

GOD, THE GOSPEL & HIS GLORY

DOCTRINE AND CONDUCT (TITUS 2)

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Notes adapted from: *The Pauline Epistles: Titus*, Chuck Swindoll (insight.org); *New Testament Survey*, Kevin Connor, Ken Malmin; *NLT Study Bible* (2nd Edition, 2008); *Commentary on Titus 2*, Thomas Constable (studylight.org)

BACKGROUND

Who wrote the book?

Paul identified himself as the author of the letter to Titus, calling himself a "bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (Titus 1:1). The origin of Paul's relationship with Titus is shrouded in mystery, though we can gather that he may have been converted under the ministry of Paul, who called Titus "my true child in a common faith" (1:4). Titus accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey, during which the apostle sent him to Corinth at least once (2 Corinthians 2:12–13; 7:5–7, 13–15; 8:6, 16–24). Paul clearly held Titus in a position of great respect as a friend and fellow worker for the gospel, praising Titus for his affection, his earnestness, and his bringing comfort to others.

Where?

Paul wrote his letter to Titus from Nicopolis in AD 63, after the apostle's release from his first Roman imprisonment. Upon leaving Timothy in Ephesus to minister there, Paul accompanied Titus to the island of Crete, where he intended Titus to lead and organize the island's churches in their early years of existence. While the gospel had no doubt spread to Crete soon after Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:11), Paul and Titus likely did a good deal of evangelism on the island in the weeks before Paul commissioned Titus to a leadership position there.

Why is Titus so important?

Three summaries of the incarnation dot the pages of Titus, providing a framework within which the Christian can view the work of God in the world and in individual lives (Titus 1:1–4; 2:11–14; 3:4–7). All three passages involve the manifestation, or appearance, of God in Christ, rooting the Christian faith in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Only when God the Son took on human flesh in the person of Jesus was the believer's faith in God made sure. In other words, since God poured out His grace on all humanity, He cleanses His people from their sin and purifies believers for Himself. This grace of God instructs us to live upright and godly lives in this present age (2:11–3:8).

What's the big idea?

The doctrine of the incarnation in the letter to Titus grounds its message of producing right living through the careful attention to theological truth. The churches on Crete were just as susceptible to false teachers as any other church, so Paul directed Titus to establish a group of faithful elders to oversee the doctrinal purity and good conduct of the believers on Crete. Paul exhorted Titus to "speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1), a clear direction that this should be the young pastor's primary role.

However, Paul also understood that when a body of believers embraces sound doctrine, the result is changed and purified lives that produce "good deeds" (mentioned in Titus 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14). God's grace is the motivation for all good deeds. Paul gave instructions to Titus about the roles of specific groups of people—older men, older women, young women, young men, and slaves—as well as general instructions to all believers about their conduct. Right living was essential because Christ "gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed," saving us "by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 2:14; 3:5).

OUTLINE

1. Titles

- Titus = pleasant, honourable, nurse, or rearer
- The Epistle to Titus
- The Book of The Minister – Godliness

2. Author

Written by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

3. Date

Probably written between 62 and 66 A.D. after Paul's first imprisonment at Rome (Acts 28).

4. Key Words

- Good ... (11)
- Work (s)... (8)
- Saviour ... (6)
- Sound ... (5)
- Doctrine ... (4)
- Teach (ers, ing) ... (4)
- Godly (ness, un) ... (3)

5. Key Verses 2:11-14

6. Purpose

- To give to Titus specific instructions as to the qualification of the elders in the churches of Crete.
- To show the life of godliness that is to be lived by God's grace.
- To exhort Titus to teach sound doctrine.

7. Message

- The teaching of sound doctrine leads to godliness of character and to good works.
- True godliness is embodied not in what we say but in what we are and do.
- A true appreciation of the grace of God will provide motivation for good works.

8. Outline

- Godliness in the Church; Qualification of Ministers
- Godliness in the Home; Character of Believers
- Godliness in the World; Conduct of Believers

9. Summary

This book is one of Paul's four personal epistles, written to individuals rather than to churches. Titus, like Timothy, was Paul's son in the faith and became one of his traveling companions. He is not named in Acts but is referred to several times in the Pauline epistles. Titus had been left in Crete to establish and set in order the churches there (1:5). Thus, Paul writes to Titus giving him instructions how to carry out his mission. Chapter one emphasizes church order, giving qualification for elders. In chapter two, Paul exhorts Titus to teach sound doctrine, showing the godly character it produces, especially in the home. Chapter three deals with the practical realm of maintaining good works and avoiding evil. Also note that this epistle contains more references to Jesus Christ as "God our Saviour" than any other New Testament Book (1:3, 4; 2:10, 13; 3:4,6).

10. Christ Seen

Christ is seen as our Saviour (1:3), the Grace of God (2:11) and our redeemer (2:14).

SETTING

A group from Crete had been in Jerusalem during the Passover at the birth of the Christian church (Acts 2:11). Some of these might have carried the Christian faith back to the island at that time, but this letter to Titus suggests that the church on Crete had been recently founded as a result of Paul's mission (see 1:5; 3:15). The only other mention of Crete in the NT comes during Paul's transfer to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:7-21), but he did not have an opportunity to become active in Crete at that time. Most likely, Paul's work in Crete began after the events of Acts 28 (AD 60-62) and before his final Roman imprisonment (about AD 64-65).

As during his first missionary journey out of Antioch, Paul had begun the church in Crete without appointing leaders. As with those earliest churches he now wanted leaders to be established (cp. Acts 14:23), although in this case he delegated the responsibility to Titus, a long-time co-worker. Paul was headed for Nicopolis on the west coast of modern Greece, and he wanted Titus to join him there when Artemas or Tychicus had arrived on the island of Crete (3:12). Paul's plan to winter at Nicopolis suggests that he planned to sail westward from there when spring arrived (see 2 Tim 4:21), probably heading for Italy and possibly Spain (Rom 15:24, 28).

On Crete, the degenerate culture was negatively influencing the believers in the young church. False teachers were also troubling the community, seemingly like those mentioned in 1 and 2 Timothy. As Paul's delegate to Crete, Titus had to set his church in order before the arrival of Artemas or Tychicus. Above all, he needed to assign elder in each city. When this was completed, he would depart and join Paul.

SUMMARY

The Letter to Titus is all business, setting the tone for Titus himself to follow. Each section of the body (1:5-3:11) is composed in a pattern of command, rationale, and charge. Paul consistently repeats this pattern – whether addressing the appointment of elders (1:5-16), right conduct among members of the household of faith (2:1-15), or right conduct in society at large (3:1-11). The rationale for Paul's commands in the first section, on leadership, is that the community is threatened by false teachers and needs decisive leadership. In the next two sections, on right conduct, the commands are based on the rationale of God's grace and mercy and its provisions.

COMMENTARY

Introductory charge 2:1

This verse introduces the instructions concerning individual conduct that follow. In contrast to the false teachers, Titus was to teach the believers conduct that was in harmony with sound (i.e., healthy) doctrine (cf. 1 Timothy 1:10; 1 Timothy 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:2). Paul wanted Christians to behave consistently with what they profess to believe. The primary motivation Paul used in the advice to follow is that these exhortations come from and agree with sound doctrine. A secondary motive that he also stressed is that the behaviour he advocated would make a positive impact on unbelievers who would observe his readers.

The conduct of the saints 2:1-3:11

Having specified the type of men qualified to lead the church, and having pointed out the deficiencies of certain unqualified leaders, Paul turned to discuss the conduct of individual Christians in the churches. He dealt with these instructions by dividing them up among various groups in the church and then reemphasising what proper behaviour for all saints looks like.

The behavior of various groups in the church 2:1-15

To establish order in the church Paul gave Titus instructions concerning the behaviour of various groups of Christians that was appropriate for them (cf. 1 Timothy 5:1-2). This involves pastoral oversight.

Older men 2:2

Titus was to remind older men to be temperate (sober, vigilant, clear-headed; 1 Timothy 3:2), dignified (Gr. *semnous*; worthy of respect, serious-minded rather than clowns), and sensible (Gr. *sophronas*; self-controlled; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; Titus 2:5). These characteristics are all marks of maturity (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1

Thessalonians 1:3). They should also be godly. This means being sound in faith (Gr. *hygiainontas te pistei*; trust in God rather than correct in doctrine here), love (Gr. *agape*; concern for other people), and perseverance (Gr. *hypomone*; patiently enduring in view of their hope as believers).

"A seriousness of purpose particularly suits the dignity of seniors, yet gravity must never be confused with gloominess." [Note: Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary, p. 191.]

". . . the years ought to bring, not an increasing intolerance, but an increasing tolerance and sympathy for the views and with the mistakes of others." [Note: Barclay, p. 283.]

Older women 2:3

These women were also to give evidence of their reverence for God in their behaviour. Negatively they should avoid malicious gossip (Gr. *me diabolous*; slandering others; 1 Timothy 3:11; 1 Timothy 5:13-14) and dependence on enslaving substances such as wine (Gr. *mede oino pollo dedoulomenas*; 1 Timothy 3:8). Positively they should teach what is good (Gr. *kalodidaskalous*) by deed as well as word and encourage the younger women to fulfill their responsibilities (Titus 2:4).

Young women 2:4-5

Paul listed seven responsibilities of these women. They were (1) to be lovers of their husbands (to put their welfare before self-interests), (2) to be lovers of their children, and (3) to be sensible (Gr. *sophronas*; self-controlled). They were also (4) to be pure (Gr. *hagnas*) and (5) to be workers at home (Gr. *oikourgous*, producers of orderliness in the home, 1 Timothy 5:14; not necessarily occupied exclusively with household chores). Finally they were (6) to be kind (Gr. *agthas*) and (7) to be subject to their own husbands as to God's ordained authority in their family (Ephesians

5:22; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1). Such behavior would guard the Word of God from dishonor by those who would otherwise observe inconsistency between the teaching of Scripture and the conduct of these women.

"Here we have the first of several clear articulations of the need for good works for the sake of nonbelievers . . . [cf. Titus 2:1; Titus 2:10-11; Titus 2:14; Titus 3:2; Titus 3:8; Titus 3:14]." [Note: Fee, p. 188.]

"The training of the younger women is the duty, not of Titus, but the older women, qualified to do so by position and character. 'Train' means to school in the lessons of sobriety and self-control (cf. Titus 2:2; Titus 2:5). 'Younger' is a positive adjective literally meaning 'new' or 'fresh' and probably suggests a reference to the newly married." [Note: Hiebert, "Titus," p. 436.]

The word "subject" (Gr. hypotasso, Titus 2:5) in the phrase "subject to their husbands" is not the exact equivalent of "obedient."

Loving in this way involves unconditional acceptance. Wives need to accept their husbands as they are, namely, as imperfect sinners like themselves. This acceptance should not depend on the husband's performance but on his worth as a good gift God has given to the wife. The wife needs to accept her husband's thoughts, feelings, decisions, and failures. Love is active, not passive.

It is something we do. Love involves listening because listening says, "I love you and I care about you." Loving a husband involves a wife accepting her lifestyle that results from her husband's schedule. It involves protecting him from criticism in public as his ally rather than criticizing him before others. Love involves committing to a mutually fulfilling sexual relationship and sometimes taking the initiative for his pleasure. The best thing a couple can do for their children is to love each other unconditionally.

God wants wives to make homemaking a priority. A woman's home is the primary arena of her ministry. It also makes a statement about her values. Normally homemaking includes nurturing children (cf. Proverbs 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:7). Supplementing the family income may be a possible option (cf. Proverbs 31:16; Proverbs 31:24). However a mother should take a job only if both her husband and she agree that this would be best for the family.

"A wife's first responsibility is in her home." [Note: McGee, 5:489. See also Barclay, pp. 286-87; and Guthrie, p. 194.]

"The wise husband allows his wife to manage the affairs of the household, for this is her ministry." [Note: Wiersbe, 2:265.]

I assume he meant that the home is her primary ministry, not necessarily her sole ministry.

THE WORLD'S VIEW	GOD'S VIEW
Home is a boring drudgery	Home is a haven to come to from the world
Homemaking and children are a burden	They are God's good gifts
Value material success and self-gratification now	Value character and godliness, and invest in the future
Place children in childcare rather than caring for them yourself	Parents should teach and fulfill their responsibilities to train their children
Children, homemaking, and often marriage get in the way of self-achievement	Raising godly children is one of the ways to fulfill God's purposes and one of the highest callings in life
Demand your rights to fulfillment	Give up your rights and become a servant

"Any marriage relationship that is conceived and maintained only on the basis of each member adhering to certain prescribed legal requirements is probably doomed from the beginning. In considering the New Testament teaching on marriage, especially in Paul's letters, the emphasis appears to be on the maintenance of a mutual

commitment of the husband and the wife to an exclusive, intimate, loving, and caring partnership. When these prescribed biblical attitudes between husband and wife prevail, there will be little (if any) need for resorting to God's intended order for establishing authority within the home." [Note: Griffin, p. 302.]

Young men 2:6-8

The same principles apply to the behavior of young men. The age range for the older men and women would have been about 40 and up in that culture, and that of the younger would have been between about 20 and 40. [Note: Towner, *The Letters* . . . , p. 730.] Since Titus was one of the younger, Paul addressed him personally. They should also be sensible (Gr. *sophronein*; self-controlled, Titus 2:2; Titus 2:5-6) and a good example (pattern) of good deeds (1 Timothy 4:15-16).

They do this by maintaining purity in the teaching of God's truth as teachers or simply practitioners, by being dignified (serious, Titus 2:2), and by speech that others cannot legitimately criticize. Obedience to these particulars would rob the enemies of the church of any reasonable grounds for criticism (cf. Titus 1:16). They would be "put to shame" because they would have no factual basis for their opposition.

Bond-slaves 2:9-10

Believing slaves were (1) to be submissive to their own masters in everything and (2) to try to please their masters. They were (3) to refrain from talking back when given instructions, (4) not to steal from them, and (5) to prove completely trustworthy. Again the reason for this kind of behaviour follows. It is that such behaviour is in harmony with and therefore adorns (contributes to the enhancement of by providing a complimentary setting for) the teaching concerning God our Savior.

"Christian workers must obey orders and not talk back. They must not steal from their employers. Millions of dollars are lost each year by employers whose workers steal from them, everything from paper clips and pencils to office machines and vehicles. 'They owe it to me!' is no excuse. Neither is, 'Well, I've earned it!'" [Note: Wiersbe, 2:266.]

Rationale for such behaviour 2:11-14

"For" introduces Paul's full theological reason for requiring the conduct above, why such conduct harmonises with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1). In short, it is the proper response to God's grace. God has manifested His grace (unmerited favor) in Christ and the gospel. This has resulted in two things: the possibility of salvation for all and the actual salvation of all who believe in Christ (1 Timothy 2:4; 1 Timothy 2:6; 1 Timothy 4:10).

"In the Greek, 'has appeared' stand emphatically at the beginning, stressing the manifestation of grace as a historical reality. The reference is to Christ's entire earthly life-his birth, life, death, and resurrection. The verb epiphane, from which we derive our word 'epiphany,'

means 'to become visible, make an appearance,' and conveys the image of grace suddenly breaking in on our moral darkness, like the rising sun. (It is used of the sun in Acts 27:20.) Men could never have formed an adequate conception of that grace apart from its personal manifestation in Christ, in his incarnation and atonement." [Note: Hiebert, "Titus," p. 439. For helpful discussion of how Paul's theology in this section contradicted prevalent Cretan pagan mythical theology, see Towner, *The Letters* . . . , pp. 740-66.]

Christ's intent in providing salvation for us was to buy our freedom from slavery to sin and wickedness.

"First, the verb gave (and indeed the entire saying-who gave himself for us) portrays Christ's death as a ritual offering made specifically to atone for sins (Romans 4:25; Romans 8:32; compare Galatians 1:4). . . . Second, the note of willingness is emphasised, for it is said that he gave himself. . . . Third, the phrase for us reveals that this offering was both representative and substitutionary." [Note: Towner, 1-2 Timothy . . . , p. 248.]

Christ's purpose was also to purify a people for Himself who are eager to do what is right and good.

"When a royal visit is expected, everything is cleansed and decorated, and made fit for the royal eye to see." [Note: Barclay, p. 294.]

"The highest and purest motivation for Christian behaviour is not based on what we can do for God but rather upon what God has done for us and yet will do." [Note: Griffin, p. 316.]

To summarise this section (Titus 2:11-14), the grace of God should result in the Christian's present commitment to deny what He detests and to pursue what He values. We see God's grace in His past provision of salvation in Christ and the prospect of Christ's future return to take us to be with Himself forever. The fact that so few Christians make this commitment is disappointing, but it is true to life, and Jesus Christ anticipated it (Luke 17:11-19).

Concluding charge 2:15

This last verse concludes the section of instructions to various groups in the church (ch. 2). Paul urged Titus to teach, exhort, and reprove, in accord with what the apostle had just revealed, with full authority since it was divine revelation. He should let no one intimidate him because the truth was at stake.

"The minister's authority rests in the nature of his message; he is not raised above the truth but the truth above him." [Note: Hiebert, "Titus," p. 442.]