

“Reasons for Writing”

Titus 1:1-4

Q - What is the most memorable letter you have ever written?

It would be interesting to know whether the Apostle Paul had any idea the letter he was writing to his friend Titus was going to be included among the 66 books of our Bible. And though it was probably not the most memorable letter, from his own perspective, which he wrote, Martin Luther said of it:

“This is a short epistle, but it contains such a quintessence of Christian doctrine, and is composed in such a masterly manner, that it contains all that is needful for Christian knowledge and life.”

I. Paul’s Introduction 1:1a

A. His Name

Q - What is the difference in the way Americans typically start a letter and the way in which Paul’s letter to Titus starts out? Americans typically start out by indicating who they are writing to, while Paul’s letter to Titus starts out letting us know who was writing.

Q - Why is Paul’s way of introducing a letter important to us? Because of the way he wrote, we know who the author of his epistles was - something which is not true of many Bible books.

B. His Position

Q - What do the two titles Paul uses of himself in verse 1 tell us about his view of himself in the life of the church? They reveal that he saw himself as a servant of the Lord (serving like the men such as Moses, David and the prophets did) and as a man specifically chosen by Christ to provide leadership for the expansion of the kingdom of God and the body of Christ on earth.

II. Paul's Reasons for Writing 1:1b-3

A. For the Faith of those Chosen by God 1:1b

Q - What contribution was the Apostle Paul making to "the faith of those chosen by God" in his service? He was explaining many of the doctrinal truths and even "mysteries" of the Christian faith in a way that no other writer did.

B. For the Knowledge of the Truth 1:1c

Q - What stands out in your thinking as an example of Paul's contribution to "the knowledge of the truth" arising out of his service? Classic sermons by Paul which are found in the book of Acts and doctrinal masterpieces like the epistle to the Romans have served many in their growth in the knowledge of the truth.

Q - What is important about Paul's linkage of the knowledge of the truth with godliness? Actual truth will always lead toward godliness, so truth claims which do not are only claims.

C. For the Hope of Eternal Life 1:2

Q - Where would you say that you have found "the hope of eternal life" from the messages and writings of the Apostle Paul? I Corinthians 15 (the Resurrection Chapter) and I Thessalonians 4:13-18 stand out as significant examples.

Q - What did Paul ground the believer's hope of eternal life upon? It is grounded upon the ancient promise of the God who cannot lie!

D. For the Proclamation of God's Word 1:3

Q - What stands out in your thinking about Paul's commitment to the proclamation of God's Word? His sermons, his

epistles, and his missionary journeys all evidence his commitment to the proclamation of God's word.

III. Paul's Greeting 1:4

A. The Object of His Greeting

Q - What is the likely significance of Paul's reference to Titus as his "true child in a common faith"? It seems likely that Titus (like Timothy and Onesimus) was won to faith in Christ (which gave them a common faith) by the Apostle Paul during his missionary journeys.

B. The Wish in His Greeting

Q - How do we know that Paul's wish of "grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior" was more than a mere formality at the beginning of another of his letters (many of which express similar sentiments)? Paul invested much of his life, at significant personal cost, in the promotion of grace and peace which come from God in Christ during his years of public ministry.

Think About It: Paul wrote to Titus as a means of building up the saints because he shared the concern of God's own heart for the growth of the saints in knowledge and godliness.

“A Godly Leader”

Titus 1:5-9

Q - Who stands out in your mind as an example of “a godly leader”?

While there are many men (and women) who are visible in the public eye as spiritual leaders, public visibility is not necessarily an indication of spiritual credibility. Most people could easily provide names of spiritual leaders who have been less than exemplary in their spiritual lives. So the Apostle Paul provided Titus (as he did Timothy) with a list of characteristics which the Lord wants to characterize the spiritual leaders of His people.

I. The Challenge for Titus 1:5

A. His Location 1:5a

Q - Where did the Apostle Paul say he had left Titus to further the work of the ministry we assume Paul probably had a hand in launching? He said that he had left Titus on the island of Crete.

B. His Responsibilities 1:5b

1. To Establish Order

Q - What would the need to set in order things which remained in churches where Titus was working suggest about the churches involved? It would suggest that the churches were still fairly young and not yet well-organized.

2. To Appoint Elders

Q - What would the suggestion that Titus should appoint elders in every city reveal about those who composed the membership of the churches? It would suggest the presence of some men who were well-informed in matters of faith and credible in their behavior - perhaps because of a rich Jewish heritage.

II. The Characteristics of an Elder 1:6-9

A. Background Qualifications 1:6

1. In General

Q - What would be the difference between “sinless” and “above reproach”? Though no human being is completely free of sin, it is possible to be credible in the sense that there are no glaring failings in a person’s life.

2. In the Home

Q - What might Paul have had in mind by his reference to (literally) “a one-woman man” (in both Titus and I Timothy)? He may have ruled out a polygamist, or perhaps a divorced man by the terms he used - though polygamy was not a common problem among either Jews or Greeks in Paul’s day.

Q - What would be the importance of “children who believe” (literally “faithful children”) to a church leader? If a man’s children are not faithful they would call into question his ability to lead others to be faithful.

Q - How did the Apostle Paul go on to clarify what he meant by “faithful children”? He said that such children would not be characterized by dissipation or rebellion.

B. Personal Qualifications 1:7-8

1. Seen Negatively 1:7

Q - How did the Apostle Paul go on to clarify what he meant by “above reproach as God’s steward” in the remainder of verse 7, and why would you say each characteristic would be important for a church leader? He said that an “overseer” (a term he equated with his earlier reference to an “elder”) should be:

not self-willed - a self-willed individual is not well positioned to promote God’s will in view of his apparent self-importance.

not quick tempered - a quick tempered person does not give himself time to think carefully through important issues before flying off the handle in his attempt to force his agenda on others.

not addicted to wine - because wine impairs a person’s ability to think clearly and control his mind and body it is not good for a church leader to be unduly influenced by its negative properties.

not pugnacious - a pugnacious person is self-assertive and combative rather than attentive to the thoughts and needs of those he is tasked to lead in a healthy way.

not fond of sordid gain - a spiritual leader should never be motivated in his leadership by the possibility of gaining wealth, especially in under-handed ways.

2. Seen Positively 1:8

Q - What positive qualifications did Paul say should characterize an elder/overseer in verse 8, and why would they be important in the life of an elder? He said that he should be:

hospitable - being hospitable is a good way to become better acquainted with those who are under a leader's care, and traveling ministers needed to be provided for when circulating among the churches.

loving what is good - Christians generally are called to pursue that which is good, so those who lead them need to embrace that calling as well.

sensible - healthy mental qualities are essential in making the many decisions which come with leadership responsibilities.

just - church leaders should be committed to fairness in their dealings with all who are under their spiritual care.

devout - devotion to the Lord, His word, and His people are essential qualities for all who will lead God's people effectively.

self-controlled - the ability to discipline oneself is clearly a prerequisite for anyone responsible for maintaining healthy discipline within the body of believers.

C. Practical Qualifications

Q - Why did Paul say it was important for an elder to be "holding fast the faithful word which is in accord with the teaching"? He said it was important so that the elder would be able "to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

Think About It: God has high standards for men in church leadership.

Application: How do our lives measure up to the standards God has established for the "godly man"?

“False Fronts”

Titus 1:10-16

Q - Is there any building you have seen whose false front you have found particularly memorable?

You are probably well-aware that it isn’t only buildings which sometimes have false fronts. Sometimes people put on “false fronts” to try to make themselves seem bigger or better or more significant than they really are. The church needs to be protected from people who put up false fronts in spiritual matters - and the island of Crete in the first century had plenty of them!

I. The False Teachers in Crete 1:10-11

A. The Characteristics of False Teachers 1:10

Q - What unsavory terms did the Apostle Paul use to describe the false teachers who were troubling the churches in Crete? He described them as “rebellious men, empty talkers, and deceivers.”

Q - Why would such false teachers be likely to arise from among those Paul described as “the circumcision”? Because the differences between Judaism and Christianity were significant, Jews were likely to defend their religion; and even Jews who professed Christ were sometimes reluctant to leave the trappings of Judaism behind them in following Christ.

B. The Crimes of False Teachers 1:11

Q - What were false teachers doing which made Paul say they needed to be silenced? Paul said they were upsetting whole families and were teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.

Q - How would a false teacher go about his teaching “for the sake of sordid gain” (cf. I Timothy 6:5)? He would seek ways to receive increasing remuneration for his false teaching.

II. The Faults of the Cretans 1:12-14

A. A Prophet’s Description 1:12

Q - What was the wisdom of the Apostle Paul in quoting the critical evaluation of a Cretan “prophet”? It placed the blame for a critical evaluation of Cretan society on someone within the Cretan community rather than making the charge himself.

B. Paul’s Prescription 1:13-14

1. The Report Evaluated 1:13a

Q - How does the Greek verb *kretizo* - to Cretanize (i.e. to lie and cheat) - serve to justify the Apostle Paul’s criticism of Cretan society? It demonstrates that Paul’s critical evaluation was an evaluation broadly held within Greek-speaking society.

2. The Course of Action Prescribed 1:13b

Q - Who was Paul challenging Titus to reprove severely by the instruction in the middle part of verse 13? Paul was telling Titus of the need to severely reprove greedy false teachers in the churches of Crete.

3. The Desired Direction Described 1:13c-14

Q - What was Paul hoping the severe reproof of Titus would accomplish in the churches of Crete? Paul was hoping it would cause false teachers to become sound in the faith.

Q - What does verse 14 tell us would result if false teachers because sound in the faith? It says such teachers would turn away from Jewish myths and the commandments of men who were turning away from the truth.

C. Paul’s Summation 1:15-16

1. The Positive Option 1:15a

Q - What was it going to require for false teachers to focus on things which are pure? It was going to require that they become personally pure.

2. The Problematic Outcome 1:15b-16

a. The Condition of the Impure 1:15b

Q - What descriptive terms did Paul use to reveal the underlying problem of Crete's false teachers? He described them as defiled and unbelieving - with both mind and conscience defiled.

b. The False Profession of the Impure 1:16a

Q - What did Paul say reveals the emptiness of the claim of false teachers to know God? Their claims are shown to be empty by deeds which do not align with their profession.

c. The Direction of the Impure 1:16b

Q - How did Paul express his strong feelings toward people who falsely claim to know God and who lead others astray by their false teaching? He said that they are detestable, disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

Think About It: The church needs to be protected from the deceptive and destructive false fronts of false teachers.

“God’s Ways for Older Men”

Titus 2:1-3

Q - Who are some church leaders and older men who have challenged you most to rise to your highest potential in the Christian life?

After earlier providing Titus with a list of qualifications for the elders which he was tasked to appoint in every church on the island of Crete, Paul moved on to reveal that the Lord doesn’t only have high standards for elders who lead; He also has high standards for all older men in the body of Christ!

Because Jesus was sinless as He lived out the will of God in his physical body, it is not too surprising to learn that the Lord would also like to see a sinless performance on the part of the spiritual body of Christ, the church.

I. God’s Will for Titus as a Leader 2:1

Q - What contrast was Paul making in beginning this address to Titus himself with the words “but as for you”? Paul was contrasting his challenge for Titus with the poor performance of those he just warned about in 1:16 - men who professed to know God, but whose detestable, disobedient, and worthless deeds falsified their claim.

Q - What was Paul’s challenge for Titus as he carried out his ministry among the churches on the island of Crete? He was challenged to speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.

II. God’s Will for Older Men 2:2

A. To Be Temperate

Q - Why would it be important for older men to be temperate (*nephalios* - temperate, sober, clear-headed, self-controlled) in their behavior? Older men have experienced more of life and have had the time to practice what the Lord would like to see in the lives of men in the church.

B. To Be Dignified

Q - What would be required of an older man who is

“dignified” (*semnos* - worthy of respect (or honor), noble, serious, honorable)? He would be serious about his thoughts, words and deeds - conforming them to the word of God.

C. To Be Sensible

Q - What would likely be some characteristics of an older man who was less than “sensible” (*sophron* - thoughtful, moderate, self-controlled, decent, modest)? He would probably be involved in activities which are foolish and indecent.

D. To Be Sound in Faith

Q - Why would conditions on the island of Crete (1:10-16) make it particularly important for an older Christian man to be sound in faith? There were false teachers on the island, influenced by Judaism or Judaizers in some cases, who were upsetting whole families with their erroneous teachings, professing to know God but denying Him by their behavior.

E. To Be Sound in Love

Q - What would unsoundness in love look like in the life of an older man? Pursuing activities which are not in the best interests of those around him in the home, the church, and the community.

F. To Be Sound in Perseverance

Q - What conditions on the island of Crete made it important for older men to be sound in perseverance (*hupomone* - to remain under, patiently endure; perseverance, steadfastness)? The presence of false teachers, complicated by the infamous characteristics of many Cretans (1:12), made it important for older men to be steady and strong in the face of error.

Think About It: God has high standards for church leaders as well as all of the older men who make up His church.

Application: How are we who are men doing with the challenge of living up to the high standards the Lord has revealed for senior saints?

“God’s Ways for Godly Women”

Q - Who are some women who have most influenced your life for good and for God?

Women have played a key role in the life of every person who has ever lived - as mothers, home makers, teachers, and in many other important roles in business and society. They have also played many significant roles in the lives of God’s people down through the ages. In many churches today women continue to provide much of the “workforce” in the ministry of the gospel. So it is not surprising to find the Apostle Paul providing Titus with some advice for women, older and younger, in the churches on the island of Crete.

I. God’s Will for Older Women 2:3

A. To Be Reverent in Behavior

Q - How would you describe the “reverent” behavior the Apostle Paul said Titus should encourage among older women (using the Greek word *hiereprepeis* - suitable to a sacred character; reverent; from *hieron* - sacred, sacred thing, temple, and *prepo* - fitting. So, by etymology, referring to what is fitting in sacred places or with respect to sacred things)? Paul said that Titus was to encourage behavior which is sensitive to the worship of the Lord where His people gather.

B. Not Malicious Gossips

Q - Why would Paul, inspired by the Spirit, address himself to older women with respect to the danger of malicious gossip (*diabolos* - slanderous, falsely accusing)? Women are generally more interested in social relations than most men are, and are generally inclined to speak more words than most men do (cf. Proverbs 10:19).

C. Not Enslaved to Much Wine

Q - Why might enslavement to wine have been something Titus should challenge older women to avoid? Older women were reputed, in both Greek and Roman society, to have been fond of wine. Older women generally had more time and resources to give themselves to drink, and physicians considered wine necessary in dealing with the afflictions of older women.

D. To Teach What Is Good

Q - In view of Paul's instructions elsewhere that women not teach or exercise authority over a man (I Timothy 2:12), who would the older women be instructed to "teach what is good"? They would be called to teach younger women (cf. 2:4) and children the good truths common to the Christian faith.

II. God's Will for Younger Women 2:4-5a

A. To Love their Husbands

Q - Why might a young woman be married to a husband for whom she had little or no love? She could be married to a man who was himself unloving, unkind, or even cruel. Or she might have been forced into a marriage she had no interest in getting into (perhaps an arranged marriage).

B. To Love their Children

Q - What are some of the challenges which might keep a young woman from loving her children? She might easily find her children very taxing to care for (especially if she had many children), and they might have personality traits which are difficult to appreciate.

C. To Be Sensible

Q - What would be the importance of a sensible outlook (*sophron* - of sound mind, self-controlled) on the part of a young woman? Young women who are not sensible are not good managers of either family or home and can bring grief into the lives of their husbands and families.

D. To Be Pure

Q - What makes purity such an important quality in the life of a young woman? There are many men, young and older, who are looking for opportunities to use women who are not committed to purity for their own selfish purposes.

E. To Be Workers at Home

Q - What is the value to a husband and family of a young women who is committed to be a worker at home? A well-run

home benefits a husband and children in many ways, and it frees the husband to concentrate on his role in providing for the family's needs.

F. To Be Kind

Q - Why is kindness a particularly important quality in the life of a young woman? Her kindness toward her husband and family contributes very powerfully to the atmosphere in the home for all who are within her sphere of influence.

G. To Be Subject to their Husbands

Q - What is the reason why women are instructed in the Scriptures to be subject to their husbands? A woman's subjection to her husband conforms to creation's order and God's intention and contributes to the peace and harmony of the home, permitting the man to fill His God-assigned role as head of his house.

III. God's Concern for His Word 2:5b

Q - What danger did the Apostle Paul say would be avoided by godly living on the part of the women in the churches? He said that the danger of blaspheming the word of God would be avoided by godly living.

Think About It: God's word is honored by women, both young and older, whose lives are conformed to His will.

Apply It: If you are a woman, how fully is your life aligned with the challenges the Apostle Paul applied to women in his epistle to Titus?

“Being a Credit to God”

Titus 2:6-10

Q - Who comes to mind as one of the most productive young spiritual leaders you have ever known about?

In his epistle to Titus the Apostle Paul has written of God's will for church leaders, for older men, for older women, and for younger women. In the passage before us he turns his attention to younger men and all who are involved in the workforce. No matter who we are and no matter where we are, our behavior reflects on the Lord we claim to follow - so how we live is very important to the Lord and to people around us who are watching how we live.

I. God's Will for Younger Men 2:6-8

A. To Be Sensible 2:6

Q - Having heard Paul's challenge for older men and women and younger women to be sensible, what are some ways in which a young man can show himself to be sensible?
By means of well-disciplined bodies, careful use of time, wise use of material things, discretion and purity in social life, and respect for authority.

B. To Be an Example of Good Deeds 2:7a

Q - Why was it particularly important for Titus himself (to whom Paul directed this instruction) to be an example of good deeds? Spiritual leaders need to be characterized by the good deeds they are constantly challenging others to adopt.

C. To Be Pure in Doctrine 2:7b

Q - What would be required of a young man (as Titus apparently was) who was wishing to be pure in doctrine? The challenge of Paul to Timothy in II Timothy 2:15 applies - “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

D. To Be Dignified 2:7c

Q - Because youth (especially for young men) and dignity often don't go together naturally, what was Paul expecting Titus and other young men like him to do in order to become dignified? Taking God and His word seriously should lead anyone to become more dignified about the way in which they conduct themselves before a watching world.

E. To Be Sound in Speech 2:8

Q - How does Paul amplify the phrase "sound in speech" to help the reader understand his challenge? He amplifies it with the next phrase "which is beyond reproach."

Q - What did the Apostle Paul believe sound speech would bring about for the young man practicing it? He stated that opponents would be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about believers because of it (like Daniel).

II. God's Will for Employees 2:9-10

A. To Be Subject to Employers 2:9a

Q - What relationships in modern society can be equated with the relationship of bondslaves and their masters? The relationship between employee and their employers or supervisors.

Q - To what extent did Paul say a bondslave should subject himself to his master? He said they should subject themselves in everything - assuming, of course, that everything they are instructed to do is acceptable to the Lord.

B. To Be Well-Pleasing 2:9b

Q - What would be required for a bondslave/employee to be "well-pleasing" in the view of his master/employer? Doing what is asked and expected is always pleasing to the person in charge.

C. To Avoid Argumentation 2:9c

Q - What would be an acceptable and godly way for a bondslave/employee to take exception to his master/employer? Questions and suggestions and even well-placed corrections are far more acceptable than argumentation.

D. To Avoid Pilfering 2:10a

Q - What are some things which might make pilfering a problem in the bondslave/master and employee/employer realm of personal relations? It is easy for someone entrusted with the management of someone else's possessions to come to think of them as his own and rationalize taking liberties with them which should not be taken.

E. To Show Good Faith 2:10b

Q - When does the faith of a bondslave/employee become "good faith"? It becomes "good faith" when it corresponds to what God has said in what we think and say and do and are.

Q - What did Paul say demonstrating "good faith" on the job should result in? He said the person showing good faith will "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect."

Think About It: God wants His people's lives to be a credit to His name in everything we do - in the church and in the world and on the job.

“Responding to Grace”

Titus 2:11-15

Q - When has someone done you an unexpected favor which you found challenging to respond to properly?

It is commonly stated that “one good turn deserves another.” Anytime someone does us a favor we become their debtor in some sense; we owe them a favor in return. With that understanding, it shouldn’t take much thought to conclude that we all owe the Lord an awful lot of “favors”! Without a doubt, no one has done us more “favors” than He has!

I. The Arrival of God’s Grace 2:11

A. Its Appearance

Q - What is your understanding of the meaning of the frequently mentioned New Testament word “grace”? Grace has often been described as “unmerited favor.” Based on that understanding the word speaks of a favor someone has done which would be considered unexpected and undeserved.

B. Its Offer

Q - How does Paul eliminate any doubt about the grace of God he had in mind which has appeared to all men? He specified that the grace which appeared brings salvation to all men when Jesus came to earth to serve and save humanity.

II. The Benefits of God’s Grace 2:12-14

A. God’s Grace Instructs Us 2:12

Q - In what way does God’s grace instruct God’s people to deny ungodliness and worldly desires? God’s grace was expressed when Jesus died to pay the price for sins, and ungodliness and worldly desires are among the sinful behaviors for which Jesus died. We are given all the details we need in the revelation of His written word.

Q - Instead of ungodly and worldly ways, how did Paul say God’s grace is intended to instruct His people to live? His grace is intended to instruct God’s people “to live sensible,

righteous and godly lives in the present age.”

B. God's Grace Gives Us Hope 2:13

Q - How did the Apostle Paul describe the believer's forward look in view of God's grace? He described the believer's forward look as a “blessed hope.”

Q - What was Paul looking forward to by his reference to “the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus”? He was looking forward to the return of Christ to take His people into His presence, as He will at the rapture and again at His second coming.

C. God's Grace Saves Us 2:14

Q - How did Paul say that God's grace was most clearly demonstrated in verse 14? He said that it was demonstrated when Christ “gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed.”

Q - What was required of Christ in order to redeem His people? He was required to pay the price of death which the burden of their sins demanded, because “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

Q - What did Paul say the believer's redemption in Christ is intended to accomplish? It is intended to purify believers as Christ's own possession and make them zealous for good deeds.

III. The Announcement of God's Grace 2:15

A. The Authority of the Message

Q - What did the Apostle Paul tell Titus he had the authority to do in his ministry on the island of Crete? He told him he had the authority to “speak and exhort and reprove with all authority.”

B. The Authority of the Messenger

Q - How might Titus carry out Paul's instruction not to let anyone disregard him? When the force of a gospel minister's authority is disregarded, church discipline should be the

next step.

Theme: God wants His people to respond to His grace.

Application: How are we responding to God's offer of salvation?

Are we denying ungodliness?
Are we denying worldly desires?
Are we living sensibly?
Are we living righteously?
Are we living in a godly way?
Are we living in anticipation of His coming?

“Let Me Remind You”

Titus 3:1-2

Q - How would you respond to the familiar question “If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?”

Though it has been around for a long time this is a very good question - well worth our consideration. Some who claim to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ live their lives so much like the people of the world around us that it is hard to see any difference - if, in fact, there IS any difference. As Pastor Joe Lomusio, of Temple Baptist Church in Fullerton, California, often stated it, “Christians are not sinless, but they should sin less.” Christians should be pursuing God’s expectations for their lives - so the Apostle Paul reminded Titus of some of God’s expectations.

I. The Reminder to Submit 3:1

A. To Rulers

Q - Why is it important for Christians to be subject to rulers (cf. Romans 13:1-2)? “Governing authorities” are established by God, so those who resist them are resisting God and will be condemned for their resistance.

B. To Authorities

Q - Who are some of the other authorities, besides the “rulers” already mentioned, to whom God’s people should also subject themselves? Parents in the home, teachers in the classroom, employers and supervisors on the job, and church leaders in the body of Christ.

II. The Reminder to Obey 3:1

Q - What made the Apostle Paul’s reminder that Christians be obedient (*peitharcheo* - to obey authority) a timely reminder on the island of Crete? Paul had observed earlier (1:10-11) that there were “many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially of the circumcision” among the Cretans who needed to be silenced.

III. The Reminder to Do Good 3:1

Q - How does the Apostle Paul's instruction in Ephesians 2:10 help us understand his reminder to Titus in our verse? He made it clear that God intends for Christians to be His “workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Q - What did Jesus say would be the outcome in the lives of His followers who “let [their] light shine before men in such a way that they may see [their] good works (Matthew 5:16)? He said that such men would glorify their Father in heaven.

IV. The Reminder to Avoid Trouble 3:2

A. Not Maligning

Q - What is it that might cause a person, even a believer, to malign (*blasphemeo* - to slander) someone else? Someone's attempt to build themselves up by putting others down - trying by slanderous words to make others look worse so that they might look better by comparison.

B. Not Contentious

Q - What are some unimportant things you have known Christians to become contentious over, and what resulted from the contention? I saw church families become contentious over the replacement of curtains in a fellowship hall, resulting in confusion and division until the issues were resolved.

V. The Reminder to Be Gentle 3:2

A. The Call to Gentleness

Q - With the understanding that alternative translations of Paul's word for “gentle” would include “equitable” and “yielding,” what does Paul seem to be looking for by his reminder to be “gentle”? He seems to be asking Christians to be willing to yield their preferences to others in order to avoid the contention he just challenged Christians to avoid.

B. The Demonstration of Gentleness

Q - How did Paul encourage believers to demonstrate

their gentleness in the last phrase of verse 2? He encouraged them to show every consideration for all men.

Think About It: As God's people we should be pursuing God's expectations for our lives, so to what extent ARE WE?

Application: Are we submitting to rulers and authorities?

Are our lives characterized by good deeds?

Are our tongues under control - not slandering or stirring up contention?

Are we fair - dealing gently with all men?

If we were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict us?

“Leaving the Past Behind”

Titus 3:3

Q - Is there something which stands out to you as a characteristic of your past which you are glad the Lord made a thing of the past?

As the bumper sticker reminds us, “Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven.” But though Christians aren’t perfect, there ought to be evidence in the lives of all who claim to be followers of Christ that their lives have been changed! The gospel clearly demonstrates its power (Romans 1:16) in our lives when it eradicates sin!

I. The Reminder of the Past

Q - Would you describe the changes which the Lord has brought about in your life as mildly different or radically different from the way your life was in the past? Coming to salvation in Christ very young in a Christian home my life has been changed, but not too radically.

II. Some Sins of the Past

A. “Foolishness” of the Past

Q - What are some foolish behaviors (*anoetos* - mindless) the Lord would like to see eradicated from the lives of His people? Pride and prejudice and impurity are among the mindless behaviors which should be past for God’s people.

B. “Disobedience” of the Past

Q - What are some commandments the Lord has given to His “children” which even committed Christians may have difficulty obeying? The Lord’s commands to love one another; to make disciples of all nations; to pray without ceasing; etc.

C. “Deception” of the Past

Q - Is there some deception you once found convincing which you have been successful in putting behind you? As a college student I was challenged by the deception of the theory of evolution until I read the writings of some Christian crea-

tionist scientists which helped me see why the theory is wrong.

D. “Slavery” of the Past

Q - What are some forms of slavery which are common in our world and culture which keep Christians from serving the Lord as He would have them serve? Slavery to drugs and alcohol and pornography and sexual perversion are among the more common forms of slavery Christians need to overcome.

E. “Malice” of the Past

Q - What are some ways in which you have seen malice (*kakia* - wickedness, evil, depravity) damage the lives and witness of even believers in the body of Christ? Malicious gossip, name-calling, and sexual impurity are some of the ways I have seen professing believers do harm to themselves, the body of Christ, and the reputation of the Lord.

F. “Envy” of the Past

Q - What reason would a Christian have for displaying envy toward others? He might feel displeasure over the happiness and prosperity of others by comparison with himself.

G. “Hatefulness” of the Past

Q - What are some ways in which a general hatefulness has often been on display in our country - even among Christians? So-called “racial hatred” has seriously marred our nation’s history, and Christians have not been immune from the problem.

H. “Hating Others” of the Past

Q - What might be the difference Paul had in mind between “hatefulness” (*stugetos* - to hate) and “hating others” (*miseo* - to hate)? A general sense of hatefulness has often been directed at individuals as “personal animosity,” breaking down interpersonal harmony which is so critical to the health of the body of Christ.

Think About It: The Lord wants His people to get the sins of their past life permanently behind them.

Application: Are the sins of our past life no longer evident in our lives in the present? If not, repentance and change are in order!

And if our sins have never been forgiven because we have not sought forgiveness in Christ, we need to trust Him now!

“Saved by Grace”

Titus 3:4-7

Q - When have you been amazed by the totally unexpected generosity someone has shown toward you?

Many of the good things which come into our lives are not entirely unexpected because we have all done things which others appreciate and respond to in positive ways. But there are also times when we are blessed in ways we know we do not deserve and had no reason to expect. Those who understand the love of God for undeserving sinners are aware that God’s offer of salvation from sin on the strength of the sacrifice of Christ is the most undeserved gift anyone could ever receive!

I. The Background of Our Salvation 3:4

Q - When would you say the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind “appeared”? It “appeared” most clearly when Jesus became a man and served and died to save men who trust in Him.

II. The Basis of Our Salvation 3:5

A. Seen Negatively

Q - What makes Paul’s revelation that God saved those who are saved “not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness” a noteworthy revelation? Most people assume that they should work their way to salvation (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25), so all false religions are based on human works in one way or another.

B. Seen Positively

A. The Father’s Part

Q - What part does the mercy of God have to do with His plan of salvation? Because all have sinned, only God’s ability to extend mercy (which passes over sin on the basis of Christ’s saving work) makes salvation possible for any person.

B. The Son’s Part

Q - What is the basis for the “washing of regeneration” which is extended to sinners by God in Christ? A person may be “born again” (regenerated) when his debt of sin is washed away by Christ who paid the “wages of sin” (death) when He died in the place of those who put their trust in Him.

C. The Spirit’s Part

Q - In what sense does a person become “renewed” by God’s Spirit when he experiences God’s mercy and is born again through Christ? The person who trusts Christ for salvation from sin becomes “a new creature in Christ” (II Corinthians 10:17) by the Spirit’s work in his life. He receives a new nature and a “clean slate” as a new man.

III. The Benefits of Our Salvation 3:6-7

A. The Gift of the Spirit 3:6

Q - What are some of the ways in which the Holy Spirit is poured out upon us richly when we come to Christ? He renews and justifies and baptizes and seals and indwells and empowers and fills and (ultimately) glorifies believers in their walk with Christ.

B. The Gift of Justification 3:7a

Q - What is it that makes the believer’s justification dependant upon God’s grace? Justification is a gift no person deserves, so it is God’s grace which makes it possible and available to those who receive it.

C. The Gift of Eternal Life 3:7b

Q - In what sense does the believer “hope” to inherit eternal life? In the sense that he fully expects to experience life abundant (in the present) and unending (in the future) as a child and heir of God the Father and a fellow-heir with Christ (Romans 8:16-17).

Think About It: Because of God’s goodness we can all have salvation from sin with all of its benefits - by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit!

Application: Are those of us who HAVE received the gift of

salvation and the experience and expectation of eternal life as grateful for it as we should be, and is it making the practical difference in our lives which the Lord wants it to make? As the Apostle Paul expressed it to Timothy in II Timothy 1:9 - God has “saved us and called us with a holy calling”

Q - Have YOU received salvation from sin? You can't earn it, but you can HAVE it if you will receive it on God's terms of grace in Christ. Q - Have you? And, if not, will you?

“Good Deeds, Bad Deeds”

Titus 3:8-11

Q - When have you seen the potential for good overcome by the inclination to evil in a person’s life?

People who imagine that they will go to heaven because of the good things they have done are naively ignoring the other side of the issue in their lives. Except for Christ, no one has ever managed to live life without sinful behavior as a counter-balance to any good they have done. So the balanced life to which Christians are called is a life characterized by, on the one hand, the avoidance of that which is bad and wrong and, on the other hand, the pursuit of that which is good and right.

I. God’s Will for His People 3:8

A. Reviewing God’s Will 3:8a

1. A Trustworthy Statement

Q - What does Paul appear to be referring to by his reference to “a trustworthy statement”? He appears to be referring to His summary of the gospel just given in vv. 5-7.

2. A Confident Statement

Q - Why was Paul so insistent that Titus speak with confidence about the things he has just referred to as “a trustworthy statement”? In I Corinthians 15:3-4 Paul referred to the gospel message as “of first importance,” because (as he observed in Romans 1:16) the gospel is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.”

B. Restating God’s Will 3:8b

1. The Statement

Q - What result was Paul seeking in charging Titus to speak confidently about the “trustworthy statement” he had just addressed? Paul was seeking to have the saints take care to engage in good works.

2. The Reason

Q - What benefit did Paul tell Titus would result when the saints engage in good works? Paul wrote that good and profit would result when saints engage in good works.

Q - What are some examples which come to mind of the good and profit which can result when saints engage in good works? People are blessed when saints do good things; the saints themselves find their lives enriched in the process; and the Lord can be glorified when His people “let their light shine” (as Jesus explained in Matthew 5:16).

II. God's Warnings to His People 3:9-11

A. Concerning Divisive Things 3:9

1. The Statement of the Warning 3:9a

Q - Why do you think Paul felt the need to warn Titus about:

“foolish controversies”? - Controversies should not occupy the energies of God’s people of peace, and especially when they are over foolish things.

“genealogies”? - Though genealogies were more important for the people of Israel, because of Jewish laws of inheritance, they are of little spiritual significance for followers of Christ who do not live under Jewish law.

“strife”? - The Lord has called His people to peace (John 14:27) - peace with God (Romans 5:1) and peace with each other (Mark 9:50) - so strife is not a part of our calling in Christ.

“disputes about the Law”? - Because Christians do not live under the Law of Moses, disputes about the Law (like those which occupied the Jewish religious leaders of Christ’s day) are of no relevance to the followers of Christ.

2. The Reason for the Warning 3:9b

Q - Why did Paul say he was warning Titus about the things he did warn him about in verse 9? He said that such things are unprofitable and worthless for Christians to engage in them.

B. Concerning Divisive People 3:10-11

1. The Statement of the Warning 3:10

Q - How was Titus and those he served to know when someone was a “factious” person who needed to be rejected? Such a person had shown his factious ways already by needing a first and second warning.

2. The Reason for the Warning 3:11

Q - What was the Apostle Paul’s assessment of a factious person who had already been warned a first and second time? He said that such a person is perverted and sinning and self-condemned.

Think About It: God wants us as His people to minimize divisiveness - shunning divisive ways and avoiding divisive people - because He wants us to give our time, attention and energies to doing good deeds!

Do Something About It: Are we intent on having our own way or are we devoting ourselves to going HIS way?

Think Again: There are some bad things (many of them) which God doesn’t want us to do - but there are many good things that He does want us to do. Are we carefully pursuing the good deeds while we are avoiding the bad?

“Wishing for Fruitfulness”

Titus 3:12-15

Q - What are some ways in which Christians can be fruitful in their relationship with and service for the Lord?

People who plant fruit trees generally do it because they hope to get some fruit. A fruit tree produces side benefits like shade and color and beauty, but the greatest asset of a fruit tree is most likely to be the fruit it bears. The Lord Jesus and others in Scripture used the comparison between fruit trees and the children of God in order to remind us that, just as fruit trees ought to bear fruit, so should the people of God! The Apostle Paul is going to take us there as he ends his epistle to Titus.

I. Paul’s Requests of His Co-Workers 3:12-13

A. His Request for Titus to Join Him 3:12

1. His Request Stated 3:12a

Q - What does Paul’s request of Titus tell us about Titus and about Artemas and Tychicus? It tells us that Titus must have had some success in accomplishing his assigned task on the Island of Crete (Titus 1:5), and that Artemas (mentioned only here) and Tychicus (mentioned in Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21 ff.; Colossians 4:7 ff.; and II Timothy 4:12) were trusted associates of Paul, as Titus was, capable of taking the place of Titus in Crete.

2. His Plans for Winter 3:12b

Q - Why might Paul have wanted Titus and Timothy (II Timothy 4:21) to join him for the winter months at Nicopolis? Perhaps he wanted to provide further training for his associates, or he may have had a project in mind there for which he needed their assistance.

Q - When has a spiritual leader sought your company and/or your help in advancing their ministry? Missionaries have often sought our help in prayer and financial support to assist in the work they are engaged in.

B. His Request for Zenas and Apollos 3:13

1. His Request Stated 3:13a

Q - What does Paul's request of Titus with respect to Zenas (mentioned only here in Scripture) and Apollos (better known from the New Testament) reveal about their activities? It reveals that they were at Crete or expected to be there, and that Paul believed they could benefit from the help Titus was in a position to provide in their continuing travels.

Q - When have you had the opportunity to help a traveling Christian minister along the way in his/her service for the Lord? We have shared meals and provided lodging and, at time, some financial support for ministers and missionaries in the course of their ministry.

2. His Reason Given 3:13b

Q - What was Paul hoping the help he was requesting from Titus for Zenas and Apollos would do for these men? He was hoping they would experience no lack of resources and encouragement as a result of the help Titus (and the churches) on the island of Crete could provide.

II. Paul's Desire for the Saints 3:14

A. His Desire Expressed 3:14a

Q - What is the impression you get from Paul's repeated references to "good deeds" in Titus 2:7, 2:14, 3:8 and now 3:14? I get the impression that the Lord is very intent that His people engage in good deeds!

Q - Where are believers likely to encounter some of the "pressing needs" which might be successfully addressed by the "good deeds" done by the people of God? Pressing needs in the family, the neighborhood, the church, the community and even needs of the nation and the world.

B. His Desire Explained 3:14b

Q - What was the Apostle Paul expecting to result when God's people engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs? He was expecting that those who do engage in such things will not be found unfruitful in spiritual matters.

III. Paul's Closing Greetings 3:15

A. His Words of Greeting 3:15a

Q - What made Paul's words of greeting to and from unnamed people a significant gesture? The fact that they were all people who were related "in the faith" made his greetings to and from people we can't name, but which he and Titus could name, a significant gesture.

B. His Wish for Grace 3:15b

Q - How does II Corinthians 11:25-28 demonstrate the fact that Paul's wish that others experience God's grace was not just an empty gesture? Paul paid a high price for his commitment to extending the grace of God to others!

Think About It: The Lord wants His people to bear fruit by the good deeds they do!

Do Something About It: Are we who have received Christ as our Savior bearing the fruit the Lord wants to see in our lives?

What good deeds are we engaged in doing in order to extend God's grace to others as we address some of the pressing needs in their lives?