bishops).

The three words taken together mean that the senior man must have learned what is commonly called the gravity of life. A certain amount of recklessness and unthinking-ness may be overlooked in youth, but the years should bring wisdom. It is very uncomely for an older man to be found to be silly.

In addition to these three qualities, there are three great virtues that the senior man must have helped God develop in him. Verse 2 tells us that the older men must be sound in faith, in love, and in patience. The linking of faith, love and patience is found in more than four places in Paul's writings. It is a grouping that he very often puts together because it gives a whole picture.

(1) He must have developed faith. If a man lives with a very close relationship to the Father and Christ, the passing of the years and the experiences of life will make his faith stronger. The years must teach us to trust God more, not less. There are bitter old men who feel cheated.

(2) He must have developed love. One of the greatest dangers of aging is that a man could drift into fault-finding. Some allow the passing of years to destroy kindness and sympathy. A man must not allow himself to unconsciously become resentful. The years should bring wise forbearance, not increasing unsympathetic intolerance. Love is kind, it does not envy. Older men must be aware of these common problems.

(3) He must have developed patience. The years should temper a man like steel, so that he can bear more and more, and emerge more and more the conqueror of life's troubles. But he must be a man of both steel and velvet. Patience unlike hope includes some element of resignation. He must have the wisdom to know what he can change and what he cannot.

It is interesting to note that the same Greek word meaning '*sound*' in verse 2 "*sound in faith*", which is used here of elderly men's pursuit of Christian virtues, is used in verse 1 to describe

While this soundness is most applicable to faith, it has an application to love and patience in that love and patience need to be kept healthy. Both the heart and mind of a Christian must function in a healthy manner in order for that to be true.

Titus 2:3 The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—

It is clear that in the early church the older women held a very honored and responsible unofficial position. They, as faithful saints, should have developed serenity and sympathy and understanding of great value to the life of their family and of the brethren.

The expression "*reverent in behavior*" or, '*reverent in the way they live*' contains two words unique in the New Testament; *katastema* (translated '*behavior*') means '*demeanor*', describing a state of mind. The other word that is used is *hieroprepes* (translated '*reverent*') means '*suited*

*to a holy character.'*

In other words, Paul is saying here that the senior women are to have behavior that suits holiness. They are to be taught to be suited to holiness in their attitudes and conduct.

He also gives Titus two things to teach the older women not to do. They are not to be slanderers. That is, they are not to be false accusers and they are to be careful not to gossip.

It is a curious trait of human nature that most people would rather repeat and hear a malicious tale than one to someone's credit. It is best to decide ahead of time to say nothing at all about people, if we cannot find anything good to say.

Also, the older women are not to allow themselves to be addicted to drinking too much wine. The verb used here in the expression "not given" signifies '*bondage*'. They are not to be '*slaves to drink*' as the Revised Standard Version states it.

Paul states the last principle with regard to the older women as positive instruction. They are to teach what is good. Since elderly women in general are included in this category, it does not refer to public teaching, but mainly refers to teaching in the home. Today, that includes home-schooling in various locations for those of you who teach your own children.

Titus 2:4-5 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Something of the nature of this service of older women to younger women is indicated here. The senior women are to instruct the younger women to "*love their husbands and children.*" I think it is sad that a society can bring women to a point where they would not do this. Apparently that is the point to which the women in Crete had come.

The senior women are to encourage and caution the younger women to have outgoing concern for their families. In other words, older women are to assist the younger women in the quality of family love, not of course as interfering busybodies, but as humble advisers on married life.

This society today has influenced even Christian women to lack true maternal affection, no thanks to the perversions of the feminist movement. Women who put their careers before the welfare of their own children are displaying a significant symptom of this weakness of abstinence.

The purpose of proper Christian conduct is that no one will be able to speak evil of the word of God. One of the greatest responsibilities and privileges in this life is to produce a Christian home.

It is infinitely more important that a mother be at home to put her children to bed and hear them say their prayers, than to seek fulfillment in an office pushing paper, or punching keys on a computer keyboard for six to eight hours a day.

In verse 5, the same word translated "discreet" is from the same Greek word translated "temperate" (in verse 2) with regard to older men. The meaning in both places is self-control. It is linked with being chaste and pure, which points to an upright moral character. True morality is

emphasized for the younger women.

The quality "homemakers" (in verse 5) indicates that young women should be '*workers at home*'. Paul is expressing that a young married woman's sphere is the home. No matter which translation you read it implies the same thing. The King James Version translates it as, "keepers at home." The English Standard Version says, "working at home." The New International Version says, "to be busy at home." The Revised Standard Version says, "domestic." The New King James Version and the Amplified Version say, "homemakers," and the New English Translation says, "fulfilling their duties at home." That is just to name a few. So there is no way around it, and Paul is telling Titus to emphasize to the women of that Crete society to stop working in the world and start taking care of their homes.

The primary responsibility of all married women should be home and family, even if they work outside the home. If an outside job interferes with the proper Christian care of the home, a woman is guilty of negligence in her God-given responsibility.

As the result of biblical principles, observation and evaluation of families, the church has long recommended that mothers of young children avoid working outside their home. Nevertheless, there are extenuating circumstances. Family crises do happen occasionally when it may be necessary for the wife to pitch-in to help with the finances. Sadly, in the case of divorce, a mother may have little other recourse than to work outside of the home. This is one of the many curses that are attached to divorce. Another curse is that it brings violence to the community.

However, the happiness and security that result from a woman being a wife and mother should not be sacrificed for a little spending money and material possessions. The principle is that any outside work which would interfere with a woman properly performing her responsibilities in the home is not worth sacrificing the mental and physical health of her family.

The next quality "good" means just that — "good."

In addition, the expression "obedient to their own husbands" means '*subject to*' — '*submissive to*.' Such care about behavior, especially in home-life, has for the Christian a specifically spiritual purpose — "*that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*" Violation of these qualities is a denial of the truth of God.

Moving on to young men in Titus 2:

Titus 2:6 Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded,

The duty of the younger men is summed up in one sentence by Paul. Titus was to admonish them to be sober-minded. They were to remember to be careful to have a sound mind, exercising self-control, a virtue in which many young men are deficient.

A person's youth is a time of increased danger because he tends to view the world as a playground, and there are three main characteristics that contribute to this:

- (1) In youth the blood runs hotter and desire seeks excitement, but discernment of risk is weak.
- (2) In youth there can be more opportunities for going astray. Especially in the government

high schools and universities, where young people are thrown into company where temptation can be very compelling. Often they have to study or work away from home and the influences that work as a moral governor in their lives are not there. They have not yet started the responsibility of a home and family; they do not yet have the anchors that hold an older person in the right way through sheer sense of obligation to family.

In youth there is often confidence that comes from lack of experience. In almost every sphere of life a younger person will be more reckless than his elders, for the simple reason that he has not yet discovered all the things that can go wrong. No one can buy experience, as it is something that only the years can pay. But, by being sober-minded the lack of experience can be somewhat offset. A young man can save himself a multitude of problems and suffering.

(3) For this very reason, the first thing at which any young person must aim is self-mastery. Whether they are male or female, but especially the young men must aim for self-mastery. No one can properly serve others until he has mastered himself. He who angers you controls you!

Proverbs 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,  
And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

It is important for all Christians to show moderation, sensibility, and self-restraint in all aspects of life. The younger men need to learn it as fast as they can.

Paul wrote to the young man Titus that he must strive to "*show himself*" to live God's way of life for an example or a pattern to be followed by all groups in the church in every good work, but especially to the other young men.

In his teaching, Titus was to show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that could not be found fault with. Paul was always concerned that those who oppose God's truth would be provided with ammunition for their attacks by poor examples either of the minister or of the brethren.

He said it was better for the accusers to be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about the members of the church. Paul knew that they would not stop their attacks, but that they might at least be embarrassed by having to invent false accusations, since there was no proof of them.

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.

For Titus' teaching to be effective, it must be backed by the witness of his own life. A teacher must practice what he preaches. Although a human teacher is not perfect, he still must be working very hard to manifest proper behavior. Teachers should display three things, and this is good for all teachers, male and female:

(1) It must be clear that his motives are absolutely pure. A Christian teacher is always faced

with certain temptations. There is always the danger of the temptation to demonstrate his own cleverness and to seek to attract notice to himself rather than God's Truth.

There is always the temptation to dictate. No one likes being under a human dictator. People can be lead, but will never be successfully driven. One danger which confronts a teacher is to have the wrong standards of success.

(2) A Christian teacher must have dignity. Dignity is not arrogance or pride; it is the consciousness of having the tremendous responsibility of being the ambassador of Christ.

Non-Christian teachers are often arrogant about their knowledge, but a Christian teacher must have a humility which forgets its own capabilities and recognizes the true source of his knowledge and relies on God to supply it. There is little that can damage the work of God as much as for a teacher to conduct himself in an inappropriate way as an ambassador of Christ.

(3) A Christian teacher must have a sound message. He must promote the doctrines of God the Father and Jesus Christ rather than his own ideas. He may be tempted to spend time on his own side-issues, and have to pray that God give him a sense of right perspective.

Next, Paul moves to speaking about employees, slaves and bondservants.

Titus 2:9-10 Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Paul always seems to take it back to the spiritual principle involved in it.

In the first century of the church the Christian employee often had a very tough time. His hardship worked in two different directions. If the employer was an unbeliever, the responsibility laid on the employee was heavy because it was through his conduct that the employer might come to see God's truth, or come to hate it. It was the job of the employee to show the employer what a converted employee could be; and that responsibility still lay on the Christian employee.

There was another side to this difficulty. If the employer was a believer, a different trial came to life in the believing employee. He might think that, because he was a Christian, special allowances would be made for him. He might expect to be able to get away with things because both he and the employer were members of God's church.

Realizing these important responsibilities, the apostle Paul lists some necessary qualities a Christian employee should have.

He is obedient. A Christian is never a person who is above taking orders. His spiritual conversion motivates him to serve. Sadly, many people want to serve God, but only as advisors. Paul told the Colossians, "Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to

the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God." There we see the spiritual principle that Paul brings in.

He is efficient. He is determined to satisfy his boss. A Christian employee can never put less than his best foot forward and his all into any job that is given him to do. Wise King Solomon wrote, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might."

He is respectful. He does not think his Christianity gives him special right to be unmanageable. Even to the hurt of his own pride he does not allow his personal feelings to supersede the necessary lines of authority. Solomon wrote, "Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility."

He is honest. He never lies to his employer. He is a man of integrity—truthful, upright and fair in dealing with others.

He is faithful. His employer can rely on his trustworthiness, loyalty and discretion. He exhibits his character as worthy of confidence. Nehemiah wrote of giving charge of Jerusalem to his brother Hanani because, "*he was a faithful man and feared God more than many.*" He was faithful because he feared God, so he was worth of getting that honor.

Sometimes the converted employee who takes his way of life to work will run into trouble; but, if he perseveres, he will eventually win the respect of most others. In the end the world comes to see that a truly Christian employee is one most worth having.

This brings us to, in a sense, a shift of Paul's direction. Here we have our second doctrinal statement that Paul gives us in Titus. This section gives the basis for the appeals Paul has just made for righteous living. God, in His grace redeems us from being slaves of sin, assuring us the hope of the coming of Christ that will eventually be realized.

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

Grace is given so a change can take place. God's grace is directly related to our responsibility and spiritual growth. It places us under obligation to stop sinning, grow and produce spiritual fruit. The grace of God has appeared in the gospel of the Kingdom of God, which includes: the hope of salvation, the promise of Christ's return, Jesus' perfect life, and His crucifixion for the forgiveness of sins.

Titus 2:12-15 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might

redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

The main emphasis here is the miracle of moral change which Jesus Christ can work in us. This miracle is repeatedly expressed here in a very meaningful way. Isaiah exhorted the Israelites in Isaiah 1:16, 17, "*Cease to do evil; learn to do good.*"

First, there is the negative side of goodness, the giving up of the things that are evil and the liberation from those things that are perverted.

There must be the renunciation of all ungodliness and worldly desires. We are very short-sighted if we set our whole heart, and expend our effort on things which we must leave behind when we quit this world. It is only Christ who can make—not only our outward life—but also our inward heart acceptable to God.

Second, there is the positive side, the acquisition of good qualities—virtues—which signify righteous living.

Jesus Christ makes us able to live with the carefulness and good sense which has everything under perfect control. By dwelling in us, He is able to help us develop self-mastery, which should be the characteristic of every individual in the church.

With His help we do not allow desire to drive our minds. We are able to give both to God and to men that which is their due with justice and integrity. We live with the reverence and respect which makes us live in the awareness that our body is the temple of God.

II Corinthians 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

We have a tremendous responsibility on our shoulders claiming to be followers of Jesus Christ, and claiming to be members of God's church.

The dynamic of this new life is the expectation of the coming of Jesus Christ. Even today in the world, expectation of a royal visit means that everything is cleansed and decorated, and made appropriate. In a similar way, we should always be prepared by having our homes in order spiritually for the coming of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In verse 14 of Titus 2, Paul goes on to sum up what Jesus Christ has done, and once again he does it first negatively and then positively. Jesus has redeemed us from the power of lawlessness—the influence and desire which makes us sin. Jesus purifies us until we are acceptable people of God. We are purified by the blood of Christ which cleanses us from all sin.

The word translated 'special' (*periousios*) means 'reserved for'; and it was specifically used for the part of the spoils of a battle or a campaign, which the king who had conquered set apart especially for himself. Through the work of Jesus Christ, we become acceptable to be the special

possession of God.

Christ not only liberated us from the penalty of past sin; He can enable us to live the perfect life within this world of space and time; and He cleanses us so that we become acceptable to being the special possession of God.

In verse 15 of Titus 2, Paul succinctly lays before Titus the threefold task of the minister, teacher and leader in God's church:

1. It is a responsibility of proclaiming. The message of God must be declared; any argument or discussion against it is not relevant. There are times when we must say: "Thus saith the Lord!"
2. It is a responsibility of encouragement. Any minister who reduces his audience to bleak despair has failed in his responsibility. People must be convicted of their sin, not so they will feel that their lives are hopeless, but so they can be led to repentance, forgiveness, overcoming and the grace of God.
3. It is a responsibility of conviction. The eyes of the sinner must be opened to his sin; the mind of the misguided must be led to realize its mistake; the heart of the heedless must be stabbed awake. The message of Christ is a blinding light, which shows us ourselves as we are, and God as He is. When we were shown this we were brought out of darkness into the light and we certainly do not like what we see in ourselves.

In chapter 3, Paul moves from Christian conduct in groups (Titus 2: 1-10) to Christian conduct in general (Titus 3: 1-11). The behavior of believers as citizens must be different than the behavior of unbelievers because of our moral and ethical responsibility as loyalists of God. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit enables us to go contrary to the self-serving direction of the world.

In Titus 3, Paul tells Titus to remind the members of God's church how to maintain good works.

Titus 3:1-2 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

In verses 1 and 2, Paul lays down our public duty; his advice is especially relevant to anyone living in a society such as the one of Crete, which we certainly do. The Cretans were notoriously argumentative and impatient of all authority.

In contrast, God has been training us to renounce wickedness and worldly desires, and in the present age to live our lives with self-control, uprightness and godliness.

Titus was to be in all respects a model of good works, and although God is not saving his people because of any works of righteousness that we have done, He wants us to be zealous, ready and devoted to good works. This is righteous action, especially in service to others.

Verses 1-2 lay down seven qualifications for the good citizen:

The first qualification for the good citizen is that he is subject to rulers and authorities. That is, law-abiding. He recognizes that unless laws are kept, life becomes chaos. He gives a proper respect to those who are set in authority and carries out whatever command is given to him

provided it does not go against the commands, statutes, laws and principles of God.

God does not instruct us to cease to be an individual, but He does insist that we remember that we are a member of a group and more importantly of a family. A person does not best express his personality in isolated individualism, but within the framework of the group.

The verb '*subject*' in verse 1 implies '*loyal*' subjection. It shows the Christian's duty toward the civil administration. The same descriptive words, rulers and authorities, are combined several times in Paul's writings, and generally refer to spiritual agencies.

The second qualification for the good citizen is that he is obedient. This is the Greek word '*peitharcho*' which expresses general conformity to the regulations of the civil authorities. The good citizen abides by even the regulations and codes imposed by civil authorities that help maintain order in everything from land development to traffic laws, provided it does not go against the commands, statutes, laws and principles of God.

In one sense, this is emphasized, in addition to subjection, to help clarify—that as good citizens we are to abide by all civil laws and regulations. I have observed during more than 40 years of attending God's church that there are always some who tend to think that they are above the laws of the land. Even a few ministers thought this way—I can think of several I knew personally. One spent time in prison for his unlawful activities unrelated to God's truth. I remember hearing of another minister, taking care of Y.O.U., who was taking drugs across the Mexican border into Texas. He thought that he was above the law.

The third qualification for the good citizen is to be ready for every good work. That is, ready to do whatever is good. He is ready and willing to help others. He should always be cooperative, provided no question of conscience is involved.

But this does not mean that we are to join and be active members of local community groups. Often these groups are very heavily involved in the world's national and/or pagan holidays. We are commanded to come out of the world and be separate.

We have to remember that our higher priorities are our own families and brethren. I have seen some members of the church get so involved with serving their worldly communities that they neglect the mental and physical health of their own families.

As potential first-fruits being trained as leaders and teachers for God's kingdom, it is imperative that we learn to have the right priorities in our lives now. The good Christian citizen serves God, his family and brethren first—in that order; then, in a very limited way he gives wise service to the outside community. He must always be ready to come to a person's aid in his time of dire need whether he is in or out of the church.

The fourth qualification for the good citizen is speak evil of no one. He must be careful in speech, that is, refraining from slander. No one should say anything about another person that he would not want said about him. A good Christian citizen is as careful with the words he speaks as with the things that he does.

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

The fifth qualification for the good citizen is peaceable. Some translators interpret this as tolerant, or avoid quarreling or refraining from strife. Although he may be confident, he is not aggressive. The Greek word is '*amanchos*,' which means 'not a fighter.' He will not fight for false or unrighteous causes like his own pride. A good citizen stands for the principles that he knows to be right, but he is never so opinionated as to believe that only what he believes is right.

The sixth qualification for the good citizen is gentle. He is 'kind and considerate' as it is in some translations. The Greek word is, '*epieikes*' which describes the person who does not stand on the letter of the law. He considers not only the letter of the law, but especially the spirit of the law, that is, the intention behind it. The good citizen is always ready to avoid the injustice which often lies in being strictly just. Judgment in moderation may be another way of putting it. We are seeing more and more today in this world, the judgment of these judges not taking anything into consideration into the lives that they are destroying compared to the severity of the law.

I have an old friend from college who recently was released from prison and he went to prison because his paper work was not correct. The local attorney general in his area took him to court and then prosecuted him to the point where he was sent to jail. He is a member in one of the churches of God. I think he was two years in prison. His family had to make it on their own, and they had to sell their home to make it. God helped them to endure that. These things happen in the world because of the strictly-letter-of-the-law approach that this world takes, and it will get worse.

The seventh qualification for the good citizen is showing all humility to all men. This phrase is rendered '*to show perfect courtesy toward all men*' in the English Standard Version and Revised Standard Version. This is from the Greek root-word '*praus*,' which describes the man whose temperament is always under complete control. He knows when to be angry and when not to be angry. He patiently bears wrongs done to him, but is always considerately ready to spring to the help of others who are wronged. The word '*prautes*' literally means gentleness or meekness, which implies courteous consideration. Remember, meekness never means weakness.

These qualities are perfectly reflected in the life of Jesus Christ. Qualities such as these are possible only for the person in whose heart and mind God is first, and in whom Christ dwells. This is the person who submits to God and lives according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Paul balanced out his emphasis that all members of the church of God must maintain good works by explaining that we are saved according to God's mercy. God's creative work on a Christian's character through the Holy Spirit provides us with experience in living with true righteous conduct.

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

When Paul says we '*were also once foolish*', he means that we were without spiritual understanding. Next in his list are '*disobedient*', which is directed toward God, and '*deceived*',

which is related to man. The Greek word for '*deceived*' refers to a false guide leading one astray. That is exactly what Satan is; he is the world's false god.

In the words '*servicing various lusts and pleasures*', the metaphor of slavery is used to illustrate our former servitude to passions and pleasures.

The words '*living in malice and envy*' reflect the anti-social nature of our former lives. Both words emphasize wickedness. The concluding words '*hateful and hating*' show how quickly hate can multiply.

The third doctrinal statement in this book is found in verses 4-7. It emphasizes the kindness, love and mercy of God who saves us, "*not by works of righteousness which we have done.*" Nevertheless, the need for good works as a result of salvation is stressed six times in these three chapters of Titus (1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14).

Titus 3:4-7 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The vibrancy of our life in Christ comes first from the realization that we were once no better than the unconverted people in the world. Christian goodness does not make us proud; it makes us tremendously grateful. When we look at others living worldly lives, we should not regard them with contempt. It comes from the realization of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We must realize what a gift we have from our Savior and God the Father.

Paul mentions seven wonderful facts about God's work in us:

- (1) Jesus Christ came to reveal God the Father and His plan of salvation through His Son to us; and to put us into a new relationship with God.
- (2) The love and grace of God to us are gifts which no one can ever earn. They can only be accepted in faith and obedience with humble thankfulness.
- (3) This love and grace of God to us is mediated by Jesus Christ through the church. They come through the washing of water baptism, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. We deliberately leave one way of life to enter another. Or, if we have grown up attending God's church, we 'choose' faithfulness to God's way of life while rejecting Satan and the world's way of life. I want to make that distinction because it is helpful to those who have grown up in the church.

In this connection, Paul uses two words. He mentions '*regeneration*' (*paliggenesia*). This word implies a process which begins with the spiritual conception of a spiritual embryo. When we accept Christ as Savior and Lord, it is as if our life begins all over again. There is newness of life which can be likened only to a new conception. Regeneration is the process of being spiritually

converted and spiritually begotten; put in a new and better condition.

Paul also mentions '*renewing*'. It is as if life were worn out, and when we discover Christ there is an act of renewal, which is not over and done with, but repeats itself every day.

(4) The grace and love of God to us is mediated by Jesus Christ through the church, but it is done by the power of God's Holy Spirit. All the work of the church, all the words of the church, and all the ordinances of the church are inoperative and ineffective unless the power of the Holy Spirit is there in the brethren and the church as a whole.

It is the mind and essence of the divine nature and the spirit extension of God through which He carries out His will. God's Spirit empowers the mind to comprehend spiritual matters, thereby producing conversion. It leads us to all truth; convicts us of sin and righteousness; imparts faith, the love of God, power to overcome sin and to receive other gifts essential to doing His will. Without the Holy Spirit it is impossible to have any of this in our lives.

(5) The effect of all of this is that it brings forgiveness for all past sins, and any genuinely repented of in the future. In His mercy God does not hold our forgiven sins against us; but we do still have to continue throughout our lives overcoming sins. Remembering that we have been forgiven for our sins should move us to be in awe of the forgiving mercy of God

(6) The effect is also present life. The grace of God is not confined to what will be. It offers us here and now a more excellent way of life. It is a quality of life never before seen. When Christ enters a person's life and He is accepted as our Lord and Savior, we begin to truly live for the first time.

(7) There is the hope of even greater things. For us the best is always still to come, and we know that. No matter how blessed we are now, no matter how wonderful life on earth with Christ may seem for some, the life to come will be greater yet. This hope helps us put our lives in proper perspective because we know the wonder of past sins forgiven, the thrill of present life with Christ, and the hope of the greater life, which is still to come. It is a win-win situation for us because we have the grace of God working on our behalf.

Titus 3:8 stresses the need for Christian action and the danger of a certain kind of discussion.

Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

How many times throughout the epistles does Paul say this very thing, and emphasize how important good works are and maintaining them, not just doing good works but continuing to do

them?

This "*faithful saying*" relates to Paul's previous 4 verses. And "*these things*" are what Paul is advising Titus to emphasize to the church which is all that was in the previous part of the letter. The advice is simple. Members of the church should commit themselves to doing what is good. It is impossible without the Holy Spirit.

These admonishments are directed toward those who have believed and trusted in God. A true belief is an indispensable basis for the right ordering of conduct. The specific purpose is to encourage believers to be careful. We must have a thoughtful approach to the maintenance of good works.

In verses 9-11, Paul gives Titus advice on how to avoid dissension and handle people in the church who are divisive. This advice is good not only for ministers, but for every member as well.

Titus 3:9-11 But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Can you imagine Paul preaching into today's society, publicly in some way? He would have offended every single politically correct thing that has ever been. Good for him.

In verse 9, Paul warns of useless discussions. It is very dangerous to think that merely because a person discusses religious subjects, that he is therefore spiritual.

It is much easier to discuss theological questions than to be kind and considerate and helpful to someone, or efficient, diligent and honest at work. Good works go against human nature, but talk comes naturally and is cheap since it costs nothing.

There is no virtue in sitting discussing deep theological questions when the simple Christian responsibilities are waiting to be done. If this is the case, these types of discussions can be nothing more than an evasion of Christian duties.

Paul was certain that our real responsibility lay in action. This is not to say that there is no place for biblical discussions; but the discussion that does not end in action is very largely a waste of time. The action may be inspiration to overcome some problem or to help someone in need, but whatever the situation, action must follow study of God's truth.

Jesus' words in John 8:32, "*You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free,*" mean that upon receiving understanding of God's way of life you are inspired to act wisely in the right way. Wisdom is the right use of the truth.

Paul advises that the contentious and opinionated person should be avoided. The word '*avoid*' is from the Greek '*peristamai*' literally meaning '*to turn oneself about so as to face the other way.*' Or, as we know it today, to turn your back on that person. The basic reason given for such avoidance is the essential unprofitableness and uselessness of the false teaching. What Paul is saying here is that the person should be disfellowshipped if he continues to teach contrary to God's truth.

In Titus 3:10, the word '*divisive*' is translated from the Greek word '*hairesikon*.' It is distinguished in meaning from the English word '*heretic*' derived from it. It was only in later times that it acquired a more technical meaning of one who holds false doctrine. Originally it carried no negative meaning. This negativity creeps in when a person raises his own private opinion against the doctrine of the church. Here, it refers to one who promotes division by his views.

A 'heretic,' in this context, is simply a person who has decided that he is right and everybody else is wrong. Paul's warning is against the person who has made his own ideas the test of all truth. It characterizes what is a self-chosen opinion or viewpoint. Because of the divisive person's insistence on his own opinions, he is devoid of a true spiritual foundation and understanding of the words of God.

One commentary said this kind of person is "an opinionative propagandist who promotes dissension by his obstinacy." When the divisive person is persistent for a period of time it results in the formation of heretical groups within the church. This is why Paul takes such a strong stand on what should be done with them.

Paul told Titus to warn them by lovingly pointing out their error. If, a second effort to admonish them proved ineffective, Paul said to have nothing to do with them. An effort to convince this kind of person is a poor use of valuable time. At this point it becomes like casting pearls to swine. In addition, it gives the offender an undeserved sense of importance. Remember, we are not to hate them or despise them.

In II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15, Paul tells us to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition that we received from the apostles. And if anyone does not obey the word of Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, and by extension all the words of the inspired scriptures, we are to note that person and not keep company with them, that the divisive person may be ashamed. The realization of that shame usually comes later.

Titus 3:12-15 When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen

In verse 14, Paul's last piece of advice is that we should continue to practice good deeds, so that we may be able to help others who are in need. We see there that he emphasizes urgent needs. We are not to just be running to and fro everywhere in the world trying to help people in need. There has to be some sense to it. We should be helping with all needs of people in our family and in our church family. We have to be very specific in our helping people in the world mainly because we just do not have the capacity to do that. Many have been led astray in trying. We work not only to have enough for ourselves, but also to have something to give

away. All who engage in good works of mercy never have to fear that they will be unproductive.

Paul again emphasizes the practical side of Christianity, which he has all the way through his letter to Titus. The words '*to meet urgent needs*' adds a clarification that puts '*maintaining good works*' in a more clear light. By 'continually persevering' in good works to family and to brethren, we assure that when an urgent need arises, we will already be in the right state of mind to jump to aid and relieve the urgent need. It does not pass us by unnoticed, because we recognize it very quickly.

This short letter to Titus has a powerful message for us today that we speak sound doctrine, maintain good works, and rebuke and reject divisive people. Paul stressed exemplary Christian conduct and insisted that our conduct must be based on and regulated by the truth of God.

Paul very forcefully urged the essential connection between truth and the purest morality as a minimum requirement in the church.

Faith is a heartfelt response to God's truth, but it also must engage the mind. God's truth has a moral character; therefore, the knowledge of that truth leads to godliness.

Conduct must be determined by what godliness requires—that reverential attitude that leads to conduct which is well pleasing to God. If we have internalized God's truth, then we are able to walk in harmony because commitment to the truth demands right action.