

Paul's Letter To Titus
Week Two
Titus 2:1-15

Day One

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. ²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

2:1 – Paul gave Titus a simple, straightforward command: Teach sound doctrine. **What is sound doctrine?** It is the doctrine that Paul imparted to Titus. **And do we have access to this same sound doctrine?** We do. It is found in God's word as written by Paul and others. Paul understood that what he was imparting to the churches, including the one on Crete where Titus was, was the word of God. Peter understood it as well and wrote of it in his second epistle:

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Peter knew that Paul's letters were Scripture. So if you want to teach sound doctrine, you must teach what the apostles taught and wrote. It's that simple. You don't have to come up with creative messages with innovative insight. You can simply teach God's word in its simplicity and you will be true to what Paul and the apostles passed on from Jesus. Included in that sound teaching are of course the words that Jesus spoke and taught in His earthly ministry. Jesus understood that He gave the words of God because He was God and He had come from the Father:

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my **words** will never pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

For the one whom God has sent speaks the **words** of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit (John 3:34).

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The **words** I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life (John 6:63).

There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my **words**; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day” (John 12:28).

“He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These **words** you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me” (John 14:24).

2:2 – Paul directed Titus to teach those who were more mature to be sound in behavior and a model to others. Notice how sound doctrine was to translate into holy living and righteous acts. Those who were elders or more seasoned in their lifestyle were to set a godly example, which is a form of teaching in and of itself.

Day Two

³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

vs. 3-5 – It is interesting that Titus was to warn older women not to be addicted to much wine! That is not a problem I usually associate with older women, but that must have been an issue in Crete. Paul urged Titus to structure his teaching in such a way that the needs of particular groups would be met, and not just to teach or preach one message for all. Also notice how practical Paul's theology was. He never asked anyone to learn just so they would know. He taught to produce spiritual behavior and holy living. Here is a list of things Paul thought important for older women to teach and younger women to do and be:

- love their husbands and children
- self-controlled
- pure
- kind
- busy at home
- subject to their husbands

That is not a list that would be very popular today, for women (and men) are to be independent and have their own lives and careers no matter what. Paul wanted a woman's focus to be the home. **Was this just cultural, a product of the time in which Paul lived, or was this God's will yesterday and today? Can a woman have a career and still maintain her priorities at home? What do you think about this list? Is it realistic for today's woman and world?**

Paul's purpose was to see that the word of God and the Way would not be maligned due to believers who misbehaved. He knew the Church was being watched and observed, and he wanted their corporate witness to be consistent with what people outside the church knew should be present.

It is always interesting to me that the world knows what the behavior and activity of the church should be. When it isn't there, they shake their heads in disbelief. The world expects to see love and kindness, with care for the poor and needy. This is what Jesus said should be true of the Church:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34).

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Day Three

°Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.

v. 6 – As I write, the news is filled with reports of business people, athletes and entertainers who are relatively young and who have no self-control. They do what they want and many feel the repercussions. This verse makes me think of what Paul wrote to the Galatians:

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. ¹For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law (Galatians 5:16-18).

When you yield to the Spirit, He takes away the desires to sin and replaces those desires with their positive counterpart. Instead of hate, you receive love. Instead of lust, you develop service and compassion. Yet this isn't a passive process. You must present your sinful nature to the Lord for Him to change or else you will remain in your undisciplined lifestyle that may include harmful, sinful behaviors.

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Romans 8:13-14).

I had never considered that these instructions constitute some sort of justification for the ministry segmentation we have in modern churches. It justifies the need for churches to focus on the needs of certain age and gender groups and to equip the members of those groups for successful living. This would entail church ministries to men, women, youth, young adults, young married folk and older ones as well.

Notice too that Paul had a preconceived idea of the godly behavior goals for each group and the teaching was to be tied to produce that end result. In other words, teachers must think through what they want their teaching to produce in those who hear.

That is why it is good for teachers in the body of Christ to also be pastors because then they must live with the results of what they teach. That will tend to keep them more grounded and sane, for if they teach crazy things, they will have to live with the crazy people and lifestyles their teaching produces.

Imagine if every church taught their young men to be self-controlled and then held them accountable for their deeds? Young men tend not to be self-controlled and that is the source of much pain and suffering in our societies. **What if every family taught their young men to be self-controlled?** I know you can see the benefits of such practical instruction.

Day Four

⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

v. 7 – Paul continued Titus’ instruction for the young men, which was to model the behavior he wanted to produce in the young men. That is such an important part of teaching. There is an old saying, “Do as I say, not as I do” and that saying is totally wrong! People will tend to do what you do and if you do what you are saying to do, your teaching is all the more powerful and effective. **So, do you model what you teach to your children or others? Where are you inconsistent? Where can you be more consistent?**

And what is doing good for you? Are you doing your good in such a way that it is instructing others in how to behave? On Sundays in church, I hold up my offering envelop to show the people that I am giving the way I am asking them to give. Then in our last service, I walk down and hand my offering to the usher for him to deposit. I am not showing off, for no one knows how much I am giving. Yet I am showing the people that I am a church member too and I must fulfill my obligations to the church just as I am asking them to do. That is a simple thing, but one that I hope adds to my effectiveness as a teacher and pastor.

This is what Paul referred to as “integrity,” which is simply another way to refer to the wholeness that teachers and Christians need to have. We need to act in accordance with what we teach. Paul also wanted Titus to be serious. I use a lot of humor in my teaching, but that is to soften the intensity with which I often present my material. Yet I try to convey that the things I teach are not optional or frivolous, but the word of God! That is why I write as much as I do – to keep the important material I have to teach before the people on a regular basis.

v. 8 – Paul was concerned about the “public relations” aspect of his early ministry. He knew that the early churches were fragile church plants with many young believers with no spiritual background. He realized that the culture around the churches would be watching their behavior to see if it was consistent with what was taught. He also was aware of the enemy of the church and his ability to wage cunning warfare that would distract or discredit the church. So Paul wanted Titus to conduct himself by impeccable standards.

Notice that Paul said *when* others oppose you, not *if* they oppose you. You can expect someone to resist you when you begin to live or teach godliness. Paul warned Timothy of this as well.

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be **persecuted** (2 Peter 3:12).

And Jesus warned you as well about the opposition that is sure to come:

“Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also” (John 15:20).

Day Five

⁹Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

v. 9 – Some read into this advice that Paul advocated slavery. He did not. He was powerless, however, to change it as one could be today with access to political action strategies. What’s more, Paul was concerned for the Way and how it would be perceived by the dominant culture as we stated earlier, so he wanted believing slaves to model exemplary behavior toward their masters.

Whenever I encounter Paul’s instructions toward slaves, I tend to substitute the word “employee” for “slave.” So the advice for moderns would be, “You employees, respect your supervisors and don’t talk back to them.” Peter also gave advice to slaves/employees in his epistle:

Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps (1 Peter 2:18-21).

v. 10 – Paul further explained that he wanted the church’s doctrine to be attractive to all, including masters. So he was not just interested in good public relations, but also in evangelism. He wanted slaves to lead their masters to Christ! Paul kept his eye on the prize at all times and the prize for him was seeing the Gentiles come to know the Lord. So slaves were to be respectful and disciplined in speech. What’s more, they were not to steal and pilfer.

I remember a time when I felt impressed to write my employer a \$25 check to replace all the paper, paper clips, postage and other office supplies that I had carelessly used. I had pilfered and stolen supplies that belonged to my company. There is another way to steal from your company and that is through wasted time. If you are being paid for work and are not working, then you are stealing.

Paul wanted slaves/employees to prove that they can be trusted without supervision.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving (Colossians 3:22-24).

So, what kind of employee are you? How is your relationship with your supervisor(s)? Do you give your best at work? Do you act your best at work? Would people there know that you are a Christian, not by what you say, but by what you do? Do you want to be promoted based on what you know and your expertise rather than on your character and integrity?

Day Six

¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

v. 11 – We must always remember that God’s salvation is a measure of God’s grace. He did not have to give man a second chance but He did and does as we read in the earliest chapters of Genesis:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

What’s more, Paul understood that this grace was and is for all men, not just for Jews or special Gentiles. This grace of salvation had to be shared with as many as possible. Plus, this grace had to impact the behavior of all who believed, whether slave or free.

v. 12 – God’s grace teaches us to say no to ungodly behavior. This makes me think of the old anti-drug campaign that said, “Say no to drugs!” Believers should have the same motto with one slight adjustment: “Say no to sin and ungodliness!” There is no simple way around sin, except that God’s grace is with you to avoid it, as Paul taught the Corinthians:

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (1 Corinthians 10:14).

In every one of Paul's letters, he tied his theology to proper behavior, which in this case is to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this age as preparation for the age to come. **Are you saying "no" to worldly passions and "yes" to godly living? Is there any area where you need to improve?** Don't just think of ungodly living as extreme sins like robbing banks or committing adultery. There can be more subtle expressions as well, like materialism or self-promotion.

v. 13 – Paul pointed out that this life is just the first step to eternal life. He wanted the saints to live properly as they waited for the blessed coming return of the Lord Jesus. He did not want them to live sloppy moral lives while they waited, but rather to live godly lives, no matter how long the Lord's' return would take.

Of course, the return of the Lord is an essential tenet of Christianity. He will return in power to judge both the living and the dead. We are to act accordingly, for we do not know when He will return, so we must always behave like His return is imminent.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

Are you living like the Lord could return today? What would that behavior and lifestyle look like for you if you were living with that expectation? What could you do without? What would you need to do more of?

Day Seven

¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. ¹⁵These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

v. 14 – The Lord Jesus did not only give Himself for us only to save us. He saved us so that we would live godly lives and He has spelled out that godly behavior through Jesus' ministry as presented by the apostles, including Paul. Jesus redeemed us from a useless life of sin to become His people, armed and ready to do good deeds. Jesus surrendered His life; no one took it from Him.

“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father” (John 10:18).

Jesus not only saved us *from* something but also *to* something. He saved us to a life lived for Him in obedience to His will and Word. This obedience isn't to be grudging, but

enthusiastic! Are you eager to do what God wants? If not, what is the hesitation? Why would you be reluctant to give, go, pray, witness or fast? As the old hymn states:

I delight to do Thy will, O Lord,

I delight to do Thy will.

And to walk with Thee is not grievous unto me.

I delight to do Thy will.

v. 15 – Paul concluded his instructions concerning what Titus should teach in Crete. He was specific and clear and expected Titus to follow his guidelines. Since Titus was designated by an apostle to do the work in Crete, Titus was not to be hesitant or tentative in his teaching or ministry. Paul expected Titus to both encourage and rebuke the believers. Paul’s final advice was not to let anyone despise or disrespect his work and ministry.

There is only one way to be confident in ministry; you cannot fake it. The means to have confidence is to teach what Paul taught and instructed his disciples to teach. When you do that, you can be bold and confident, knowing that you are not imposing your own will but passing on and explaining God’s will. Are you up to the task? Can you be a faithful teacher and minister?