

## How We Are to Respond to False Teachers (Pt.2)

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Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher

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### INTRODUCTION

1. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to Titus chapter one.
2. We are looking at the section in chapter one that begins at verse 10 and runs through verse 16.
3. Here in this section Paul is instructing Titus concerning false teachers.
4. Read Titus 1:10-16.
5. In our last time together we looked at verses 10-11 where we saw the description of the false teachers at Crete.
6. Paul told us their number. He says there are *many*.
7. He told us their behavior—*they are rebellious men, empty talkers, and deceivers*.
8. He also told us their identity. *He says they were chiefly "of the circumcision."*
9. Based on their number, behavior, and identity, he then tells Titus about their destructive activity and first urges them to be silent.
10. How was Titus to silence these false teachers? By refuting their vain talking.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Titus*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998). Tit 1:11.

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11. John Calvin said, “A good pastor ought therefore to be on the watch, so as not to give silent permission to wicked and dangerous doctrines to make gradual progress, or to allow wicked men an opportunity of spreading them. But it may be asked, “How is it possible for a bishop to constrain obstinate and self-willed men to be silent? For such persons, even though they are vanquished in argument, still do not hold their peace; and it frequently happens that, the more manifestly they are refuted and vanquished, they become the more insolent; for not only is their malice strengthened and inflamed, but they give themselves up to indolence.” I reply, when they have been smitten down by the sword of God’s word, and overwhelmed by the force of the truth, the Church may command them to be silent; and if they persevere, they may at least be banished from the society of believers, so that they shall have no opportunity of doing harm.”<sup>2</sup>
12. False teachers cause great harm. That’s why they must be challenged in what they’re teaching and silenced.
13. In verses 11-13 Paul gives us two reasons why they must be silenced.
14. He says in verse 11, *they are destroying homes*.
15. Some have thought false teaching is confined to a particular location like the church and doesn’t have any impact on the home.

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<sup>2</sup>John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Titus*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998). Tit 1:11.

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16. That foolish reasoning is what gives false teachers the voice in propagating their heresies.
17. Everything you're taught at church or by some para-church ministry will affect your home.
18. Paul says these false teachers must "be silenced because they are upsetting whole families" (v.11).

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### **I. The False Teachers Described (v.10)**

### **II. The False Teachers Destruction (vv.11-13)**

- A. Their Mouths Must Be Stopped (v.11a)
- B. They Are Destroying Homes (v.11b)

Paul says they are “upsetting” (anatrepo). This word literally means “to turn up or over” (Vine). It comes from a verb that refers to the act of causing problems with regard to someone’s faith or beliefs; hence “to undermine someone’s faith.”<sup>3</sup>

Because the church met in the home, This may be a reference to the turning of whole house churches to the heresy.<sup>4</sup>

The word *whole* here suggests that the influence of this doctrine was thorough.<sup>5</sup>

A.T. Robertson says they do this by the “perversion of one member.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995). 276.

<sup>4</sup>Philip Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, The IVP New Testament commentary series (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994). Tit 2:2.

<sup>5</sup>Philip Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, The IVP New Testament commentary series (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994). Tit 2:2.

<sup>6</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament: Titus*.

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A bad seed sown in one individual can do great harm.

If one person can destroy a church how much more a family.

John Gill says, they “**subvert whole houses**; into which they creep; that is, whole families, whose principles they corrupt, whose faith they overthrow, and carry them away with their own errors.”<sup>7</sup>

Any teaching which tends to disrupt the family is false for the Christian Church is built on the basis of the Christian family.<sup>8</sup>

1. Jesus used similar terms when describing the Pharisees in Matthew 23:14 (NASB) ["Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.]
2. Paul also used these words to describe to Timothy the heretical teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus in 2 Timothy 2:18 (NASB) *men* who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection

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<sup>7</sup> John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

<sup>8</sup>*The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, ed. William Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975). 241.

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has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

3. In chapter three he says in the last days there will be those “who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses” (3:6).

How are these false teachers “upsetting whole families?”

### C. They Are Teaching Things They Should Not Teach for Personal Gain (v.11c)

First, he says, they are “teaching things they should not teach.”

They were teaching things that “were not agreeable to the perfections of God, to the Scriptures of truth, to sound doctrine, and which were hurtful and pernicious to the souls of men.”<sup>9</sup>

Since they were chiefly “of the circumcision,” their teaching consisted of a salvation of works and “Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth” (v.14).

I agree with William Hendriksen when he says, “In the church of God there is no such thing as “freedom of *misleading* speech.” Reason: it would be too dangerous. The teachers of false doctrine “upset (cf. John 1:15) entire families,” causing them to wander

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<sup>9</sup> John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

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away from the truth (see on II Tim. 3:6). They do this by teaching “what is not proper,” that is, “Jewish myths and injunctions of men” (see on verse 14). And their purpose is to acquire *shameful profit*, profit that is shameful because the men who are after it are anxious to enrich themselves even at the expense of the downfall of others. They are utterly selfish, aiming at nothing but money and prestige.<sup>10</sup>

The words **Sordid gain** refers primarily to ill-gotten financial profit<sup>11</sup> or “shameful gain,” which God’s true servants must not do.<sup>12</sup>

This “is the real motive for the false teaching. The preposition **χάρι** ν (see 1 Tim. 5:14), “for the sake of,” indicates the goal of the teaching. Paul usually uses **αἰ σχροός**\*\* (exclusively Pauline in the NT: 1 Cor. 11:6; 14:35; Eph. 5:12) of that which is “shameful” or “disgraceful.”

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<sup>10</sup>William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001). 351.

<sup>11</sup>John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 59.

<sup>12</sup>*KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994). 2521.

\*\* all occurrences of the word or phrase in the New Testament are listed or it is identified as a New Testament hapax legomenon

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κέρδος\*\* (Phil. 1:21; 3:7) is “gain.” These two words occur together only here in the NT, but the compound αἰσχροκερδῆς occurs in v. 7 and in 1 Tim. 3:8. Paul designates the “gain” as “shameful” or “disgraceful,” not because he thinks teachers should not be paid (cf. 1 Tim. 5:17–18), but because they get it by teaching error (ἄ μὴ δεῖ), and because “gain” as the basic motivation for teaching what purports to be the Christian faith, as it was for them (χάρι ν), is “shameful” (cf. v. 7 and 1 Pet. 5:2: μηδέ αἰσχροκερδῶς).<sup>13</sup>

So, the whole motivation for their actions is financial profit.<sup>14</sup>

Every child of God must understand that “False teachers are always in it for the money.”<sup>15</sup>

When a teacher constantly talks about or appeals to the sheep for money, you should “beware.”

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<sup>13</sup>George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles : A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992). 298.

<sup>14</sup>Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995). 276.

<sup>15</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Tit 1:11.



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1. Peter said in 2 Peter 2:14 that false teachers have “a heart trained in greed.”
2. That’s why Jesus refers to them in John 10 as hirelings. They are “thieves and robbers” (v.8) who “comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (v.10). Because they are “a hired hand, and not a shepherd,...[when they see] the wolf coming, [they leave] the sheep and flee...because [he] is not concerned about the sheep” (vv.12-13).
3. One of the qualifications for elders in the church is that they according to 1 Peter 5:2 (NASB) shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness.”

D. Edmond Hiebert says, “Having surreptitiously gotten into certain families, they traded upon the ignorance, or curiosity, or even vice of the people, extracting money from them.”

### D. They Have a Reputation for Lying (vv.12-13a)

Paul quotes from “Epimenides, a native of Gnossus in Crete. He lived around 600 B.C. (Plato dated him at 500 B.C.)” (Hiebert). He was a highly respected Greek intellectual of the sixth century B.C. and in ancient times was considered to be one of the seven great wise men of Greece.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 60.

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He “had characterized his own people as the dregs of Greek culture.”<sup>17</sup>

The Cretans’ most famous falsehood, doubtless also a self-deception, was the claim that the god Zeus was buried on their island. Even in light of their own pagan belief, that claim was foolish, because Zeus was considered to be immortal.<sup>18</sup>

### 1. They are “always liars”

The Cretan habit of lying passed into a verb, κρητί ζειν *to speak like a Cretan = to lie*: also into a noun, κρητί σμός *Cretan behaviour = lying*.<sup>19</sup>

When Paul says that “Cretans are always liars,” he is using a figure of speech which meant “to Cretize” or “to tell lies.”<sup>20</sup> To “behave like a

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<sup>17</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Tit 1:12.

<sup>18</sup>John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 60.

<sup>19</sup>Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002). 4:337.

<sup>20</sup>William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001). 353.

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Cretan” came to be synonymous with “being a liar.”<sup>21</sup>

Paul says in Romans 16:18 that those who cause divisions “by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.”

### 2. They are “evil beasts”

Or “Wicked wild beasts.”<sup>22</sup>

This means they were rude and cruel.<sup>23</sup>

They behaved “like a wild animal, living solely on the level of sensual appetites and passions.”<sup>24</sup>

Peter said in 2 Peter 2:12 that false teachers are “like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed.”

Daniel Archea says, “*evil beasts* is used metaphorically to describe ferocity and wildness,

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<sup>21</sup>C. Michael Moss, *1, 2 Timothy & Titus*, The College Press NIV commentary (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1994). Tit 1:13.

<sup>22</sup>A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997). Tit 1:12.

<sup>23</sup>J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981). 5:487.

<sup>24</sup>John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 60.

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and thus corresponds to “insubordinate” in verse 10.”<sup>25</sup>

### 3. They are “lazy gluttons”

The AV has “slow bellies” *gastēr argos* (γαστήρ ἄργος), “idle bellies.” *Gastēr* (Γαστήρ) refers to the stomach in this context. Vincent says: “Rev. gives the correct idea, *idle gluttons*. They are so given to gluttony that they are mere bellies.”<sup>26</sup>

John MacArthur says, “The meaning of **lazy gluttons** is self-evident. Cretans hated to work but loved to eat. They were self-indulgent, greedy, lustful, overfed, and perhaps in poor physical condition.”<sup>27</sup>

Paul said to the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 (NASB)<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.<sup>11</sup> For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.<sup>12</sup> Now such persons we

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<sup>25</sup>Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995). 277.

<sup>26</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Tit 1:12.

<sup>27</sup>John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 60.

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command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

Paul agrees with the poet who says...

### 4. This testimony is true (v.13)

Paul affirmed that the six-hundred-year-old **testimony** of Epimenides about the Cretans was still **true**.<sup>28</sup>

## III. The False Teachers Denounced (vv.13b-16)

Since Epimenides is correct, and Cretans are what he said they are, Titus is therefore commanded to *Rebuke them sharply*.<sup>29</sup>

### A. Titus is to Rebuke the False Teachers (v.13b)

The word “reprove” (elegcho) means “to convict, refute” (Vine) or “to bring to light, expose” (BAGD).

The word “sharply” (apotomos) literally means, “in a manner that cuts” (Vine).

The reproof was to cut with penetrating force. The severity of such a rebuke should be remedial. Titus

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<sup>28</sup>John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 60.

<sup>29</sup>Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995). 277.

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was not to condemn the men but seek to correct their doctrinal error and personal sinfulness, in order **that they may be sound in the faith**. As someone has observed, “The surgeon of the soul only cuts to achieve a cure.”<sup>30</sup>

The errorists and those who listen to them must be *reproved* (cf. II Tim. 4:2) *sharply* (cf. II Cor. 13:10), decisively, and this not only by the elders (see on verse 9 above) but also by Titus himself, in order that they may be (that is, *may become*) what at present they are not, namely, *sound* (cf. I Tim. 1:10) in their stand with respect to the truth as revealed in Christ.<sup>31</sup>

1. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-4 (NASB) <sup>1</sup>I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup>preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. <sup>3</sup>For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, <sup>4</sup>and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

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<sup>30</sup>John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 61.

<sup>31</sup>William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001). 355.

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2. He told him in 2 Timothy 2:24-25 (NASB) <sup>24</sup> The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, <sup>25</sup> with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.

### B. Titus is to Instruct the False Teachers (v.14)

“Not [to pay] attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.”

Here we are given some information as to the nature of the heresy that these heretical teachers are teaching, and for which they need to be rebuked, and it looks very much like the description we get in 1 Tim 1.4–7. For their faith to become sound, they must stop paying attention to these false teachings.<sup>32</sup>

1. 1 Timothy 1:3-7 (NASB) <sup>3</sup> As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, <sup>4</sup> nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than *furthering* the administration of God which is by faith. <sup>5</sup> But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. <sup>6</sup> For

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<sup>32</sup>Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995). 278.

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some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,<sup>7</sup> wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

The word “Jewish” also refers back to verse 10 “of the circumcision.”

If according to 1 Timothy 5:20 sinning elders are to be rebuked “in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful *of sinning*,” how much more those who teach error.

2. Proverbs 27:5 (NASB) Better is open rebuke Than love that is concealed.

So they are to reject Jewish fables the “commandments of men who turn away from the truth.”

The Judaizers lived in a world of religious fantasies and of rules centering around clean and unclean foods, the observance of days, and the avoidance of ceremonial defilement.<sup>33</sup>

### IV. The False Teachers Defined (vv.15-16)

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<sup>33</sup>William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Tit 1:14.



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Paul summarizes the false teachers in verses 15-16 by saying, “To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. <sup>16</sup> They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”

The lives of these false teachers can be summed up in two ways:

### A. By Their Inner Lives (v.15)

“Defiled” (Miaino) means, “to stain, defile or pollute” (Rienecker). In the “LXX it means ‘to declare unclean’” (Kittel).

The outwardly despicable things that those men practiced (vv. 10–12) were simply reflections of their inner corruption.

If the mind is defiled, it cannot accurately inform the conscience, so conscience cannot warn the person. When conscience is accurately and fully infused with God’s truth, it functions as the warning system God designed.<sup>34</sup>

God said in Jeremiah 6:15 of Israel, “Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; They did not even

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<sup>34</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Tit 1:15.

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know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I punish them, They shall be cast down," says the Lord."

True purity does not come from "the commandments of men" (v.14). If these false teachers were "pure," "all things would be pure." But they were not "pure" but "defiled and unbelieving... both their mind and their conscience are defiled" (v.15).

Paul gives the reason for their impurity and unbelief in verse 16 by pointing out...

### B. Their Outer Lives (v.16)

#### 1. They "profess" but "deny" Him "by their deeds"

It doesn't matter what they "say" their lives undermined what they said.

a) God said in Isaiah 29:13 "this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*."

b) They according to 2 Timothy 3:5 hold "to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these."

#### 2. They are "detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed"

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John Gill says they are abominable “in the sight of God, however esteemed by men; and notwithstanding the vizard and mask of sanctity and religion they put on, which could not screen them from the omniscience of God, who will one day declare he knows them not, and will bid them depart from him, being workers of iniquity.”<sup>35</sup>

**Disobedient** lives betray a professed faith in God. The ungodly continue to walk “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). Because they attempt to “deceive [God’s people] with empty words, ... the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6; cf. Col. 3:6). And, as Jeremiah had proclaimed many centuries earlier, “they [do not] furnish [God’s] people the slightest benefit” (Jer. 23:32). They are **worthless for any good deed**. The term for **worthless** is *adokimos*, which means “disqualified or rejected” (cf. 2 Tim. 3:8).<sup>36</sup>

## CONCLUSION

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<sup>35</sup> John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

<sup>36</sup> John MacArthur, *Titus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 67.

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1. To have a healthy church there must be a steady diet of sound teaching.
2. All false teaching must be confronted and challenged and reproved with correction.
3. No church is exempt from false teachers.
4. We must commit ourselves to the truth no matter the cost.
5. Our lives must always match our profession.
6. Do you “profess to know God, but by [your] deeds...deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed?”
7. If this describes you tonight, I want to urge you to repent and surrender your life to Jesus Christ who alone can save you.
8. Let's pray.