

LESSON 6

Godliness in Action

Materials

- RBP transparencies 1 and 8
- Lesson 6 case study from resource CD
- Titus 3:8 verse card from resource CD
- Lesson 6 extra application idea from resource CD
- Bottle of disinfectant

Scripture Focus

Titus 3:4–15

Key Verse

“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” (Titus 3:8).

Overview

Paul brings his letter to a close, explaining the greatest good work of all time—God’s work providing salvation and eternal life—and making a vigorous appeal for believers to maintain good works.

Topic

Good works

Theme

Believers benefit from being careful to maintain good works.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will recognize the benefit of maintaining good works and resolve to be diligent in doing them.

Outline

- I. God’s Actions (Titus 3:4–7)
 - A. Their root (3:4, 5a)
 - B. Their reality (3:5b–7)
- II. Believers’ Actions (Titus 3:8–11)
 - A. Maintain (3:8, 14)
 - B. Avoid (3:9)
 - C. Reject (3:10, 11)
- III. Titus’s Actions (Titus 3:12–15)

Getting Started

Blooming for God

Henry Ward Beecher said, “As flowers always wear their own colors and give forth their own fragrance every day alike, so should Christians maintain their character at all times and under all circumstances.”

Ask: What factors make it so difficult to maintain behaviors to which we have committed ourselves? What would you say is the most challenging factor? (Questions 1, 2)

Searching the Scriptures

Believers are challenged to be holy in all manner of life, for it is written that we should be holy because He is holy (1 Pet. 1:15, 16). Or, one could say that Christians are to be godly because God is godly.

I. God's Actions (Titus 3:4-7)

God's actions are godly simply because He does them. God is the standard by which every being and activity must be judged. There is no standard outside of God by which God is judged; rather, God is the criterion for everything else. One way in which fallen man seeks to be God is by making himself the standard for his own behavior and claiming to be unaccountable to anyone outside of himself.

God's moral perfections make Him a perfect moral standard. God does not capriciously decide what is right and wrong. His independence from outside authority does not result in a tyranny, for He operates in perfect harmony with His own internal standards or attributes. God's attributes are infinitely perfect, and all that He does harmonizes with the totality of His attributes. For example, the seeming opposites of justice and mercy both play their proper roles in any decision God makes regarding a disobedient creature. Our God is a great God!

READ: Hosea 14:9. **ASK:** What word describes the Lord's ways? What attitude toward God's ways does it take to simply "walk in them?" (Questions 3, 4)

A. Their root (3:4, 5a)

God's actions in providing salvation for us spring from His attributes of kindness, love, and mercy (Titus 3:4, 5a). Paul mentioned kindness first. The Old Testament describes God's kindness as marvelous (Ps. 31:21), merciful (Ps. 117:2), great (Neh. 9:17), and everlasting (Isa. 54:8). The New Testament stresses that Jesus Christ epitomizes God's kindness (Eph. 2:7). Through Jesus Christ, God's kindness has come to us. Christ's appearance on earth may be called the appearance of the kindness of our Savior (Titus 3:4).

ASK: What are some examples of Jesus' good works of kindness that He performed while on earth? (Question 5)

Next Paul cited God's love. Books have been written about the love of God. The hymnwriter exclaimed that God's love could not be fully written down even if the sea were ink, the sky a scroll, and every human being a scribe.

Two primary Greek words for love, *agape* and *phileo*, appear many times in the New Testament. *Agape* love is more objective love; it is more related to the will. We may call it caring concern. *Agape* love looks at the object loved, and out of concern for the object's well-being it decides to do what it can for the loved one. The focus is on the one loved.

Phileo love is more subjective love. It is more related to the emotions. We could call it tender affection. *Phileo* love looks at the object loved, and out of warm feelings for the object it moves into action. The focus is on both the one loving and the one loved.

The love of God that appeared in the Person of Christ was *agape*, according to John 3:16, but also *phileo* love, according to Titus 3:4. God has been both concerned about us and affectionate toward us. What encouraging thoughts!

ASK: How do you feel when someone says that he loves you but his actions toward you scream that he doesn't? (Question 6)

God says that He loves us and that all of His actions, whether we understand them or not, are done in love toward us.

ASK: Why is it wrong to determine whether or not God loves you based on whether or not He brings about beneficial circumstances on your behalf? (Question 7)

Finally, Paul referred to God's attribute of mercy, or His compassion for those who are suffering. God "is rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4), "the Father of mercies" (2 Cor. 1:3), and His mercy endures forever (1 Chron. 16:34; cf. Ps. 136). Therefore, you can trust in the mercy of God forever and ever (Ps. 52:8). Titus informs us that God saved us according to His mercy (Titus 3:5). God's actions in this passage arise from His kindness, love, and mercy.

B. Their reality (3:5b-7)

God has acted in saving us ("saved us," v. 5). Salvation is a broad term speaking of deliverance and including many specific ministries of God. In Titus 3:5 Paul described salvation in terms of the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Sin defiles like an irremovable stain. Only God can provide a cleansing agent powerful enough to remove the defilements of sin. The blood of Christ, the perfect sacrifice for sin, is His effective sin-stain remover. Regeneration brings a washing from sin's defilement that leaves the born-again babe in Christ spotless. Such flawless perfection goes beyond mere repair.

OBJECT LESSON: Display a disinfectant. Read to the students the disinfectant label that says it kills only ninety-nine percent of germs. Ask the learners if they would eat directly off the church bathroom floor if you cleaned it with the disinfectant first. Have them share why or why not.

Nothing on earth can ever be declared completely clean. God's cleansing through regeneration is unlike any disinfecting job on earth. Christ's blood cleanses 100 percent and forever.

The word "regeneration" literally means "born again." The noun is used of individual salvation only here in the New Testament. Jesus and Nicodemus engaged in a detailed discussion of this concept (John 3). Jesus' words there reveal the Holy Spirit's active role in making a person to be born again. Regeneration is rightly called a renewing by the Holy Spirit.

Since God alone can produce the new birth in an individual, being born again may be described as being born of God (1 John 3:9; 4:7). God begets us with the word of truth (James 1:18). The Word of God produces faith like a seed produces a plant (Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23), and faith is the channel by which one receives the new birth. The Holy Spirit of God accomplishes regeneration using the Word of God.

READ: Titus 3:5. **ASK:** When have you sensed the power of the Holy Spirit in an obvious way in your life? (Question 9)

The Holy Spirit plays a broader role in our salvation than mentioned in verse 5. God has also acted in giving believers the Holy Spirit Himself (Titus 3:6). During Jesus' earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit dwelt with the disciples, but He was not dwelling in them (John 14:17). Jesus repeatedly promised such a new and more complete ministry of the Holy Spirit that it would almost be as if the Holy Spirit were coming for the first time (John 14:16, 17; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit did come on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, forming that new spiritual organism, the church (Acts 1:5; 11:15, 16; 1 Cor. 12:13).

At that time the Holy Spirit also took up permanent residence in every believer, as Christ had said that He would be "in" them. Now every believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19); should a person not have the Holy Spirit, then he must not be a child of God (Rom. 8:9).

READ: Titus 3:6. **ASK:** What would you say to the person who complains that he or she can't do anything for the Lord? (Question 10)

Paul also mentioned that God's salvation includes being justified (Titus 3:7). This word may sound complicated at first, but it simply means to declare one righteous. When the publicans justified God (Luke 7:29), they declared that God was righteous (which He is by nature). When God justifies a sinner, He declares that sinner righteous (which he is not by nature, but which he is by virtue of Christ's righteousness being imputed to him [2 Cor. 5:21]).

Finally, God has acted in making us heirs (Titus 3:7). His long-range purpose in saving us included a grand inheritance. Many of salvation's blessings fall into our hands while we still inhabit the earth, but others will not be seen until we arrive at home in Heaven. By being united to Christ we become joint heirs with

Him (Rom. 8:17). When He catches us up at the Rapture, we shall meet Him and forever be with Him (1 Thess. 4:17). It is when we reside in our heavenly Home that we will take possession of our full inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4).

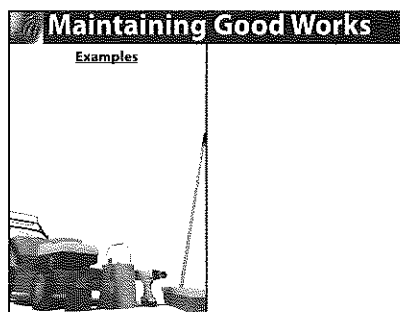
READ: Titus 3:7. **ASK:** What would you say to the believer who says he is a nobody and has no future? (Question 11)

Christians, rejoice over God's actions of saving, giving the Holy Spirit, and providing an inheritance. Such actions conform to God's character and lie exclusively within His ability. Such actions by God are truly good works.

II. Believers' Actions (Titus 3:8–11)

A. Maintain (3:8, 14)

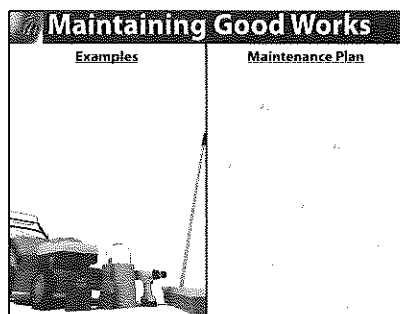
The exhortation to good works appears twice in the final verses of Titus. Those who have believed in God must maintain good works. The word translated "maintain" appears eight times in the New Testament, and six of those times it is rendered "to rule" or "be over." The idea is to stand before as one presiding over a meeting. So to maintain good works, an individual must rule over self to see that good works constantly get accomplished. The flesh tends away from good works, but God's will is for all who have believed to maintain good works throughout their lives on earth.



TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 8 with the right half covered. **ASK:** What are some examples of good works that are readily available for most believers to do? (Question 12) Record learners' answers on the transparency.

EVALUATE: I would have gotten involved in good works if someone would have asked me to get involved. **READ:** Titus 3:14. **ASK:** Maintaining good works prevents what condition? (Questions 13, 14)

The maintenance of good works requires being careful, or thinking about it (3:8) and learning to do it (3:14). Verse 8 implies that maintaining good works can slip from our conscious thoughts unless we are "careful," that is, take definite steps to think about doing them. Verse 14 informs us that we must learn to maintain good works. Ruling over ourselves to constantly maintain good works doesn't just happen automatically. The maintenance of good works results from careful thought and personal education.



TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 8. **READ:** Titus 3:8. **ASK:** What could you do practically to make sure you maintain good works? (Question 15) Record learners' answers on the transparency.

ASK: In addition to pleasing God, how are good works good and profitable to the doer and his peers? (Question 16)

We must discern a most important sequence in the text. First, one must be saved by faith, “not by works of righteousness which we have done” (v. 5). Following salvation, “they which have believed in God” must be careful to lead lives full of good works (v. 8). Salvation is first, then good works; not the reverse.

B. Avoid (3:9)

Separation means keeping close to the holy God as well as keeping apart from all that is evil. Christians walking the path of godliness find the highway has warning signs against certain exits or side roads. The pilgrim must avoid foolish questions, genealogies, and contentions and strivings about the law.

These types of questions are pointless and often deal with the hypothetical. Those who ask such questions are often attempting to undermine the Bible so they can ease their consciences that are pricking them to submit to the truth of the Word.

READ: Titus 3:9. **ASK:** How do these questions contrast sharply with good works? What would happen to a pastor’s ministry if he spent a lot of time trying to answer foolish questions? (Questions 17, 18)

Works-righteousness appeals to the flesh. World religions and cults, as well as nonorthodox Christianity, claim that man can work his way to approval by the god(s) in which they believe. The Jews of the Old Testament times fell into the same snare, thinking God would be pleased by their external conformity to the rituals of the law.

Psalm 4:5 pulls back the curtain of Heaven to show God’s view of the law: “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.” Salvation has always been and will always be received on the basis of faith. But the Jews turned the sacrifices and other required behaviors into a works-righteousness system whereby one supposedly received salvation by doing.

Judaism in New Testament times, therefore, had become a perversion of God’s revealed system. And Jewish teachers crept into the churches, claiming to believe in Christ but still insisting on the necessity of works to obtain or to maintain one’s salvation. Such were known as Judaizers. The book of Galatians thunders a curse upon such doctrines (Gal. 1:6–9).

Titus and his learners were to avoid, shun, or stay away from the Judaizers’ foolish questions, genealogies, and contentions and strivings about the law.

C. Reject (3:10, 11)

Heretics are those who have chosen doctrine contrary to sound doctrine, and who, therefore, cause divisions over doctrine because their followers disagree with those who hold the truth. (See 1 Corinthians 11:18 and 19 and 2 Peter 2:1 for the subject of heresy.)

The Christian must reject heretics, for they have turned aside from God (are subverted); they are sinning (missing the mark of God's truth); and their teaching shows them to be under condemnation by God (Titus 3:11). However, the Christian is to warn the heretic of his dangerous position, hoping that he will repent (2 Tim. 2:24–26). In fact, two warnings must precede the rejection of the person of the heretic (Titus 3:10).

ASK: What is the danger in ignoring a heretic in your church? (Question 19)

III. Titus's Actions (Titus 3:12–15)

Paul closed his letter to Titus with personal instructions to his representative. Three godly behaviors awaited Titus's doing. First he was to visit Paul. Paul had assigned Titus to Crete and the establishment of the Cretan churches (Titus 1:5). Now Paul summoned his stand-in to his side. Titus was to meet Paul at Nicopolis. You will recall that Paul wrote to Titus during his period of freedom between the two Roman imprisonments. Paul decided to spend the winter (a difficult time for travel) at Nicopolis, and he desired Titus's presence.

Titus was to leave Crete when either Artemas or Tychicus should arrive there. This is the only mention of Artemas in the Testament. Tychicus hailed from Asia Minor and accompanied Paul during the latter part of his third missionary journey, traveling from Achaia through Macedonia into Asia Minor (Acts 20:1–4). During Paul's first Roman imprisonment, the apostle sent Tychicus to Colosse to accompany Onesimus and deliver the letter to the Colossians and the Ephesians (Col. 4:7; Eph. 6:21). Now he considered sending him to Crete. Just before his death Paul sent him to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12). Either Artemas or Tychicus would take Titus's place in Crete.

Secondly, Titus was to give missionary support to the team of Zenas and Apollos. Zenas is otherwise unknown to New Testament readers, while Apollos is quite familiar (Acts 18:24; 19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4–6, 22; 4:6; 16:12). Perhaps these two missionaries were Paul's couriers to take his letter to Titus.

Finally, Titus was to give Paul's greetings to all those who loved him in the faith. Those whose hearts were bound to Paul's around the great truths of Christ received his greetings.

We have seen that godly living comes from the enabling of God, not merely by self-determination. However, there must be that personal decision to follow after godliness and to call upon the resources provided by the Lord if one is to make progress or growth in holy living.

Making It Personal

Calendar Checkup

Distribute the extra application idea for lesson 6 from the resource CD.

Use the case study for lesson 6 as desired.

Have the students complete the exercise and bring it with them to class next week. Review it together as a class before you start the lesson next week.

Benefits List

Ask the learners to make a mental list of benefits from doing good works, benefits they have already experienced or aspire to experience. Have them resolve with God that they will be thoughtful to maintain good works. (Questions 20, 21)

Review Transparency

Use transparency 1 to review the Mark of the Faithful for this lesson: Ministers thoughtfully and intentionally.

Memory Verse

Distribute copies of the Titus 3:8 verse card from the resource CD. Encourage the learners to memorize the verse.

NEXT LESSON

Encourage your learners to complete lesson 7 before the next class.

Marks of the Faithful	
1. Forgives others as God forgives.	8.
2. Remembers and shares God's forgiveness.	9.
3. Seeks and supports godly leadership.	10.
4. Lives a genuine, godly life.	11.
5. Serves zealously in light of Christ's Return.	12.
6. Ministers thoughtfully and intentionally.	13.
7.	

LESSON 7

Faithful Servants

Materials

- RBP transparencies 1, 9, and 10
- Lesson 7 case study from resource CD
- 2 Timothy 1:8 verse card from resource CD

Scripture Focus

2 Timothy 1:1–8

Key Verse

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim. 1:8).

Overview

The book of 2 Timothy was the last inspired epistle from Paul’s pen, containing his final thoughts to the Christian world. Paul wrote it with an awareness of his impending death. Today we will meet the writer (Paul) and the recipient (Timothy) and be introduced to the letter’s theme, faithfulness.

Topic

Faithful servants of God.

Theme

Faithful servants of God must be servants of faith.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will see the priority of faith in Christ to faithful service for Christ, and will evaluate what principles from this lesson will further his faithfulness at this time.

Outline

- I. Introduction (2 Tim. 1:1, 2)
 - A. Paul, the writer (1:1)
 - B. Timothy, the reader (1:2)
- II. Servants of Faith (2 Tim. 1:5)
- III. Servants of Faithfulness (2 Tim. 1:3, 6–8)
 - A. Paul (1:3)
 1. Serving faithfully
 2. Praying faithfully
 - B. Timothy (1:6–8)
 1. Stirring up the gift (v. 6)
 2. Shoring up the spirit (vv. 7, 8)