

The "Good" Christian Citizen (Titus 3:2)

The apostle Paul transitions from speaking directly to the Christians (in Crete) regarding rulers and authorities (3:1) to now expanding horizontally the scope of Christian influence in the community.

The Christian must be ready for every good work:

- The Christian's responsibility is to make sure that he (as a vessel) is clean; his mind and the intentions of his heart must be pure (2 Timothy 2:20-21).
- The Greek word for "good" refers to anything that is virtuous in character, or beneficial in its effect. The Christian must be aggressive for good works, not out of a sense of obligation, but out of a genuine, unselfish love for the Lord and for other people.
- Good deeds and good works are not natural deeds, but supernatural ones. Christians should not have to be persuaded to do good works; it should be natural as a result of regeneration (Ephesians 2:10).
- God gives us grace to do his bidding, and then rewards us for what He does through us (Philippians 2:12-13).

The "good" Christian citizen is marked by four characteristics:

1. He must speak evil of no one

- The Greek word is a combination of two words: "slandering" and "reputation." The English word is "blasphemy."
- The Christian must never say anything that will bring unnecessary harm or injury to anyone (especially regarding false pretenses).
- It means to "color" or to "add coloring." It refers to painting or presenting a false picture of someone.
- The Christian is not the standard; it is Christ. He must make sure that the rebuking and the exhorting is not done out of a sense of pride, but out of a sense of love and accountability.
- If you report something that you know to be false (as true) you are lying. If you report to others what you think to be in any way potentially false, it is slander. To think and speak unwarranted evil of someone is not only a bad action, but a sign of a bad man with an evil heart.
- The Greek word can also refer to unrestrained berating that is based on false charges and misrepresentations that are maliciously calculated to damage another's reputation.

2. He must avoid quarreling

- The Greek word is only used one other time in the NT (1 Timothy 3:3).
- It means "not a brawler or a fighter."
- This can refer to the use of the mouth or of the hand; verbal or physical.

- The Book of Proverbs is full of warnings against a man who does not have control over his tongue and hands (14:3, 18:6, 19:19 19:29, 22:10, 22:24-25).
- The Christian must never repay evil for evil, but give thought to what is good in the sight of all (Romans 12:17). He must make sure that his conduct at all times brings honor the Lord.
- It is not always possible for a Christian to be at peace with all men, but he must be a peace-lover, a peace-pursuer, and a peace-maker.
- There are battles that the Christian must stand his ground (regarding truth and error) but only after thought has been given to what would be considered honorable in the sight of all.
- He must not be avenging wrongdoing in a passionate redress of private wrongs at the bidding of personal interest, but must leave room for God to work His economy of retribution.

3. He must be gentle

- A gentle person never holds grudges, but extends clemency to the ones who offend them. Gentleness (kindness) is not always friends with the "letter of the law."
- The gentle man knows when it is wrong to apply the strict letter of the law. He knows how to forgive when justice gives the right to condemn, and knows how to make allowances.
- The gentle man knows when it would not be beneficial to both parties to "stand on their own rights" and knows how to temper justice with mercy. He remembers that there are greater things in the world than rules and regulations. He is the man who is satisfied with less than what is due.
- The gentle man knows when the full exertion of justice would be unredemptive. He knows when mercy would fare better than the full justice of the law.

4. He shows perfect courtesy (meekness) to all

- The word "meek" in Greek literature was used to describe a soothing wind, a healing medicine and a colt that has been broken. If these are not restrained, they can cause tremendous damage.
- Meekness is power under control and restraint; it refers to the one who has the power to cause excessive injury but chooses not to. The meek man does not "fly off the handle" because he has everything under control. He has the strength, wisdom, or skill to crush others (especially when wronged) but chooses not to fully exercise it.
- The meek man is not only controlled but able to be taught. He has a teachable spirit that is absent of anger, bitterness, jealousy or resentment.