

Titus 3:10-11 — “How to Handle the Divisive Person in Church!”

Satan always hates Christian fellowship; it is his policy to keep Christians apart. Anything which can divide saints from one another he delights in. He attaches far more importance to godly intercourse than we do. Since union is strength, he does his best to promote separation. (Charles Spurgeon)

God hates division *and* God hates the person who spreads strife among brothers (Prov 6.19).

Background to Titus 3:10-11

- To maintain the truth of the gospel and the purity of the church, church leaders must deal properly and decisively with factious people.
- In Paul’s final words to Titus, he charges Titus as to: (1) what he should DO in v.8 (=preach), (2) what he must avoid (v.9) and now (3) how to handle factious/divisive people that creep into the assembly (v.10).

THESIS — From Titus 3.10-11 - God gives us very clear instructions on how to handle divisive people in the church.

The main point: we must carefully & quickly *reject* divisiveness & the divisive person (v.10-11)!

I. WHAT IS A DIVISIVE ONE? (10)

- The **danger** of the divisive one.

The **definition** of a “factious” person or a “divisive” person —

Beware of these kinds of divisive persons:

1. gospel-eclipsing man.
2. the critical man. (James 1.20-21)
3. The unteachable man (usually a twin to Diotrephes in 3 John 9-10)
4. the joy-robbing man
5. the time-wasting man
6. the non-attending man
7. the disgruntled-accusing man

II. HOW TO HANDLE A DIVISIVE ONE? (10b)

- The **discipline** of the divisive one.

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A. The steps & the process & the format:

Warn him **once**.

Warn him **twice**.

Then **reject him decisively**.

"Because of potential harm to the sheep, church shepherds must take SWIFT AND FIRM ACTION with factious men (who are actually wolves in sheep's clothing), thus escalating their action beyond the slower, more methodical process outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 for other sins." (Paul Tautges)

Why take such quick & decisive action? Two primary reasons:

- (1) There's an immediate threat to the unity of the Church body; and
- (2) There's a sin which could bring great harm and shame to the name of Christ & His gospel in the community.

III. WHY TAKE ACTION WITH A DIVISIVE ONE? (11)

- The **deception/destructiveness** of the divisive one.

Why take action?? >> Because we know 3 things:

1. he is **perverted** —
2. he is **sinning** —
3. he is **self-condemned** —

5 REASONS WHY WE MUST DO CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1. For the Good of the Person Disciplined.
2. For the Good of the Other Christians, as They See the Danger of Sin.
3. For the Health of the Church as a Whole.
4. For the Corporate Witness of the Church
5. For the Glory of God, as We Reflect His Holiness.

— Mark Dever

See the clear parallel to Romans 16:17-18!

Some practical ways to repulse Satan's attacks to bring division in the body of Christ:

- Spend more time focusing on evidences of grace in others than you do pondering their sins & weaknesses & shortcomings.
- Consider that spiritual safety comes thru spiritual unity.
- Meditate on God's many commands that we diligently love one another.
- Consider your peaceful God!
- Count the cost of disunity
- Be the first to seek peace & reconciliation (initiate & be proactive)
- Judge yourself *more than* you judge others.
- Pursue humility (and great lowliness & meekness)

-- adapted from Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*

CHRIST IS ALL

I've found a treasure that can't be taken
 Found a well that won't run dry
 O worldly pleasure be now forsaken
 Behold what love what life is mine
 Could endless striving now make me righteous
 Could all my works now grant me hope
 Oh hallelujah, the blood of Jesus
 My only plea, my only boast

**Christ is all, Christ is all
 And my song will ever be
 Christ is all, All in all
 And my song will ever be
 Christ is all!**

And in the trial when storms are raging
 Though tears may fall my soul will rise
 For there's a peace that is mine unchanging
 There is a joy that never dies

When life is passing and strength is fading
 I'll see the One that I adore
 Let this world vanish, oh give me Jesus
 My great desire, my true reward

BENEATH THE CROSS

Beneath the cross of Jesus
 I find a place to stand,
 And wonder at such mercy
 That calls me as I am;
 For hands that should discard me
 Hold wounds which tell me, "Come."
 Beneath the cross of Jesus
 My unworthy soul is won.

Beneath the cross of Jesus
 His family is my own—
 Once strangers chasing selfish dreams,
 Now one through grace alone.

How could I now dishonor
 The ones that You have loved?
 Beneath the cross of Jesus
 See the children called by God.

Beneath the cross of Jesus—
 The path before the crown—
 We follow in His footsteps
 Where promised hope is found.
 How great the joy before us
 To be His perfect bride;
 Beneath the cross of Jesus
 We will gladly live our lives.

Unity, peace, truth...

J.C. Ryle, "The Fallibility of Ministers"

Do not put implicit confidence in any man's opinion,
merely because he is a minister.

What are the best of ministers but men--
dust, ashes and clay-
men with a nature like our own,
men exposed to temptations,
men liable to weaknesses and failings.

They have often driven the truth into the wilderness,
and decreed that to be true, which was false.
The greatest errors have been begun by ministers.

Peace without truth is a false peace;
it is the very peace of the devil.

Unity without the gospel is a worthless unity;
it is the very unity of hell.

We ought to contend jealously for the truth and to
fear the loss of truth more than the loss of peace.

To maintain pure truth in the church, we should be ready
to make any sacrifice, to hazard peace, to risk dissension
and run the chance of division.

Never let us be guilty of sacrificing any portion of truth
on the altar of peace.

We should no more tolerate false doctrine
than we would tolerate sin.

To regularly hear unscriptural teaching is a serious thing.
Is a continual dropping of slow poison into the mind.

Let us receive nothing, believe nothing, follow nothing
which is not in the Bible, nor can be proved by the Bible.