

WELCOME HOME

Reality Check // Titus 3:3-11

THE POINT: Our lives should serve to welcome others into the church.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Many people who aren't a part of the church have preconceived notions about what the church is. Some think we're stuffy and legalistic, but many have heard that Jesus is a friend to sinners, that God loves the world, and that the people in church are kind and generous. Scripture calls God's people to reflect Him, and we should therefore be the most loving people on the planet. However, when people enter our churches, what they find is often inconsistent with what God has called His people to be. We might think we are welcoming, yet the reality can be entirely different. To ensure we are a welcoming church, let's go back to the beginning. We welcome others because of the gospel.

► **What makes you feel welcome in a new place?**

TITUS 3:3-7

Paul addressed practical questions in his letter to Titus. But more importantly, Paul also reminded Titus of something that was already very familiar to him—the gospel. Paul pointed out three essential truths:

- **The gospel keeps us from looking down on others:** We were once lost, selfish, and hopeless, and even in that state, God reached out to us. All people are created in God's image and are infinitely valuable.
- **The gospel reminds us of what is possible:** It's impossible to restore the relationship with God we ruined by our sin. Yet, when we were hopeless, God accomplished what was otherwise impossible by the sacrifice of Jesus.
- **The gospel points us to the future:** When we focus on the here-and-now, it's difficult to imagine anything beyond our broken reality. But the gospel points us to a new heaven and earth where, for eternity, there will be no sin or brokenness.

If we want to welcome others into the church, we must remember that at one point, we ourselves were on the outside looking in. If God had not welcomed us through Jesus, that's exactly where we would have stayed.

► **How have you personally experienced the kindness of God?**

TITUS 3:8

At times, we may feel happy, comfortable, and secure in the relationships we currently have. We may not always feel like being super friendly and outgoing. But the gospel teaches us that Jesus left heaven to dwell on this sin-cursed earth for the sake of reaching out to those who were separated from God. At some point, when we were strangers, Jesus welcomed us into the family. And other believers were kind to welcome us into the church. In our race, we should strain ahead for good works, all the while looking for opportunities to slow down and show kindness to others. The gospel allows us to start. It also allows us to take every step.

- **How have you seen good works really make a difference?**
- **What's the difference in being saved by good works and devoting ourselves to good works?**

TITUS 3:9-11

The Christian life is about self-sacrifice for the sake of others. This is particularly true when we are welcoming someone into the family of God. When we allow issues of personal preference and self-centeredness to creep in, it is destructive to our overall mission.

- **Our role in the church:** We have our needs met in the church, but above this, we are to seek to meet the needs of others. If we are all selfishly looking to have our own needs met, we'll all go without. But if everyone lives generously and sacrificially, all of our needs will be met.
- **The makeup of the church:** In the early days of the church, we see that she consists of Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, men and women. God welcomes all into His family, and we are to reflect His heart.
- **The nature of the church:** The church is more than a building. It's the body of Christ, so when people look at our lives, they should see the sacrificial nature of Jesus.

Essentially, when we focus on trivial matters, the church becomes a place not too different from the rest of the world—drama and complaining, selfishness and squabbles. But when we intentionally live out the gospel, others are drawn to God's family and feel incredibly welcome when they arrive.

► **What steps can we take to redirect debates toward kingdom-focused conversations?**



LIVE IT OUT

Unit 1 // Session 1

▶ CHRIST

Living in light of the gospel means:

- Loving Jesus more and more each day
- Living in a way that reflects Jesus' character
- **Briefly note a few ways you've experienced Jesus this week that have caused you to grow in loving Him.**

➤ **How will you live these out this week in order to reflect Jesus?**

▶ COMMUNITY

The church is a community of believers, united for the sake of demonstrating God's goodness on earth.

➤ **What room for improvement do you see in your life or in your church to help make this a reality? (Make sure not to complain; talk with your leader about more serious issues.)**

➤ **What steps will you take to grow where you see weaknesses?**

▶ CULTURE

➤ **How do you think it impacts your unbelieving friends when they hear of arguing in the church?**

➤ **How will you pursue unity with your church family for the sake of impacting your friends who aren't involved in church?**