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# **The Book of Titus**

***A practical Bible Commentary by Terry Baxter***



Paul most likely led young Titus to Christ during his first missionary journey. Paul himself was a fairly young believer at this time. As was his practice, Paul poured himself into Titus by inviting him on actual ministry trips. He followed the example of Jesus and effectively used short-term mission trips to build disciples and future leaders. It's clear from the text that Titus was a cheerful and joyous young man and an anchor of hope. He was not only a diligent worker, he spread joy everywhere he went. In this text he had recently returned to Paul from Corinth. The timing was perfect. Titus was an energy-giver. God sent him back to Paul just when Paul needed it most.

The book of Titus is an example of the content Paul used to help Christians grow in their faith. It can be used as a textbook for "Disciple-Making." It is an amazing book to study.



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Edited by Dan Jones

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# **The Book of Titus: A Practical Commentary by Terry Baxter**

*(Edited and occasional added comment by Dan Jones)*

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## **Background to the book of Titus:**

I want to tackle the small book of Titus as our next study. In Galatians 2:3, Paul makes mention of Titus; “But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.” From this verse we glean that Titus was a Gentile of Greek ancestry.

As we study the context of Galatians 2:1-3 and Paul’s testimony about the Jerusalem Council, we discover that Paul most likely led Titus to Christ during his first missionary journey. Paul himself was a fairly young believer at this time. (See also Titus 1:4) As was his practice, Paul was pouring himself into Titus by inviting him on actual ministry trips. Paul followed the example of Jesus and effectively used short-term mission trips to build disciples and future leaders.

This small book challenges every Christian to be active in the Great Commission by spreading the gospel and mentoring young believers. (Matthew 28:19-20) As you go through life as a Christian make it your goal to be contagious for Christ. The gospel is powerful and the Holy Spirit will use it to bring people to salvation.

Then do what Paul did and pour yourself into new Christians and help them grow. Live on the front lines with the gospel and invite others to join you in the Christian journey. The book of Titus is an example of the content Paul used to help Christians grow in their faith. It can be used as a textbook for “Disciple-Making.” It is an amazing book to study.

## **The Joy of Mentoring Others: 2 Corinthians 7:6-7**

“6) But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7) and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.”

As I was preparing to start writing on the book of Titus, I came across his name in my other morning reading yesterday. 2 Corinthians 6 piqued my curiosity and added valuable background to the story of Paul and Titus. Let’s look at this text briefly:

There is a distinct advantage to pouring yourself into others. When the chips are down in your life then you have someone to help pick you up. Such was the case with Paul and Titus. When Paul was stretched, down, and depressed God used Titus to help lift him up. Notice Paul mentioned he was depressed in verse six. Depression is more common than Christians care to admit. Friendship can help take the edge off from depression. Sometimes the giver needs to become the receiver.

But there’s more –Titus is mentioned two other times in this chapter. Look at verse 13-14: “13) For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14) For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be the truth.”

I believe from this text that Titus was a cheerful and joyous young man. He was not only a diligent worker, he spread joy everywhere he went. In this text he had recently returned to Paul from Corinth. The timing was perfect. Titus was an energy-giver. God sent him back to Paul just when Paul needed it most. This time Paul was the one in need of encouragement.

I think there is a life lesson in this chapter. What you do to encourage and minister to others has a way of coming back to you. I can imagine the joy Paul had when he wrote the small Epistle to Titus. Mentoring others is a two-way street and it holds blessings to numerous to count.

### **Paul Introduces His Mode of Operation Titus 1:1**

“1) Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,”

Paul opens his letter to Titus by identifying himself as a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. This was his common practice. He viewed himself as a “bond-slave sent out for the sake of Jesus.” The reason he was so effective is that he never forgot who he was or why he was called.

His mission was “for the faith of those chosen of God.” His job was to reach people with the gospel and build them up in the faith. His job description was “reach and teach.” It was “evangelize and make disciples.” It was something he did in season and out of season. This is why he was writing to Titus.

Notice the last phrase in this verse, “... and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness.” It is a fact that, “a person's morality dictates their theology.” Nothing twists truth quicker or distorts good doctrine faster than sin and moral compromise. I have watched many good men and women over the years change their view of God and their interpretation of Scripture.

It usually didn't take long to track down the problem. Sure enough, either themselves or a loved one had adopted a sinful lifestyle which they were now trying to justify and defend. It doesn't work! Truth is based on godliness. Repentance is the first step toward redemption. Confession is agreeing with God about His view of truth. Paul's goal was to help people align their lives with God's truth. This is what it means to make disciples.

### **Our Anchor of Hope: Titus 1:2**

“2) in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,”

It is not hope like the world often uses the word “hope.” It is not luck or a long shot hope someone might have to win the lottery against all odds. The modern use of the word “hope” is highly distorted and watered down.

The biblical word is the desire for something good with the expectation of obtaining it because of the certainty of the object hoped for and the foundation of the guarantee. In this case the hope is eternal life and the guarantee is God Himself, who cannot lie and made the promise long ages ago. In other words, the foundation for the Christians hope of eternal life is as sure and sound as the character and nature of God.

The biblical doctrine of eternal hope has been the source of much joy and comfort through the ages. It has imparted strength, grace, and confidence beyond any and all odds. It has allowed the soul and spirit of countless Christians to thrive despite outward suffering, affliction, and even persecution. Eternal hope imparted by the Holy Spirit in every born-again Christian is the punctuation mark of unshakable faith.

The writer of the book of Hebrews nailed this theme in Hebrews 6:13- 20. After stating clearly that the promise is based on the character of God he concludes by says; “19) This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20) where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

The concept of a forerunner is interesting. When a ship was caught at sea in a terrible storm and it was too dangerous to navigate the ship into a calm bay because of rocks or reefs, the crew would carry an anchor into the calm bay and deposit it there. It was their “anchor of hope” that no matter what happened to the ship every life boat could pull itself into the safety of the bay.

In our case, Jesus is our forerunner. He is already anchored in heaven. He is our hope. He is our forerunner. He is our guarantee. The doctrine of Christian hope is based on solid substance. When properly understood we have a rope with three stands holding our anchor. Faith, hope and love are closely interwoven. (See 1 Corinthians 13:13)

The Christian doctrine of eternal hope with Jesus as the Forerunner separates Christianity from every other world religion. Our anchor is the very character and nature of God and His promise of eternal life based on the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

### **God's Timing is Always Perfect: Titus 1:3**

“3) but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,”

This is an unusual verse. As Paul opens his letter to Titus, he looks at the big picture of God's work in the course of human history. His conclusion is that the work of the gospel of Jesus Christ that brings eternal life was right on schedule.

Some scholars refer to this as “Progressive Revelation.” This means that God revealed Himself and his plan for humanity in a progressive fashion over time. The story was built generation upon generation over many centuries of Old Testament history. Each story added significant insight and depth to the need of a Savior and the message of the Gospel.

In 1 Timothy 2:6 Paul proclaims that, “Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony born at the proper time.” Jesus didn’t come into the world too early and He wasn’t too late. Jesus came into the world at the proper time. God’s timing was perfect over the course of human history.

I believe in the sovereignty of God. I believe He is in control of everything. I believe He is in control of the details of your life and my life as well. I do not believe in coincidence, I believe in Divine Providence. I also believe in human responsibility and the need for personal diligence. The two are perfect dancing partners under the banner of the Mystery of God.

The Bible calls us to be proactive and diligent with the spread of the gospel and it calls us to walk by faith and expect the Holy Spirit to work in miraculous ways as the gospel goes forth. He wants us to plan and be devoted to the spread of the Word. He also promises to show up and do the actual work of saving and changing people. God’s timing is always perfect and He always gets the credit for what happens.

#### **The Family of God: Titus 1:4**

“4) To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.”

Paul did not have any natural children. We have no evidence that he ever married. But he had many spiritual children. These were men like Titus and Timothy that he personally led to faith in Jesus Christ and helped them grow into fruitful believers. There was a bond between them that was thicker than blood.

I love being part of the family of God. I enjoy watching people grow in their faith. It is thrilling being part of the spread of the gospel around the world. There are no geographic, gender, ethnic, or age boundaries to the family of God. But there is an amazing bond and unity to being “In Christ.”

#### **Building The Team: Titus 1:5**

“5) For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,”

This is a powerful verse. Paul understood the huge mandate given by Jesus to the church to evangelize the world. In Paul’s thinking, this translated to a church in every city on the Island of Crete and I dare say a church in every city in the known world.

There was no way Paul could do this on his own. The answer was raising up leaders and building teams. Paul was handing the baton to Titus who would hand it off to others as well. I believe these men planted proactive churches that were mission-minded and these churches turned out men and women destined for leadership and fruitfulness.

The modern church has lost this dynamic. It has abandoned the mission mandate and lost its sense of purpose. I agree with the concept of Purpose-Driven Churches. I believe that Spirit-filled and alive churches that are committed to seeing lives transformed through the gospel are the only hope for our lost and dying world. Now more than ever, the church needs to rediscover its roots.

### **Qualifications for Leadership: Titus 1:5-9**

“5) For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6) namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7) For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8) but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9) holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Leadership is important. As Paul left Titus to appoint elders in every city, he had high standards for the office. Not everyone is qualified to be an elder or a leader. Character matters and it is always an expression of what the Holy Spirit is doing inwardly.

Having said that, good leaders are the byproduct of intentional disciple-making. It took Jesus three years to take ordinary men from being rough fishermen and tax collectors to becoming apostles. I suspect the early church followed His model and invested deeply in mentoring and leadership development.

Great leaders are made and not just found. The book of Titus focuses both on the character and the doctrinal development of good leaders. Both are important to the disciple making process.

### **The Problem of Prejudice: Titus 1:12**

“12) One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.””

It is as old as human civilization. It is always wrong for one group to prejudge another group. I have not found a positive side to prejudice. Every person deserves the right to be known, understood and mentored as an individual.



Recently I was in Peru and was talking to an American missionary who was overseeing one of the oldest missions in the city. They had a great facility but the ministry was dying. It was dwindling in size to the point of barely being able to keep its doors open. I commented to the Director that he needed to raise up Peruvian leaders to take over the ministry so American workers could step out of the picture.

His response exposed the problem with the entire ministry. He snapped back; “Peruvians can’t lead anything, there’s no such thing as trustworthy Peruvian.” I was shocked and deeply saddened, mostly because our thriving ministries in Peru are all Peruvian-led. We intentionally handed over the reigns of leadership to nationals as quickly as possible. They are doing ten times better and being more effective than their foreign-led ministry counterparts.

Let’s face it, prejudice is always negative. It kills ministry. It belittles people. It leaves you with a false sense of importance and self-competence. It causes you to focus on self more than on God or others. Prejudice builds walls rather than bridges. Paul knew Titus needed to fight the tendency toward prejudice for the dream of healthy churches on Crete to be realized.

These were not empty words for Paul. He put Titus and many others into leadership even though they were Gentiles. Paul practiced empowering people.

### **The Importance of Reproof: Titus 1:13-14**

“13) This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, 14) not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.”

It is not popular today to think of reproofing people. The whole notion of reproof is based on the concept of absolute truth. The goal of reproof is correction and moving people back to truth. (See 2 Timothy 3:16-4:8) It also acknowledges that people can turn away from the truth and start walking in error and deception. The call to reproof accepts the fact that there is right and wrong, good and bad, proper and improper. It openly acknowledges sin and draws moral lines in society.

Let’s face it, as a society we have drifted past moral relativism to a militant political intolerance that has totally flipped public consciousness away from biblical truth. We now call evil good and what the Bible defines as good we call evil. Christian morals are openly mocked and even prosecuted as hate crimes. Welcome to the battle for truth. (Read Romans 1:18-32)

But the Bible does not change. God does not change. Truth does not change. God still holds mankind and society accountable to His moral standards. Historically, every civilization has gone through moral drift and decay. The Old Testament records many stories of God’s people turning from Him and embracing the opposite values of the world.

The ministry of the Old Testament prophets related to reproof. Read the story of Elijah and wicked King Ahab recorded in 1 Kings 17-21 as an example. Many who followed God were put to death by Jezebel. The persecution of godly people was so bad that Elijah thought he was the only righteously prophet left. (See 1 Kings 19:13-18) He thought he was the last pillar of truth.

The bottom line is that the process of reproof and standing for the truth is part of revival and awakening. Paul was sending Titus to reach an evil culture that was saturated with Greek and Roman values. The early Christian church was designed to engage and eventually win the Roman Empire through the gospel of truth that was bathed in love, but also stood as the only light in otherwise dark and broken human culture. Christianity was not received with open arms, but every local church became a pillar of truth and therefore reproof.

The ministry of reproof that Paul was calling Titus and church leaders to in the above two verses sounds radical, but I would argue that it was part of the Great Commission. This is the Matthew 28:20 part of the Great Commission. This is the “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” aspect of the Great Commission.

Reproof is essential to evangelism, disciple-making, the mission of the church in broken culture, revival, and awakening. As each church becomes a pillar of truth, it clearly defines and exposes sin and calls people to repentance. The church is intended to be like the prophet Elijah who challenged the public consciousness of sin and morality.

The battle for truth is intense in our day and most Christians and spiritual leaders don’t even realize what is happening in the liberal media and the intense modern culture war that is all around us. We have no clue how God wants the church to fit into this battle. Why? Because the modern church is blind and ignorant of the primary societal calling of the church mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:15; “... I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”

According to 2 Timothy 3:16-4:8 pastors need courage and spine in this battle for truth. It is time for the modern church to answer the call to be the pillar of truth again in an anti-Christ era. We must speak the truth in love and be prepared to be misunderstood and even despised by the very people we love and are called to reach. The Holy Spirit uses truth, love, and the gospel through the church to become the pillar and support of truth in culture.

### **Knowing Where to Start with People: Titus 1:15-16**

“15) To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. 16) They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”

Salvation is a marvelous thing. Jesus Christ not only forgives and justifies, but the Holy Spirit starts a work of changing and cleaning genuine believers up from the inside out. Over time He makes them pure, righteous and holy. Mere religion does not do that for people. The unbelieving

are defiled both in mind and conscience. They might sound religious but they will smell and act very worldly, secular, and rebellious toward God. They will be self-centered, pleasure-driven, and sin-embracing.

The proof will always be in their life. People can claim to know God, but their actions, attitudes, morals and values can deny that claim. Actions always speak louder than words. According to these verses, the actions of the lost will be detestable. They will be rebellious and disobedient toward the Word of God. Their efforts at good deeds and humanitarian service will come from wrong motives and end up being meaningless. Many times the deeds are self-serving and even exploitive.

On the other hand, I have met some very good and morally upright people who don't know Jesus. They put many Christians to shame and it would be easy to place them into church leadership, but it would be a tragic error.

These two verses are not a ticket to judge people for the sake of rejecting or condemning them. Over time the evidence of the true condition of the inner soul will speak for itself. Paul is saying that genuine salvation will be followed by visible change, obvious fruit, and a passion for Jesus.

The motivation in this passage for looking at the fruit in a person's life is to discern if they are in need of evangelism or discipleship. Are they lost and need the gospel or are they genuinely saved and in need of encouragement and mentoring? Do we need to point them to salvation or to sanctification? The second is not possible without the first.

Many times it is not clear where a person is in regards to salvation. In those cases we need simply start with the basics of the good news. I am not ashamed of the gospel and even the oldest saint needs to hear it over and over again. The gospel of grace never grows old.

Let me stress that these two verses were not written for the purpose of rejecting people. Paul was merely helping Titus know where to aim his ministry efforts in people's lives and to discern who was ready for leadership and who was not. He did not want Titus to hand the reins of the church over to the religious person who was unsaved or to the new Christian who was in need of serious growth and maturity.

Keep in mind, the context of these two verses relates to appointing qualified church leadership. The wrong decision would produce nothing more than a carnal church with the stench of hypocrisy. Nothing smells worse or is more counter-productive to the Great Commission than unqualified leadership setting the mission, vision, and direction of the church. Unqualified leadership is the root cause behind many dysfunctional churches today.

### **Live the Truth: Titus 2:1**

"But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."

God wants us to speak and live sound doctrine. It means to build our lives around God's ways and God's Word. It's the idea of consistently living out a Christian worldview.

Nothing is worse than believing one thing and living another. With Chapter Two Paul encourages Titus to model his belief system in how he lives and treats people. The gospel is intended to be put into shoe leather, not just to carry the message of the good news around the world, but to live it around the world.

I cannot imagine the revival and awakening that would take place if Christians took this literally. Sound doctrine is not a belief system, it is a lifestyle. It is a way of life. It is a call to live out your faith in Jesus in every relationship, through every trial and with every opportunity you have to speak to people.

### **The Mature Man: Titus 2:2**

"Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance."

So what does Christian maturity look like? Paul lays it out for Titus in the next several verses. He starts in verse two by looking at older men. I have no clue what that age bracket includes, but it is most likely the post child-rearing years.

I love this list. It is simple and to the point. Ironically, the list doesn't focus on knowledge, college degrees, career, or financial status. He totally skips all the stuff that the world today uses to define success and focuses instead on character. I believe that true success in life is the byproduct of godly character.

Please understand this point, "Christian maturity is based on inward character and not outward image or adherence to a creed or a set of doctrines." His list includes things like being temperate, dignified, sensible, seasoned, and consistent in faith, love, and perseverance. Paul is describing a genuine man who walks with God and serves people.

I believe these qualities are intentionally built into a life and not automatically the byproduct of salvation. They come by daily spending time in the word and in communion with God over the long haul. They come from working on personal growth and development over the span of years. They come from interacting with other godly people and serving on the front lines of ministry. They come from weathering many trials, storms, and struggles in life.

This is the accumulation of 1 Peter 1:6-9. These qualities are the metamorphosis of life and walking with God through the ups, the downs, the good, and the bad. Welcome to mature and godly older men.

If you are a young man or a teenager, it would be very wise to find one of these mature and godly older men as a mentor. Seek one out and spend time with them. Ask them to invest in you on a weekly basis. I have found that they are rare and a premium in today's world. A quality

mentor may not have a lot of time to spend with you, rather they will model and push you toward the daily disciplines that result in a fruitful and transformed life.

My number one mentor is John Maxwell. I have never met him in person, but I have spent 15 to 25 minutes a day absorbing his writing for a number of years. I absolutely relish his 101 collection. His book "Today Matters" is priceless. In today's world there are many ways to spend time with quality mentors. Never make excuses for a sloppy and stagnant life. Learn how to push yourself toward personal growth and development. Never be content with mediocrity.

### **The Importance of Mature, Godly Women: Titus 2:3-5**

"3) Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4) so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5) to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored."

Though not every Christian is involved in leadership, every Christian is called to fruitful service and ministry. This is especially true for mature godly women. I am an advocate that women should mentor women and men should mentor men. There is simply too much room for temptation and emotional bonding when men and women get involved in trying to minister to each other.

I personally believe there is room on a church staff for a woman to serve as a pastor or shepherd to women. A volume of heartache and moral failure by otherwise godly men could have been prevented if churches would simply follow the advice of Paul to Titus in these three verses.

### **The Crucial Role of Younger Women: Titus 2:4-5**

"4) so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5) to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored."

Young women were the next important group on Paul's radar screen. They were entrusted with the task of holding the family together and molding young hearts in a godward direction.

According to Jewish culture, the mother was the first teacher and mentor of the children. She literally home-schooled her children until around age 12 when other teachers got involved in the process. (See 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9)

The mother was the guardian of Jewish family values, customs, and she literally set the heart of every child to seek God. She gave the foundation and set the compass for life in the children at the most impressionable age. (See 2 Timothy 1:5-6 and 3:14-15 for background)

The call of motherhood was the foundation of the Jewish family and culture. This role had to be taught and encouraged. This is where the older women stepped in and became an invaluable help. This is literally what imparted Jewish customs when they had no nation or were in desperation. The young mother was the glue that made Jewish culture so effective and dynamic. In this text, Paul is adopting this practice for gentile believers as well.

### **Completing the Loop with Young Men: Titus 2:6-8**

“6) Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; 7) in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, 8) sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.”

Paul now closes the loop. In these verses he focuses on young men and getting them trained up to be mature, godly, responsible, and fruitful in Christian living and ministry.

The amazing thing is that Titus himself was a young man and Paul entrusted major ministry responsibility to him. He wanted him to be sound in speech and to live beyond reproach. Discipleship aimed at producing godly maturity and encouraged everyone to step up and be involved.

Notice that Paul equipped people to fulfill their God given identity, mission and calling. Older men were to be older men. Older women were to be older women. Younger women were to be younger women. And younger men were to be younger men. Each group was important and had a significant role to play.

It is worth mentioning that these Christian roles ran contrary to secular Greek and Roman culture for each category. While secular culture was drifting into all kinds of immoral, irresponsible, and transgender roles, the early church focused on character development and personal responsibility. They built strong marriages, families, and Christian communities.

For a long time this Christian value system was persecuted and even despised as an unwanted subculture in Greece and Rome. As secular culture deteriorated it left people broken, wounded, and hopeless. The Good News of the gospel and the love of the Christians began to shine brighter and brighter as Rome fell into rapid decline and moral decay.

People yearned for the love, peace, stability and affirmation that came with a relationship with Christ and Christian marriage, family and community. While secular culture was tearing people and families apart, the simple gospel and the resulting Christian value system was the only thing that was able to put them back together. The same is happening today.

### **The Christian Work Ethic: Titus 2:9-10**

“9) Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10) not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.”

As Christianity spread it encountered the institution of slavery. Eventually the spread of the gospel brought an end to slavery in the Roman Empire and replaced it with the Christian work ethic. The small book of Philemon is a story as to how the gospel changed both the slave owners and the slaves. Both sides of the issue were affected.

The above verses also apply to employees and employers. The bottom line is that a Christian should approach work as if they are serving Jesus and therefore be diligent, responsible, and trustworthy. This should all be done with attitudes that adorn the gospel. The Christian business owner should also treat his or her employees with greater care and compassion.

As we read the greater context of these verses, it is obvious that salvation was intended to change every area of life. Christianity is not a mere religion, it is a way of life.

### **Grace-Based Salvation: Titus 2:11-12**

“11) For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12) instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,”

Salvation is a life -hanger. God's amazing grace has appeared not to let us live as we please and remain slaves to sin. To the contrary, those who receive God's grace start to change toward holiness and godliness in daily living. They are set free from sin and bondage.

Grace is like a compass for life. It is like a heavenly GPS (Global Positioning System). It points the believer consistently toward holiness and godlikeness in character and conduct.

Paul makes the case that God's grace is synonymous with denying ungodliness and worldly desires. It calls and motivates people to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in this present age. Grace is not the freedom to live as we please; rather it is the power to live as God calls us to live.

### **The Blessed Hope: Titus 2:13-14**

“13) looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14) who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”

According to these verses, the blessed Hope is future tense and has at least three factors. It is something we are looking forward to in the future and was held to tightly by the early church.

First, we are looking for the return of Christ to rule and reign on earth. This includes the defeat of the god of this world and his evil empire. The book of Revelation and the Tribulation Period is all about this cataclysmic transition. It will be an event like no other in the history of the world.

Second, we eagerly look forward to the full working out of our redemption when temptation itself is absent and our sin nature is gone. Eternity is going to be very different from this present life. According to 1 Corinthians 15:42-58 our bodies will be changed at the resurrection and everything will be new. We will have new and glorified bodies.

Finally, we will be a holy and purified people for God's own possession fully immersed into the Kingdom of God. Eternity will be glorious and marvelous beyond comprehension.

But wait, the emphasis of this book is that the process starts here and now. The blessed hope might be likened to the Children of Israel entering the promised land, but it started with the Exodus from Egypt.

Paul is about to make the point that the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is active and dynamic in this life. The moment we are converted the Exodus from sinful living begins. We leave Egypt, sin, and bondage behind us and we start walking in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Buckle your seat belts, Chapter Three is going to be very exciting!

The blessed hope was the motivation for enduring the trials and struggles of this life which serve to build our faith and cause us to grow spiritually. The idea is that "it will be worth it all when we see Jesus." Don't be discouraged and don't faint through the journey of this life. The Blessed Hope ensures that something much better is coming!

### **Engaging in Good Deeds: Titus 2:15-3:2**

"15) These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you." 1) Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2) to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men."

Getting God's people to live like God's people is not an easy task. It is complicated even more when people are religious but not actually converted by the Spirit of God. Never minimize the Gospel.

In these verses Paul encouraged Titus to use some godly authority in working with Christians. He told him to "speak" and "exhort" and "reprove" with all authority. I would guess the teaching and preaching ministry in the early church came with passion, conviction, and fire. It was punctuated with a strong "thus says the Lord" and most likely quoted a volume of Scripture. When the one standing in the pulpit speaks with no biblical authority those sitting in the pews have no fear of God or victory over sin.



This might surprise you, but a significant part of the message simply admonished Christians to engage in “good deeds.” Getting Christians to do what they should is a great way to prevent them from getting entangled in sin. In fact, the admonishment to engage “good deeds” is the number one recurring theme in the book of Titus. Review Titus 1:16, 2:7, 2:14, 3:1, 3:8 and 3:14. Intentionally engaging in good deeds is a great way to avoid the traps of boredom and complacency that often breed sin and unrighteousness.

But there is another amazing byproduct of doing “good deeds”; God often shows up with His power and anointing. James 1:17-18 basically says that God is behind everything good. Small acts of “doing good” can be multiplied many times over when God uses them for His glory. Most Christians sit around waiting for God to do something. They want to witness God at work. Do you want to see God at work? Then step up and step out and do as many good deeds each day as possible and soon you will be surfing on the mighty wave of the supernatural.

Being a Work Changer is that simple. Start engaging in as many “good deeds” as possible and God will use them to create a Tsunami. The way to combat evil is by doing good. Many fruitful ministries were birthed by seemingly small acts of compassion and good deeds.

Do you want to help the homeless? Then find someone to feed or clothe. Volunteer at a homeless shelter or help one day a week with a food station for the homeless. God will meet and change you in the process. Do you want to turn the tide on abortion? Then find a struggling unwed mother and help her learn parenting skills and a work ethic. Give her some foundation and roots in her life. There’s no telling what doors God might open for you. Do you want to help fight poverty or curb senior exploitation? Then start doing good deeds to those in need or show love to a lonely senior who has no friends or family. Just be like Jesus to people.

Doing “good deeds” is the only way I know how to sow the seeds of faith. The Christian life doesn’t work in the passive mode. It has to be alive, intentional, and active. Shut off your television, redeem your time, and step out with the intention of doing good to someone. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Smile, use kind words, engage people in conversation, build people up and stop grumbling and complaining. As you go, learn how to listen to the whispers of the Holy Spirit. Above all, be considerate to people and value them. That’s basically what Paul said in Titus 3:2; “to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.” Don’t be surprised if you’re knee-deep in fruitful ministry within a few months.

You won’t have to look too long or too far to find opportunities to be the conduit of God’s love. Our world is drowning with hurts and needs. Just be available to God and start doing good deeds. God will take care of the rest.

When you tie the last two passages together, Paul wanted the Christians to grasp their “Blessed Hope” while not wasting time sitting in their easy chair waiting for Jesus to return. He wanted them to engage in good deeds. He wanted them mobilized and active for the glory of God.

*(There's a contemporary Christian song on this subject by Matthew West called, "Do Something." Here are some of the lyrics:*

*I woke up this morning  
Saw a world full of trouble now  
Thought, how'd we ever get so far down  
How's it ever gonna turn around  
So I turned my eyes to Heaven  
I thought, "God, why don't You do something?"*

*Well, I just couldn't bear the thought of  
People living in poverty  
Children sold into slavery  
The thought disgusted me  
So, I shook my fist at Heaven  
Said, "God, why don't You do something?"*

*He said, "I did, I created you") –dj*

### **True Freedom: Titus 3:3**

"3) For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

In the United States we celebrate the fourth day of July as "Independence Day." It marks the birth of our free nation. We often equate it with freedom. But Paul warns us that true freedom is inward. It starts in the heart and soul of every person.

Many years ago, a very wise king observed that "righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people." (Proverbs 14:34) When the majority of people are deceived and enslaved to inner lusts and pleasures while consumed by malice and envy it is not long before it is torn apart with hate and violence.

I am very concerned for the future of our nation. I have never seen a time when we have been more divided or embroiled in more hate. Freedom is not a ticket to unrighteous and sinful living with every notion of God removed from public consciousness. According to Solomon, that path is a guarantee to national reproach, decline, and judgement.

Paul outlined this societal decline in Romans 1:18-32. It has happened to many civilizations and many nations. This passage should be studied by everyone concerned with national freedom. Please read the text yourself and decide where you place the United States and yourself in the text.

So what can we do? The answer is not political. It is not a stronger military, better economy, free education, or unlimited entitlements. In the next several verses, Paul explains to Titus about the inner work of God to change the human heart. True freedom starts on the inside with the cleansing work of God.

Scripture gives many accounts of revival and awakening. This is true not only for the nation of Israel; the book of Jonah records an amazing revival in the city of Nineveh. Let me say this clearly, "Freedom is based on truth and righteousness and a right relationship with the God of Creation as revealed in the Bible."

A nation not aligned with God as He revealed Himself to us in the Bible will disintegrate from the inside out. I am very troubled by the so-called "Progressive Movement in America." The removal of God from public consciousness is a pathway to doom and destruction. Freedom does not come from abandoning God and trampling His ways underfoot— it comes from seeking and obeying Him.

At the same time, God cannot be forced on any person or nation. The Gospel must be openly preached and freely received by each and every person. As the Holy Spirit sets people free from the inside, a blessing will fall upon the nation as revival and awakening gains momentum.

America has been visited by two Great Awakenings at crucial times in our history. Please join me in asking God daily to visit us with a third Great Awakening. Our future is not in mob demonstrations or violent marches for no purpose other than spreading hate and tension. Our future is dependent on a loving and peaceful inner work of grace in the hearts of many people.

Is there a war raging in your life? Spend time reading Titus 3:3-7 today. Ask God to do a fresh work of grace in your life. Turn your heart to seek Him.

#### **The Kindness of God: Titus 3:4**

"4) But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,"

Let's not move too quickly. This verse speaks volumes of the character and nature of God. Did you know that God is filled with kindness? Satan wants people to think God is filled with rage and is wrathful. But the truth is that God is filled with kindness and love.

These are not empty words. He acted out of kindness and love when He sent His only Son to be the Savior of the world. (John 3:16) Salvation based on the work of Jesus Christ to die for our sins was a factual and historical demonstration of God's kindness and love. They go hand in hand.

This verse can radically change your outlook. God wants you to know His kindness and love and He wants you to *show* His kindness and love. If you claim to know God then start acting

God-like. Start showing kindness and love to others. If Christians took this seriously we could start a Kindness Tsunami. That has the potential of sparking a revival!

### **All of the Emphasis is on God: Titus 3:4-6**

“4) But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5) He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6) whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,”

Salvation is the work of God. It is based on His kindness, love, mercy, and the active work of the Holy Spirit. We do not deserve it and we do not earn it. Salvation is not based on deeds that we have done in our own goodness. This text makes it clear that God is the One who does the saving.

Those who are saved are washed and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. It is a renewing or transformation process. The Holy Spirit is active in the life of every true believer. God does not give the Holy Spirit sparingly. He pours Him out richly on those whom He saves.

This text places all of the emphasis on God related to salvation. There is no room for human boasting and there is no room for man-made religious ceremonies. Jesus Christ alone is to be trusted as the basis of salvation.

Frankly, this text frustrates me. I want to pat myself on the back and say, “look what I’ve done.” Human nature wants to take credit for what God does. I want to acknowledge some self-effort, point to my faith, or make a list of my religious devotion or deeds. But Paul leaves it all out as a basis of salvation. The only question in the text, “Can you see evidence of God working in your life?”

### **Justified by Grace: Titus 3:7**

“7) that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Here is a new twist on justification. We know about the doctrine of justification by faith, but have you ever heard of “justification by grace?” Grace is an unmerited favor or an undeserved kindness to us from God.

The amazing part of grace in this verse is that it makes us heirs in the family of God. Grace places us in sonship and royalty. It gives us the hope of eternal life. But this is not an empty hope, it is backed up by “the grace of God.” It is substantiated by God granting something to us that we did not earn and do not deserve.

Why is this significant? Think about it: If salvation is based on my faith it is contingent on a human element. Faith, at its very minimal, is my belief in the gospel. Do you ever wonder if you have enough faith or if it is sincere enough? As you can see, there is room in this conversation about faith for the enemy to play mind games with us.

But let's join Paul in this rare verse and shift gears in our thinking about faith and grace. In the process we must not minimize the doctrine of justification by faith. I do believe there is a human response to the Divine initiative. But let me point out that if salvation is granted by grace then it is 100% God's responsibility. He cannot fail. The guarantee becomes certain because it is backed up by the character and nature of God. The human element is gone. It just evaporated.

I have walked in human sandals long enough to know the frailty of humanity. I have walked with God long enough to know something about His immutability. That simply means that "God doesn't change and He cannot fail." The emphasis of faith is on something within me. The emphasis of grace is on God alone. I do believe in human responsibility, but because of this verse I can hang the assurance of my salvation solely on divine sovereignty.

### **Personifying God to the World. Titus 3:8**

"8) This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men."

This verse comes as an application to the discussion Paul just had on salvation in verses 4-7. It answers the question, "Why did Jesus save me?" The most basic answer is that God saved us to serve people as His representatives. We are to be God's hands and feet in the world. According to the book of Titus, Christians do that by engaging in good deeds.

I'm the first to admit there is a lot of bad, evil, and gloomy news in the world today. But the only way to fight evil is with good. In fact, evil paves the way for good the same way darkness makes the light shine brighter. I believe there is a vacuum for good in the world today.

Think about it! There are literally millions of Christians in the world. If every one of them took Titus 3:8 seriously every day and set out in the name of Jesus to do good deeds, it would literally personify God in the world. I say that based on James 1:17. God is good and He does good. How is the goodness of God going to be reflected in the world if it doesn't come through His people?

Paul is not suggesting that we do good deeds and leave the gospel out. He is saying that our good deeds add traction and credibility to the gospel. This is what causes the church to become the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Matthew 5:13-16)

I have mentioned this before in this study of the book of Titus, but doing "good" or "good deeds" is the key theme of the book of Titus. Review Titus 1:8, 16, 2:7, 14, 3:1, 8 and 14. Paul wants

the church to take the lead in doing good in the world. He wants us to be a daily demonstration of the goodness of God to people. This is the best way to shod our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

The tragedy is that I have attended church for over 45 years and I have listened to hundreds of sermons both on the radio, at conferences, and in churches. Of the very few messages I have heard on good deeds, every one of them emphasized that good deeds were not a basis of salvation and left the impression that they should be shunned. How utterly tragic! Good deeds have been painted in a bad light to God's people.

To the contrary, good deeds are the fruit of salvation. (Ephesians 2:10) They should be the distinguishing mark of God's people. (John 15:35) I love the way John put it in 1 John 3:18; "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." Love is more expressed by what we do than what we say.

I believe this admonition to "good deeds" is the missing dynamic in the church today. It has cut the heart out of our gospel. It has taken the feet off from the church. It has made our salt tasteless and left our lights dim. It is time to rediscover the goodness of God and express it to the world around us in tangible ways every day and all day long.

### **Avoid Fruitless Arguments: Titus 3:9**

"9) But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless."

Fruitless theological arguments do little to adorn the gospel or promote godliness. There are plenty of things to argue and debate over. Paul says for the most part these debates are unprofitable and worthless. I believe in good Bible studies and solid doctrine, but over forty years of ministry I have seen nothing good come from fruitless debates and arguments about trivial and unprofitable things.

From the context of this book, Paul concludes it is much better to focus on spreading the gospel, engaging in good deeds and building people up in their Christian walk. My rule of thumb is that if the fruit of the Holy Spirit is not governing the conversation then the subject matter is not going to be edifying or profitable.

Sometimes it's very stimulating to tackle controversial subjects with mature and godly believers. Paul talked about this in 1 Corinthians 2:6-10. I like digging deep in the Word and speculating about the mysteries of the Bible. There are plenty of them. But not every believer can converse about controversial matters without becoming agitated, testy, or dogmatic.

When that happens, I simply back away from the subject or change the subject. No conversation is worth hurting a relationship or grieving the Holy Spirit. I am not referring to solid

biblical convictions, the gospel, well-defined doctrines, or biblical morals. We need to hold the line on those subjects.

Paul is talking about the unresolvable mysteries of the Bible or areas of personal conviction that the Bible leaves under the category of personal liberties. You can win an argument but grieve a relationship in these areas. I have learned the hard way that it's not worth it!

### **Dealing with Troublemakers: Titus 3:10-11**

“10) Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, 11) knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.”

Paul told Titus not to waste his time on people who wanted to do nothing but fight, quarrel, and argue. Some people are not teachable. They come across as if they know everything and constantly challenge authority. They disrupt unity, create tension, and stir up conflict.

Paul's solution was to give them a few warnings and then ask them to leave the fellowship if they refuse to change. They can destroy the momentum of a ministry and throw water on the fire of the Spirit.

At some point you will have to decide between ministering to them and everyone else. Why? Because other people will begin to leave. People shun tension and conflict. Satan loves few things more than sending an argumentative and factious person into an otherwise healthy ministry. I find these to be very instructive verses.

### **Glimpse of Some Key Itinerant Workers in the Early Church. Titus 3:12-13**

“12) When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13) Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them.”

As the book of Titus comes to a conclusion we have a picture of the communication, cooperation, and teamwork in the early church. There were a lot of people doing ministry and helping the early churches. Tychicus, Zenas, and Apollos were all key workers in the spread of the Gospel across this region. They were in full time itinerant ministry. You could also add Titus and Paul himself to this list. Jesus also modeled this kind of itinerant ministry.

I personally believe it is healthy for churches to have input from multiple gifted and godly people. I have benefited greatly in my life from the ministries of many godly men and women. I would encourage you to seek out and even support those in missions and itinerant ministry. They are a significant part of God's program for carrying out the Great Commission.

There are godly people working in many significant capacities today. This includes everything from Children's Bible Club workers, prison ministries, Bible Camp staff, marriage enrichment

ministries, Christian radio programs, college campus programs, to a variety of creative evangelistic outreaches and many full time missionaries. As you can see, this is a huge team today.

I personally do not like the term “para church ministry” because it sounds like these servants are not part of the church team. I see them as crucial kingdom workers. They are invaluable servants and world-changers. They all help the task of spreading the gospel!

### **Good Deeds, Pressing Needs, and Long-Term Solutions: Titus 3:14**

“14)And let our people also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.”

As Paul closes this letter to Titus, he returns to the theme of “good deeds.” This time it is qualified with the phrase “to meet pressing needs.” The idea is to be God's supply when pressing and obvious needs are present.

You don't need to pray about providing water to the thirsty or food to the hungry. These are “pressing needs.” We might include giving clothing to the poor and shelter to the homeless. These are included in the idea of “pressing needs.”

According to James 1:27, I would include “caring for orphans and widows in their distress” in the list of those with “pressing needs.” Helping people who are abandoned or easy targets for exploiters is something God wants us to do.

The book of Ruth might serve as a pattern. Boaz was not being showy nor was enabling slothfulness in Ruth. He met pressing needs by allowing Ruth to glean in his fields next to his workers. Many times providing a job or source of income is the long term solution after pressing needs are met. Find a way to help people step up and become responsible in personal growth and development to become self-sustaining in life. This preserves the dignity and self worth of the person and puts you in the role of being a life mentor.

There are obviously other people on this list. The Old Testament would add treating aliens or sojourners well and possibly coming to the aid of those who are being bullied or treated unjustly. It would also include being sensitive to the needs of the sick, elderly, and disabled. I would also put assisting victims of natural disaster or severe hardships on this list. God's people are to show love, compassion, justice, and equity to others. We are to be the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus to the world.

This also means that God wants His people to be hard workers, successful, and good stewards of the resources He entrusts to them. I like what Paul says on this subject in Ephesians 4:28; “Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.” Those who help



must become role models of those being helped. Living and passing on a Christian work ethic is part of the long term solution.

There is a significant difference between the “Christian way” and the “entitlement way!” The biblical focus relates to immediate intervention with “pressing needs” while designing long term solutions for people that leads to godly living and self-sufficiency. God wants His church to impart life skills, personal responsibility, and a mature and productive approach to life. He wants us to help people rise above pressing needs to become resourceful, productive, successful, and future world-changers themselves.

The final phrase in this verse is very powerful: “...so that they will not be unfruitful.” God is glorified, the gospel is advanced, and significant relationships are built when God's people meet pressing needs and help devise long term solutions in the name of Jesus. There is no excuse for any Christian to be unfruitful. God wants His people to be world-changers. He wants us on the front lines of meeting pressing needs, sharing the gospel, and building godly, mature, responsible and transformed lives.

### **Sending a Final Greeting: Titus 3:15**

“15) All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.”

The early church created a bond between believers. They shared each other's burdens and sincerely prayed for one another. They also greeted one another and blessed one another with grace. They pulled for each other.

I believe they worked together, labored for the gospel together, laughed together, and (when needed) they suffered together. They experienced a bond of love the world could never know. They knew one another by name.

Part of the reason for this bond was what many call “life-on-life” discipleship.” They poured themselves into one another and opened their hearts and homes to one another. When traveling believers never stayed in Motel 6. Believers took care of each other and often extended hospitality to one another. As a result they developed a unique sense of community that transcended geography.

Why does Paul close this small letter by sending a greeting? I believe it was because he knew and cared for these people. The early body of Christ was connected in a way the modern church knows very little about. We have lines that divide. They had lines that united and bonded them together. They had agape love toward one another.