

Olivet Baptist Church

3500 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21229

Wednesday Night Bible Study (7:00 pm)

Paul's Epistle to Titus – Facilitator: Rev. Alex O. Stone

Overall Theme: The Role of Grace in Promoting Godly Behavior (1:1–3:15)

- I. Salutation (Titus 1:1-4)**
- II. Qualifications of the Elders (Titus 1:5-9)**
- III. Characteristics of the False Teachers (Titus 1:10-16)**
- IV. Godly Behavior for Different Groups (Titus 2:1-10)**
 - A. Older Men & Women (Titus 2:1-3)
 - B. Younger Men & Women (Titus 2:4-8)
 - C. Slaves (Titus 2:9-10)
- V. Role of Grace in Promoting Godly Behavior (Titus 2:11-3:11)**
 - A. The Educating Power of Grace (Titus 2:11-14)
 - B. The Gracious Behavior that Results From Grace (Titus 2:15-3:2)
 - C. Grace as Motivation For Godly Living (Titus 3:3-8)
 - D. Behavior Inconsistent with Grace (Titus 3:9-11)
- VI. Final Instructions (Titus 3:12-15)**

CURRENT FOCUS: “THE ROLE OF GRACE - PROMOTE GOOD WORKS IN CHRISTIANS” (Titus 1:1–3:15)

Greeting

¹ Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, ²in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, ³but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior; ⁴To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

Qualified Elders

⁵ For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—⁶if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. ⁷ For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, ⁹ holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

The Elders' Task

¹⁰ For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, ¹¹ whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. ¹² One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” ¹³ This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, ¹⁴ not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. ¹⁵ To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. ¹⁶ They profess to know God, but in works they deny *Him*, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Qualities of a Sound Church

2 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: ² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; ³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ *to be* discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

⁶Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷in all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. ⁹*Exhort* bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all *things*, not answering back, ¹⁰not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Trained by Saving Grace

¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who 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. ¹⁵Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Graces of the Heirs of Grace

3 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. ³For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵not 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, ⁶whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

⁸This 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.

Avoid Dissension

⁹ But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. ¹⁰ Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Final Messages

¹² 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. ¹³ Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. ¹⁴ And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

Farewell

¹⁵ All who *are* with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.¹

Commentary: (CHAP. 1:1-3:15)

I. Salutation (1:1-4)

Titus 1:1. Paul began by identifying himself as **a servant of God**. Usually, no doubt as a result ² of his Damascus Road experience (Acts 9:1-9), Paul called himself a “servant of Christ Jesus.” Only here did he use the term “servant of God.” On the other hand **apostle of Jesus Christ** is standard. Both of these titles (“servant” and

¹ [*The New King James Version*](#). (1982). (Tt 1:1-3:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 761). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

“apostle”) focus on Paul’s two main concerns: **the faith of God’s elect** (cf. Rom. 8:33; Col. 3:12) **and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness** (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7). God was using Paul to call out a people for Himself (e.g., 1 Thes. 1:2–10) and to teach them the truth which is conducive to godly living (cf. 1 Tim. 6:3). In other words, Paul’s ministry was aimed at both the salvation and sanctification of God’s people.

Titus 1:2–3. In the NIV the **faith and knowledge** (already mentioned in v. 1) are said to be **resting on the hope of eternal life**. “Resting on” is from the single Greek word *epi*. But it is better to understand this word as “with a view to,” as in Ephesians 2:10. Thus Paul’s thought is that all of his ministry is “with a view to” eternal life. This hope was promised to the elect from eternity past (2 Tim. 1:9) by God, who cannot default on His word. Only in the latter days, however, has the full understanding of that word come to light in the message God gave Paul to preach. As is common in the Pastorals, the apostle referred to God as Savior (cf. 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 2:10; 3:4). God’s eternal plan to salvage a people for Himself, rather than any this-worldly agenda to liberate social structures or institutions, formed the primary focus of Paul’s ministry.

Titus 1:4. **Titus** was the ostensible recipient of the letter even though this epistle, like 1 and 2 Timothy, was designed to be read widely. Titus was called **my true son**, indicating possibly that Paul was responsible for Titus’ conversion. The same phrase was also used of Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2). Or the term may denote a mentor-*protégé* relationship, or both concepts. The greeting **grace and peace from God**

the Father and Christ ³ **Jesus our Savior** is typical (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2) except for the last term which was applied earlier (Titus 1:3) to God the Father. Paul used the term *Savior* in Titus' letter interchangeably for the first two Members of the Godhead (cf. 2:10 and 13; 3:4 and 6).

II. Qualifications of the Elders (1:5–9).

Titus 1:5. As with Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3), Paul had left Titus behind to provide leadership to the fledgling church in Crete. Now the apostle reiterated his previous instructions, both for Titus' sake and for the congregation's. The organization of the Cretan church was **unfinished** due to the brevity of Paul's visit. Thus, Titus was to **straighten out** (lit., "set in order") the situation by appointing **elders in every town**. Titus was now acting as an apostolic agent (cf. Acts 14:23) in Paul's absence. His authority in the Cretan church was an extension of Paul's own. Such authority ended with the close of the Apostolic Age.

Titus 1:6. As in 1 Timothy 3:2–7 Paul listed the qualifications for elders (cf. comments on 1 Tim. 3:1). There the list numbered 15; here 17. Yet both lists cover essentially the same qualities:

(1) the elder must be **blameless** (*anenklētos*, "unreprovable"). In 1 Timothy 3:10 Paul used this same word of deacons, while in 1 Timothy 3:2 he used *anepilēmpton* to express the same thought of the elders.

(2) **Husband of but one wife** probably means that the elder should have been married only once (see comments on 1 Tim. 3:2).

(3) The elder must have his own household under control.

³ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 761–762). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

This involves not only the matter of discipline (1 Tim. 3:4–5), but also positive spiritual influence as well. His children must be believers who **are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient**. The apostle had explained why this requirement is important (1 Tim. 3:5).

Titus 1:7. Here Paul switched from the term “elder” (*presbyteros*) to **overseer** (*episkopos* ⁴ commonly trans. “bishop”). The two words are plainly interchangeable in the apostle’s thinking, referring to the same church office. The term “overseer” is singular here, but this certainly does not mean that there must be only one *episkopos* per congregation. Rather the word is used here in a generic sense. Paul was simply affirming that these qualifications are required of all overseers. The need for blamelessness is repeated from verse 6. **The reason this quality is so important is that an overseer serves as a steward of God.** Damage to a church leader’s reputation is damage to God’s reputation.

Then Paul resumed his list with five vices which must not characterize an overseer: **(4) not overbearing**, not arrogant and self-willed;
(5) not quick-tempered (cf. James 1:19–20);
(6) not given to much wine;
(7) not violent (cf. 1 Tim. 3:3 for this and the previous vice);
(8) not pursuing dishonest gain (cf. comments on 1 Tim. 6:5).

Titus 1:8. Whereas **verse 7 lists negative characteristics** to avoid, **verse 8 lists positive qualities** to be sought.

⁴ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 762). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The elder must be

(9) **hospitable** (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2);

(10) **one who loves what is good** (cf. Ps. 15);

(11) **self-controlled**, or temperate and sensible (*sōphrona*; cf. Gal. 5:23; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 2:2, 4);

(12) **upright** (*dikaion*, “just”);

(13) **holy** (these last two are, with blamelessness, two of the characteristics Paul himself had modeled [cf. 1 Thes. 2:10], but neither is mentioned in 1 Tim. 3); and

(14) **disciplined** (in contrast to the vices of Titus 1:7; cf. 1 Tim. 4:7–8).

Titus 1:9. Not only must an overseer meet moral and spiritual standards in his personal life, but he must also be a reliable man of the Word.

(15) He must **hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught**.

This last clause, “as it has been taught,” actually comes first in the Greek, for emphasis. According to Paul, an elder is a conservator of the truth, one who must understand it, hold it fast;

(16) **encourage**⁵ **others** by teaching it; and

(17) **refute those who oppose it**.

To be qualified as an elder a man must be a capable handler of the truth (cf. comments on 1 Tim. 3:2).

III. Characteristics of the False Teachers (1:10–16).

Titus 1:10. Having mentioned those who oppose the truth, Paul then described them for Titus and offered advice on how to handle them. He noted their three

⁵ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 762–763). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

most prominent characteristics: they are **rebellious** (cf. Jude 8), **mere talkers**, and **deceivers**. All three characteristics were also present in Timothy's opponents in Ephesus (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3–11; 6:3–10; 2 Tim. 2:14–18); but in Crete, Titus faced a Jewish element (the **circumcision group**, cf. Acts 11:2; Gal. 2:12) in whom these characteristics stood out prominently.

Titus 1:11. These false teachers **must be silenced** because of the damage they were doing to the families of the congregation (cf. 2 Tim. 3:6). No doubt Titus' method of silencing was to be the same as Timothy's: the false teachers were to be instructed not to teach certain things lest they be excommunicated (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3–4; 2 Tim. 3:5). Again, Paul condemned the motives of the false teachers—they were interested in **dishonest gain** (cf. comments on 1 Tim. 6:5).

Titus 1:12. To emphasize his point Paul quoted from Epimenides, a Cretan poet and philosopher from the sixth century B.C. who was widely believed to be a religious prophet. Though the quotation may originally have referred to a particular lie (viz., that Zeus was buried in Crete, which was especially offensive to those who believed Zeus was still alive), by Paul's day the saying had become a proverb which merely emphasized the low reputations of Cretans generally. So little did others think of the Cretans that the verb *krētizō* was invented to mean "to lie." Of course, many noble Christians were in the congregations in Crete, but Paul was frontal ⁶ in his assertion that the false teachers possessed these baser Cretan tendencies.

⁶ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 763). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Titus 1:13–14. How the congregations reacted to Paul’s forthright use of this quotation is not known, but they certainly could not have missed his point: **This testimony is true.** The false teachers fit the Cretan stereotype. Thus, their negative influence must be remedied, if at all possible, by salvaging the false teachers themselves. Titus was to **rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound** (“healthy”; cf. 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3–4) **in the faith.** The ultimate goal of discipline should be to recover the one who is in error (Gal. 6:1; 2 Thes. 3:14–15). In the present case Paul hoped that Titus’ severe rebuke would be enough to bring the errorists around so that they would cease paying **attention to Jewish myths and to the commands of those who reject the truth.**

Titus 1:15–16. The “commands” of verse 14, especially in light of the Jewish and possibly Gnostic influences, undoubtedly included ascetic rules about eating, drinking, and purification (cf. Col. 2:20–23; 1 Tim. 4:1–5). Paul set the matter straight by reminding his readers of the Lord’s teaching that purification is largely a matter of the internal rather than the external (cf. Mark 7:15; Luke 11:39–41). Nothing outside can corrupt one who is internally pure; but someone who is internally impure corrupts all he touches.

The problem with the **false teachers** was that on the inside, in their **minds and consciences**, they were impure. As a result, *even though they claimed to know and follow God, their corrupt actions belied their true natures* (cf. 1 John 2:4). **Their impure interiors** thus rendered them externally **detestable** (lit., “abominable”) to God, **disobedient** (cf. Titus 1:10), and **unfit** (*adokimoi*,

“disapproved”; cf. 1 Cor. 9:27) **for doing anything good** (cf. 2 Tim. 3:17). Once again Paul connected theological error with moral deficiency.

IV. Godly Behavior for Different Groups (2:1–10).

A. Older men (2:1–2).

Titus 2:1. Returning to his instructions to Titus, Paul established a strong contrast with the false teachers he had just discussed. **You** translates *sy de*, which should probably be rendered more strongly: “But as for you....” Titus was to teach in the congregation **what is in accord with sound doctrine**, or more literally, “healthy teaching.” The notion of healthy teaching is common in the Pastorals (cf. 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:2). So also is the idea that certain behavior befits sound doctrine, and other behavior does not (cf. 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3). The victims of false teachers (cf. Titus 1:16) were out of harmony with sound doctrine; but now Paul would describe the right sorts of behavior.

Titus 2:2. Paul addressed several groups, the first being the **older men**. Titus was to teach them to manifest the characteristics of maturity. Older men are to be **temperate** (*nēphalious*; cf. 1 Tim. 3:2), **worthy of respect** (*semnous*, “serious-minded,” i.e., not clowns), and **self-controlled** (*sōphronas*, cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; 2:4). These marks of maturity should be complemented by marks of godliness, the three central Christian virtues of **faith ... love**, and **endurance** (*hypomonē*). This last one may seem to have replaced the familiar virtue “hope” in the trio, but the two are closely aligned (cf. Rom. 5:4; 15:4, 1 Thes. 1:3), especially for those who have lived long lives.

B. Older women (2:3).

Titus 2:3. Titus was likewise to teach the **older women** to behave reverently, in a way suitable to sound doctrine. They were **not to be slanderers** (cf. 1 Tim. 3:11) **or addicted to much wine** (cf. 1 Tim. 3:8). Both were real possibilities for women whose families were grown and who may have had too much idle ⁷ time on their hands (cf. 1 Tim. 5:13–14). Titus was to encourage these older women to develop a ministry of teaching younger women **what is good**. Younger women with children were to keep their primary focus at home (see Titus 2:4–5), but the older women would do well to reach outside their homes and share what they had learned with those who would profit from it most.

C. Younger women (2:4–5).

Titus 2:4–5. Paul specified here what he meant by his general reference to “what is good” in verse 3. Older women could help the **younger women** in at least seven areas, a list that no doubt represents the apostle’s understanding of a young wife and mother’s proper priorities. This list emphasizes, in the original, first what young wives and mothers are to be, and then only secondarily what they are to do. **They are to be:**

- (1) lovers of their **husbands**;
- (2) lovers of their **children**;
- (3) **self-controlled** (cf. 1:8; 2:2);
- (4) **pure**;
- (5) **busy at home**, that is “domestic” (*oikourgous*, lit., “working at home”);
- (6) **kind** (*agathas*, “good”); and (7) **subject to their husbands**.

⁷ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 763–764). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

By manifesting these qualities, Paul wrote, young Christian wives and mothers would earn the respect of outsiders and thereby prevent God's Word from being maligned. Today, though the opposite is often true, *Christian wives and mothers can still be sure that the Lord will honor those who value what He values*, and that He will ultimately vindicate both His Word and those who are faithful to it.

D. Younger men (2:6–8).

Titus 2:6. Titus was to **similarly** encourage the **young men** to exercise self-control, a virtue in which many young men are deficient. Paul used some form of the word here translated “self-control” with each of the four groups of people (vv. 2, 4, 5, 6). Various ⁸ forms of the word are prominent in the Pastorals, indicating for all Christians the importance of moderation, sensibleness, and self-restraint.

Titus 2:7–8. Titus qualified as a young man too, and so received some direct advice from the apostle. He must strive to “show himself” **an example** (*typos*, “pattern”) to all (but esp. to the other young men) in every good work (cf. 1 Tim. 4:15–16). In his public ministry of teaching Titus must show an **integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned**. Paul was always concerned lest **those who oppose** be provided ammunition for their attacks. Far better, said the apostle, that they **be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us**. They would not cease their attacks, of course, but they might at least be embarrassed by having to make up their own false accusations.

⁸ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 764). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

E. Slaves (2:9–10).

Titus 2:9–10. Slaves too, who made up a significant portion of first-century congregations, were responsible to honor God with their lives (see comments on 1 Tim. 6:1). Paul listed five qualities which were to characterize Christians who found themselves serving others. Titus was to teach them

- (1) to be subject to their masters in everything;**
- (2) to try to please them;**
- (3) not to talk back to them;**
- (4) not to steal from them;**
- (5) to show that they can be fully trusted.**

From the world's perspective a slave should not owe any of these things to his master, but from a Christian's perspective the situation looks different. A Christian slave is in fact serving, not his earthly master, but the Lord Christ who will vindicate him in the end (Col. 3:23–24). In the meantime, he must avoid giving offense, and must concentrate on following Christ's example in every way (cf. 1 Peter 2:18–25). In this way his life will prove to be an adornment to **the teaching about God our Savior**. Thus, Paul drove⁹ home again what had been the theme of this entire section (Titus 2:1–10): a believer's behavior is to be in accord with or befitting sound doctrine.

V. Role of Grace in Promoting Godly Behavior (2:11–3:11).

A. The educating power of grace (2:11–14).

⁹ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 764–765). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Titus 2:11–12. Paul had been exploring the affirmation that godly living is demanded by God’s truth. Now he changed his focus to explore that central aspect of God’s truth which demands godly living: grace. The word **for** (*gar*) suggests that here is the theological foundation for what the apostle had just written.

When fully understood, it is the gospel of **the grace of God** which teaches Christians how to live. This grace has brought salvation to all men, i.e., it is universally *available*. The NIV, however, states that God’s grace **that brings salvation has appeared to all men**, thus suggesting a universal *appearance*. The question is whether “to all men” goes with “appeared” (as in the NIV) or with the adjective *sōtērios* (“that brings salvation”). Grammatically “**to all men**” can be taken either way, but the latter makes better sense and correlates with the clear teaching of 1 Timothy 2:4, 6; 4:10.

In each case **the reference to God as Savior** (cf. 1 Tim. 2:3; 4:10; Titus 2:10) *prompted Paul to affirm the universal availability of salvation through Christ*. To side with the NIV, on the other hand, introduces an idea foreign to the New Testament and to common sense, since the gospel itself has patently not “appeared” to all men (unless “**all men**” means all kinds of people and not every single person). The message of God’s grace, when its full implications are seen, leads Christians, negatively, **to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions** (cf. Heb. 11:24–26), and positively, **to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in**

this present Age. All the specific ¹⁰ instructions of Titus 2:1–10 can fit into these two negative and positive categories.

Titus 2:13–14. The gospel of grace affects one's present behavior, on the one hand, by focusing on God's unmerited favor in the past (see the Lord's parable in Matt. 18:23–35 for the dynamics of how this should work). But the Gospel also promotes godly living by focusing on the future. Christians look forward to **the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ** (cf. 2 Tim. 4:8). It is crucial, moreover, to see that this One whom Christians look forward to meeting is the same One **who gave Himself for us to redeem** (*lytrōsētai*, “set free by payment of a price”; cf. Luke 24:21; 1 Peter 1:18) **us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.** *A holy people was His purpose in paying such a fearful price.* Therefore, knowing what all He has done and why He has done it, a Christian who truly loves Christ and looks forward to His return will pay any price to bring his life into conformity with his beloved Lord's will, lest he disappoint Him at His return.

This was the Apostle John's thought when he wrote about the hope of Christ's appearing: “Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). A full understanding of these things leads inexorably to godly living. Conversely, ungodly living in a Christian is a clear sign that either he does not fully understand these things, or he does not actually believe them.

¹⁰ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 765). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

B. The gracious behavior that results from grace (2:15–3:2).

Titus 2:15. Turning again to Titus, Paul told him to teach **these ... things**, i.e., the specific aspects of godly behavior listed in verses 1–10 and referred to more cryptically in the last phrase of verse 14, **“what is good.”** Like Timothy (e.g., 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 4:2), Titus was told to step out aggressively in his public ¹¹ ministry, encouraging those who were doing well, rebuking those who needed to be corrected, being intimidated by no one.

Titus 3:1–2. A large part of any pastor’s public ministry is reminding people of what they already know. Titus was to **remind** the Christians on Crete to be good citizens within their communities, a virtue in which Cretans were notoriously deficient. Though Paul did not repeat it here, his thought was no doubt that this behavior, like that of a Christian slave, will adorn the gospel and make it attractive to others (cf. 2:10). Paul listed seven qualities expected of Christian citizens:

- (1) **to be subject to rulers and authorities;**
- (2) **to be obedient** (cf. Rom. 13:1–7);
- (3) **to be ready to do whatever is good** (cf. Eph. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:17);
- (4) **to slander no one;**
- (5) **to be peaceable and**
- (6) **considerate; and**
- (7) **to show true humility toward all men.**

A Christian citizen should be an influence for good in the community in every way, demonstrating the loveliness of Christ to all through courteous and gracious

¹¹ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 765–766). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

behavior. This is precisely the lifestyle that results from understanding God's grace. In other words, the instructions in Titus 2:15–3:2 must be seen as concrete examples of the behavior required of one who understands God's grace (2:11–14).

C. Grace as a motivation for godly living (3:3–8).

Titus 3:3. Paul never forgot the sinful condition from which he and his converts had been salvaged (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–11; Eph. 4:17–24; Col. 3:6–7), and he reminded them of it once more. Instead of the gracious, Christlike people he was encouraging them to be, they once were just the opposite, being **foolish** instead of sensible, **disobedient** instead of submissive, **deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures** instead of self-disciplined and ready for every good work. Far from being peaceable, considerate, and humble, they were characterized by **malice and envy, being hated and hating one another**. Such is the brutish existence of people apart from God. While a veneer of civilization often obscures the bleak truth, the slightest crack in the surface of society reveals the reality behind the facade. The painful truth is that apart from God people degenerate into little more than animals wrangling over bones.

Titus 3:4. But all of that changed **when the kindness and love** (*philanthrōpia*, lit., “love for man”) **of God our Savior appeared**. The contrast is startling. In verse 3 man is the actor, but in verses 4–7 man is merely the recipient, and God becomes the actor. What man could in no wise do for himself, God initiated for him. (On the reference to God as Savior, see comments on 1 Tim. 1:1.)

Titus 3:5. God in His grace saves those who believe, not because of any righteousness in them (cf. Rom. 3:21–24; Eph. 2:8–9; 2 Tim. 1:9), but **because of His mercy**. The three words, “kindness,” “love,” and “mercy” (Titus 3:4–5) all represent aspects of God’s grace. The dual means of grace through which He accomplished this salvation are (1) the **rebirth** spoken of as a **washing** from the filth of sin, and (2) the **renewal by the Holy Spirit** (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). No mention is made here of the role of faith in the process because Paul’s entire focus was on what God has done, not on human response.

Titus 3:6–7. God **poured out** the Holy Spirit on the world **generously through Jesus Christ our Savior**. Jesus was the Mediator of the Spirit (cf. Acts 2:33). The language intentionally conjures up images of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17). God’s purpose in pouring out the Holy Spirit was **so that, having been justified by His grace**, believers **might become heirs having the hope of eternal life**. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is intimately involved, the New Testament explains, with bringing to fruition God’s ¹² gracious purposes to save (cf. Rom. 8:15–17; Gal. 4:6–7; Eph. 1:13–14). *What God in His grace began, God in His grace will see to the end, through His Spirit.*

Titus 3:8. The **trustworthy saying** formula so common in the Pastorals (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11) introduces Paul’s return to direct address. Because what he had just been saying is trustworthy, Titus should **stress these things** in order to promote godly behavior in his listeners. Twice before Paul had instructed

¹² Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 766). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Titus to teach these things in accordance with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1, 15), and this exhortation is his final reiteration of what is probably the central thrust of the entire epistle. Paul was deeply concerned that God's people **devote themselves to doing what is good** because **these things are excellent and profitable for everyone**. Titus was to promote good works, for they go hand in hand with sound doctrine.

D. Behavior inconsistent with grace (3:9–11).

Titus 3:9. If sound teaching is profitable for everyone, **foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the Law ... are unprofitable and useless**. This is a repeated theme in the Pastorals (cf. 1 Tim. 1:4; 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 1:14). Titus was to **avoid** (lit., “turn away from”) such things.

Titus 3:10–11. As to the people who are advocating these useless things and thereby exerting a divisive and otherwise destructive influence in the church (cf. 1:11), Paul's instructions to Titus were direct and specific. He was to give such a person two warnings. If that did not work, he was to **have nothing to do with him**. The assumption is that a failure to respond to two warnings is a clear sign that the offender is **warped and sinful**, and **self-condemned**. Paul's thought here is similar to the Lord's instructions (Matt. 18:15–17), when He taught that after giving ¹³ an offender three chances to repent, he is then to be cut off (but cf. 2 Thes. 3:14–15).

¹³ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 766–767). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

VI. Final Instructions and Greetings (3:12–15).

Titus 3:12. As usual, Paul ended his letter with some personal allusions. Though it is not known where Paul was when he wrote this epistle, he was planning to winter at **Nicopolis** on the Adriatic coast of Greece. Paul exhorted Titus to do his best to join him there as soon as **Artemas or Tychicus** arrived. Evidently Paul intended to send one of the two to relieve Titus in Crete. Of Artemas nothing is known. (On Tychicus, see comments on 2 Tim. 4:12.)

Titus 3:13. **Zenas the lawyer** is mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament, and nothing is known about him, not even whether he was Jewish or Roman. But **Apollos** was a familiar fellow worker. The apostle's instructions seem to suggest that both Zenas and Apollos were in Crete and that Titus was in a position to **see that they have everything they need**. Servants of Christ who are called to travel from place to place have always received support from the churches (3 John 6–8).

Titus 3:14. Some have suggested that the Cretan Christians may have manifested some of their countrymen's traits (cf. 1:12) and were therefore unable to **provide for daily necessities**, much less be of use to anyone else. This is probably behind Paul's reference to **unproductive lives**. In any case Paul had been stressing the need for good works, not to earn salvation but to serve others, and he pointedly reiterated it here. He expressed the same thought to the Ephesian congregation (Eph. 4:28).

Titus 3:15. It is not known who was included in the phrase **everyone with me**.

Those who love us in the faith obviously excluded the false teachers who opposed Paul. The closing greeting, **grace be with you all**, is similar to that in both 1 and 2 Timothy. The plural word **you** indicates an awareness on Paul's part that he was addressing a broader audience than just Titus.¹⁴

¹⁴ Litfin, A. D. (1985). [Titus](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 767). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.