

# Titus

Preached on 10-25-2020 by Phil Kayser at DCC

## Introduction

Just a reminder that the books of the English New Testament are grouped topically, not chronologically. The chronological order of these Pastoral books is 1 Timothy, then Titus, then 2 Timothy. And there is not really any controversy on that. Titus was written after the first Roman imprisonment in Acts 28, but before the second Roman imprisonment, while he was still on his fourth missionary journey.

And Titus had been working with Paul for almost 20 years - ever since he was converted by Paul's ministry in Acts 11:26. Timothy and Titus appear to have been indispensable fellow-workers with Paul. Both had the gift of evangelism. Both were involved in planting churches. Paul knew how to surround himself with very competent men.

Another interesting historical note is that Galatians 2:3 points out that Titus was the test case on circumcision, and since all the apostles agreed that Titus did not have to get circumcised, he was the prime example of Gentile and Jew working side-by-side in the Gospel and being equals in the kingdom.

Titus had already been sent on super-tough assignments before. He had been sent three times to Corinth to deal with problems (2 Cor. 2:12,13; 7:5-7,13-15; 8:6,16-24). After this book was written, we find from 2 Timothy 4:10 that Titus had tried to help Paul in Rome in his last imprisonment, but that Paul had sent him to Dalmatia. He valued Titus' ongoing ministry too much to take such risks.

Paul loved Titus dearly. He calls him "Titus my brother" in 2 Corinthians 2:13, and "my partner and fellow worker" in 2 Corinthians 8:23, and "my son" in this epistle. Two chapters in 2 Corinthians (chapters 7-8) laud Titus's exemplary character and conduct. He was a leader's leader. He was a tremendous model of faithful service. So the lack of leadership that we see in this chapter is not because Titus was a chump. They were providential hindrances that Titus was trying to work with.

And this book of Titus describes a particularly difficult task that Paul had assigned to Titus. He was sent to the notorious island of Crete, the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean. It was well-known for its lascivious ways, where even the women favored sleeping around rather than getting married. The men tended to hire themselves out as mercenary soldiers to the highest bidder, and as you can imagine, the sailor stories were not pretty. The pagan literature of that day thought of Cretans as liars, immoral, unfaithful, untrustworthy, brutal, and even called them uncivilized beasts. So it was a tough population to plant churches in. Yet churches had already sprung up in every city - a testimony to Titus' remarkable evangelistic skills.

But here was the problem. Because Crete had been evangelized but had not been able to find qualified leaders, informal leaders began to influence from two sources. There were respected pagan converts who brought their Greek philosophy with them and there were Jewish converts who brought some Pharisaism with them. And because of their worldly wisdom they began to exert a huge negative influence. I think it is a point worth noting that no organization stays in a leaderless vacuum. If there aren't formal leaders doing their job, some kind of influence will always happen.

And many problems began to arise because shepherds weren't shepherding. There were no shepherds. Titus was sent to try to fix what was broken because the church of Crete did not reflect on Christ very well at all. Drunkenness, immorality, unfaithfulness, etc was characterizing a large segment of the church. Another segment was Judaizers who were trying to fix the immorality by making people conform to their outward legalistic rules. It was a mess. Neither the immoral people nor the legalists were using God's grace properly.

And actually, that was the worst part of the situation - that the Christians were confused about the nature of grace. They were the classic example of what Virgil Walker calls "gracists" - people who talk about grace incessantly, but never seem to be transformed by grace. Gracism is a plague on the modern church.

So if you look at the chiastic outline<sup>1</sup> on the front of your handouts you will see that the heart of the chiastic structure is a correction of what grace is all about. This is such a needed correction for the modern church that has jettisoned God's law in the name of grace. Chapter 2:11-15 teaches us the difference between counterfeit grace and true grace. But each of the sections builds to that point.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the first people to recognize the chiastic structure of Titus were: 1. Banker J 1994. "A semantic and structural analysis of Titus" (rev ed). Summer Institute of Linguistics.  
2. Van Nest, R. 2003. "The message of Titus: an overview." *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7:18-30.  
3. Kevin Gary Smith, "The Structure of Titus: Criss-Cross Chiasmus as Structural Marker," *Conspectus* Volume 3, 2007, 111.

### Chiastic Outline of Titus

By Phillip Kayser. Cf work of J. Banker, R. Van Nest, and Kevin Gary Smith

- A Greetings, grace, and godliness (1:1-4)
- B Critical need for good leaders (1:5-9)
  - C Dealing with sin, divisiveness, false doctrine, Judaizers (1:10-16)
  - D Doctrines related to authority/submission in relationships (2:1-10)
  - E What true grace produces (2:11-15)**
  - D' Doctrines related to authority/submission in relationships (3:1-8)
  - C' Dealing with sin, divisiveness, false doctrine, Judaizers (3:9-11)
- B' Critical need for good leaders (3:12-13)
- A' Godliness, greetings, and grace (3:14-15)

## Overview of the chiastic structure of the book

### The A sections - Greetings, grace, and godliness (1:1-4 & 3:14-15)

We will start with the two A sections - the introduction and conclusion.

Even the introduction to the book is a correction to what was happening in the church of Crete. In contrast to the pride of the false teachers, Paul (in verse 1) calls himself a “bondslave of God” and an apostle who represents Christ’s interests, not his own. This is not about him; it is about the Triune God.

Instead of building up himself, Paul says that God’s commission was to reach God’s elect, to train God’s elect in the truth, and to change God’s elect with a ministry that accords with godliness. The book as a whole evaluates ministries on whether they accord with godliness.

In contrast to the false hopes set out by these teachers, he appeals to a hope of eternal life given by God.

In contrast to the lies being told, He appeals to the God who cannot lie. That too is such a corrective to our culture that is filled with lies.

In contrast to their creative ideas, Paul appeals to “our common faith.” He wants them grounded in the old paths, not coming up with new creative ideas.

Instead of appealing to his own authority, he appeals to the objective commands of God.

And he also gives his normal greetings and grace in both A sections, but both emphasize godliness. If your version of grace is not producing godliness, it is not the grace of God. So chapter 3:14 says (in the second A section) says, “And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”

None of Paul's intros or conclusions are wasted words. They give a grace-centered perspective on the problems in each book. But in this book, they highlight the fact that grace is not antinomian. It leads to transformation. It is practical. Like the book of James, Paul's concept of grace is grace with work-boots on.

## The B sections - Critical need for good leaders (1:5-9 & 3:12-13)

In the two B sections, Paul speaks of the critical need for good leaders who are characterized by that grace that transforms. I find it interesting that Paul does not emphasize a seminary degree or being an egg-head or being an answer man. No. The elders that he wants are people whose character has been changed. They aren't simply decision makers; they are ministers. Verse 5 says,

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—

Timothy was a solo church planter. And he had already planted a whole bunch of churches, but none of them had leaders yet. He had the powers of an evangelist, just as I did when I planted this church. He had the power to ordain and install elders. Ordinarily that is done by a group of elders, right? The ideal was to have churches planted by a team of elders, which Paul almost always did. But that was not always possible. Paul's team focused on the huge cities on the mainland. And strategically that made sense. Once those churches were established, they could plant a presbytery in their region. But Titus was assigned the task of establishing churches in smaller towns throughout Crete. Though Zenas and Appolos delivered the message to Titus, they couldn't stick around to help. I'm sure Titus would have loved for them to stay and to help out. And it can be discouraging to have a church develop so slowly.

How slowly had it taken this church to develop elders? If William Hendriksen is right, then it was thirteen years later that Paul writes this letter, and they still didn't have ruling elders. The fastest range it could have possibly been was five to seven years from the time that Paul and Titus first came to Crete until this letter was written, but it is far more likely that it was thirteen years. Of course, there were Christians in Crete even before that. From Acts 2 we know that there were Christians in Crete 35 years earlier. So the situation seems to be that there were Bible studies scattered here and there, and enough people in some towns to constitute a church, but not one of them had elders yet. Even in Biblical times it sometimes took awhile to get leaders who met all the Biblical qualifications. This is something that cannot be rushed.

And this lack of leadership resulted in problems. The Greek word for "set in order" was a word that was used by physicians to describe the process of setting broken bones or straightening out crooked limbs (cf. Wuest). And this term used by Paul implies that the churches of Crete had spiritual problems (broken limbs as it were) that needed ruling elders to be physicians. Why? Wasn't Titus' preaching enough to set those bones? Surely all we need is Sunday morning preaching, and maybe Wednesday night teaching! And Paul says, "No. The public preaching is not enough to set those bones." If it was, Titus would have been able to accomplish the task all by himself.

And you can look at the life of Christ to see the exact same balance. He engaged in public teaching, but it wasn't enough. And so He was also involved in personal discipleship of twelve leaders. His public teaching wasn't enough. I have over the years been amazed at how people can hear sermons that clearly spell out what they need to do, but there are still people who are not able to implement those sermons. They need the one-on-one accountability, shepherding, and coaching to get them past the obstacles and into righteousness. They need counseling.

Did you realize that Christ Himself was amazed that people didn't get His public teaching? He was the master-Teacher, and they still didn't get it. How many times did Jesus say, "How is it you still do not understand...?" So He had to supplement His preaching by working with them one on one. And if Christ had to do that, then we need to do that as well. One of the books that revolutionized my thinking on this model of discipleship was Robert Coleman's book, *The Masterplan of Evangelism*. Christ's plan was to divide the work up into public ministry, and then the one-on-one discipleship of a small number of people. Paul gave as the model: "the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2:2)

And so, verse 5 clearly shows that discipleship cannot happen by Titus' preaching alone. Nor can Titus disciple hundreds of people. It's impossible. If Jesus didn't disciple more than 12, we shouldn't expect Titus to. Christ trained the leaders, and the leaders trained the people. That is my vision of eldership.

Actually, all of verses 5-16 show that there can be no substitute for *personal* shepherding. Any time there are new believers, there will be a lot of baggage - longstanding sinful habits and patterns, that the elders will help to fix. And as we go through the book you will see that there was an unusually high number of problems infecting the church in Crete because they had been without elders for so long (probably thirteen years). They had gotten into sinful patterns that would not have happened if they had had elders fulfilling their godly roles. So verse 5 commands Titus: "appoint elders in every city as I commanded you."

I won't dig into the qualifications for office in too much detail, but they can be divided up into four categories of qualification. Let me cover the four categories.

First, there were qualifications of role. In this chapter they had three roles: the roles of elder, of overseer, and of steward.

Let's look at the word "elder" first. An elder should be a model of maturity and leadership. After all, the word "elder" really does mean "older," and that's why we believe the Bible sets the standard of 30 years old for entering eldership. They can start interning before that, but ordination happened at age 30 or older. Jesus didn't start His ministry till He was 30. So there is the role qualification of an elder.

Next, there is the role qualification of a bishop (or literally, an overseer). An overseer should have administrative and supervisory skills. That's what the word "bishop" means. But notice the way it is worded, elders are bishops and bishops are elders. They are not two different offices. They are just different roles that the same office has.

The next role is as a steward. A steward has a responsibility for handling the Word of God and the sacraments in the way that God dictates. Those three words pretty much cover the roles of the elders.

Second, there are seven domestic or community qualifications. He must be blameless, meaning that no one can bring a legitimate charge against him. He must be a man, who is married, and faithful to one woman, with children, able to manage his household, and with children who are old enough that *their* character can be discerned. The family is both the training ground and the proving ground for eldering.

So there are qualifications of role, qualifications of community, and third, there are 13 personal character qualifications. Why so many character qualifications? It's because Satan usually takes leaders out through some weakness in their character. Let me list those character qualifications for you. An elder must be blameless, have a steward's heart, not be self-willed, not quick-tempered, doesn't drink too much, is not violent or pugnacious, not greedy, hospitable, lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, and self-controlled. It's easy to read those qualifications, but it is much harder to have them.

Fourth, there are doctrinal qualifications. The man must be able to demonstrate that he is doctrinally sound and secondly that he is able to prove those doctrines from the Scripture even to heretics who oppose him. He has to be able to debate and convince. Verse 9 says, "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."

Every elder needs to be able to meet all four of those qualification categories. Pray that God would raise up such elders in our midst.

## **The C sections - dealing with sin, divisiveness, false doctrine, and Judaizers (1:10-16 & 3:9-11)**

And that sedgeways into the C sections. The ministry of leaders is to connect people with Christ and His grace in ways that helps those people to conquer their sins and to be brought into wholeness. And what an array of sins and messed up lives we see in these two C sections. Both C sections show that where the true grace and Gospel of Jesus is embraced, change should be evident. So why was there so much sin, divisiveness, false doctrine, and Judaizing legalism? It was because of false teachers.

Verse 11 shows these false teachers had a negative influence upon entire households. Verses 12-14 show the unbiblical sources of authority that these false teachers used. And verses 15-16 show the character issues that arise when people do not live by Scripture alone, grace alone, and to the glory of God alone. If you lose those three solas, you are going to get a messed up life.

Who were these false teachers? Most people believe that there were two kinds of false teacher in Crete: There were teachers who were influenced by the pagan Greek philosophy of Epimenides, and second, there were Jewish teachers who looked to Jewish man-made traditions of the rabbis for their authority. And Paul says that neither one has a leg to stand on, and neither one results in the kind of transformational grace that this book speaks to.

Paul starts with the Greek philosophy influence. Epimenides was a brilliant philosopher from 600 years before. He was revered by the Cretans since he came from their island. And he was revered by other Greek philosophers because of his brilliance. But Paul very easily exposed the fallacy of this Greek philosopher's entire empirical philosophy by quoting what had become famous as the Paradox of Epimenides. Epimenides had said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." The paradox is that if Cretans are always liars, and if Epimenides was a Cretan, then Epimenides lied when he said that Cretans are always liars. You logically have two options if you buy into this pagan's philosophy, and neither one works. Either Epimenides always lied and could not be trusted, or his maxim that Cretans always lie was a lie and he could not be trusted. Either way, he could not be trusted. And so his entire philosophy is disposed of. Here's the problem - based on his human philosophy it would be impossible to affirm that all Cretans always do anything. It would take omniscience to make any universal affirmation - and his philosophy was full of universal assertions. No one but God, an omniscient being, could make such a declaration.

But God through Paul makes exactly that statement. He discounts the philosophy of Epimenides by saying that Cretans are indeed always liars. That's verse 13 - "This testimony is true." Paul was not endorsing the *philosophy* of Epimenides - just that statement. He was using the well-known self-refuting paradox of their favorite philosopher to demonstrate that without divine revelation you cannot make any universal statement - but that God can. As God said elsewhere through Paul, "Let God be true and every man a liar." You may not consider yourself to have lied, but God's Word says that all of have. In fact, one Scripture says that people start lying from birth. By counting noses of Cretans, you can never arrive at a valid induction of what is true of all Cretans. Therefore, empiricists like Epimenides can never know the truth. So Epimenides is a liar in philosophy and methodology because his whole underlying philosophy is false. Paul's apologetic is brilliant. It is brilliant. Gordon Clark's exegesis of this passage shows how we lose our ability to know anything if we reject Sola Scriptura.

Anyway, Paul goes on to refute the second set of bad influencers in exactly the same way since they too had thrown out sola Scriptura - the Jewish teachers made the same mistake by failing to found everything on God's Word alone. For them it was always the Bible plus tradition, and where the two came into contradiction, tradition was primary. It's just like the Roman Catholicism of today. Verse 14 says,

not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

What is the truth? It's the Bible. The Bible says to God alone, "Your Word is truth." NoT "Your word is true," because that would imply that the Bible's veracity was being judged by some higher standard; but "Your word is truth." It is the judge of all truth claims. When you turn from the only infallible source of truth, the Bible, the most you can call your teaching is fables and commandments of men. And by their works you will know them. The lifestyle of these Jewish teachers lacked grace, was not founded on God's Word, was not done to God's glory, and therefore was useless. Verses 15-16 says,

15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. 16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

This is such a rebuke to the modern church that sees science and other disciplines as their source of truth. The church has abandoned the Reformation cry of “Sola Scriptura,” and Paul says that they are disqualified. There is a sense in which they were no better than the converted Greek philosophers who trusted Greek philosophy more than the Bible. The Jews trusted their traditions more than the Bible.

The second C section says much the same. Chapter 3:9-11 says,

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. 10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

If you read the Talmud you will find strivings about the law by what one rabbi versus another rabbi versus another rabbi said. Paul wants them to just listen to the law, not the useless Talmudic striving about the law. Both sections illustrate the complex nature of error, and how useless our Christianity is if we do not have a sola Scriptura and sola gratia approach. These false teachers were obviously not embracing grace themselves and their disciples were obviously not being transformed by grace. The modern church needs to dig deep into those two C sections which are corrections on a massive scale.

## **The D sections - Doctrines related to authority/submission in relationships (2:1-10 & 3:9-11)**

The two D sections deal with doctrines related to authority/submission in relationships. And these two are sections that are needed by the modern church, which has been so infected by egalitarianism. The modern church refuses to submit to the Bible’s role relationships. They are not sola Scriptura and their views of grace completely undermine what the Bible says. I can only give you a few hints.

Chapter 2:1-10 shows how we adorn the Gospel well (so there is grace) when we stick to the Biblical role relationships God has established in the home and business. And we bring great discredit to the Gospel when our homes and businesses don’t look much different from pagan homes and businesses. Well, that sort of implies that the Gospel ought to change the way you run your home and business. He’s asking, “Where is the evidence of grace?! One of the tests of whether you are really living by grace is whether you honor the authority relationships of God’s Word. This does not speak well of the 21st century church, which has become egalitarian.

The second D section does much the same thing, but this time with civics. Chapter 3:1-8 shows how we adorn the Gospel well when we are subject to rulers and authorities in the civil sphere. But we deny the Gospel when our civic lives are just like the world’s. That’s an amazing section for Christians to read when they are in civics. Is God’s grace impacting our civics? Remember that the heart of the book towards which everything is flowing deals with transforming grace.

But before tackling the heart of the book, I do want to comment on the safeguards, methods, and goals of mature men discipling younger men and mature women discipling younger women in these two D sections.



First, the safeguards. Verse 1 of chapter 2 says, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.” Godliness cannot be achieved apart from Biblical doctrine, and various words in verses 2,3,5,7,8, and 10 reemphasize this. Those who are not doctrinally grounded themselves can easily mess up on discipleship. You don’t want doctrinally unsound older women discipling younger women. Why? Because their bad doctrine will impact their life. Paul’s older women (or mature women) who are doing the discipleship must be “sound in faith” in verse 2 and must know the Word of God in verse 5. The mature men should hold to their doctrines with integrity in verse 7, and even the master-slave relationship must “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” in verse 10. So doctrine is the first safeguard.

Second, as we will see in the heart of the book, godliness cannot be achieved apart from true grace. All discipleship must flow from God’s grace and go back to God’s grace. But since I will spend so much time on that in the heart of the book, I’ll skip over how grace is a safeguard right now.

What about the methods of discipleship? I can’t go into great detail, but what the mature men and mature women are doing here is working themselves out of a job. This is backwards to modern discipleship programs that live on in perpetuity. If you study this chapter you will notice that Titus is training dads to train their children, to train their own children, and those grandkids to train their own children. And Titus is having mature women training moms to train their children. Why? Well, when new converts come to Christ, no one has trained them, so they will be training their daughters in bad habits if they don’t have anyone to show them the ropes. So this was *remedial* training for the messed up converts of Crete, not ongoing women’s programs. They were on an as-needed basis when mom’s were not able to do that themselves, and when dads were not doing an adequate job of training their boys. But at the same time, parents should feel free to ask other potential mentors to mentor them, or their wives, or their kids in a slice of life if they are not competent to do so themselves.

Chapter 2 showcases beautifully two complementary methods of discipleship. The first way is modeling or imitation. You are reproducing your successes in the people you are discipling, and hopefully not reproducing too many of your own failures. Many of the things listed in this chapter can only happen when you spend a great deal of time together, see lifestyle being demonstrated, give homework, delegate responsibilities, have accountability, feedback, and support. Sadly, false teachers were doing exactly this in Crete. They were discipling people into their bad habits. But good disciples need to replace the bad ones. So modeling is the first method.

The second method you see in chapter 2 is *speaking* what needs to be done. Paul uses five Greek words to highlight various facets of this speaking part of discipleship. I’ve listed the words on the back of your outline.

1. First, there is the Greek word λαλέω, which means to talk about things. You are sharing what has helped you and hindered you. It’s translated as speak in verses 1, and 15. Most people can at least engage in this level of mentoring. They can pass on their

successes and failures via talking over lunch tables.

2. The second word is διδασκαλία, which means discipling, teaching, instruction. This is much more systematic and formal than the first word. And you see that word used in verses 1, 7, and 10. Women can talk with men and share (the first word), but they are not allowed to disciple men (the second word). But they can certainly disciple women with the husband's permission.
3. The third word is σωφρονίζω, which means encouraging, urging, advising. And that occurs in verses 4, 6, and 12. This too is something everyone in the body can do - use rational speech to encourage, urge, and advise.
4. The fourth word is παρακαλέω, which means to come along side a person and to coach them, encourage them, or exhort them. That word occurs in verses 6 and 15. Some people are particularly gifted at coaching. It's a very important kind of mentoring.
5. The fifth word is ἐλέγχω, which means to scrutinize, analyze, rebuke, and correct. That word occurs in chapter 1:9,13 and chapter 2:15. This is needed when troubleshooting why people aren't having success. There is nothing superficial about it. It is very analytical in its dissecting the problem and coming up with a solution. This often takes a lot of training in counseling. I'm so glad that the Foxes and Duffs are getting training in counseling.

Now, I will say that those five words do involve a lot of trust. You don't just randomly put people together to disciple each other. You look for a person whom you believe is advanced beyond you in at least one or more slices of life and ask that person if they would be willing to mentor you in those areas. Even pastors can benefit from this. I am always looking for people I can learn from. As I've gotten older, it has gotten harder and harder to find people locally. But I have looked for pastors who had one slice of their ministry, or public service, or family life that I thought I could learn from, and have asked them if I could meet with them once a month to ask them lots of questions and to get whatever insights I could from them. One pastor here in Omaha taught me a great deal on administration. Another helped me put together my own personal mission statement based on what God has providentially been preparing me to do over the previous 45 years. And other pastors (even pastors who didn't think they had anything to teach me) have passed on qualities of sharpening the use of my spiritual gifts, organizing my time better, etc. I would urge the families of this church to make good use of the resources of other people in this congregation and outside this congregation.

I also want to point out the *kinds* of things being taught. This is not a justification for lay conferences. This is one-on-one mentorship and discipleship in practical areas of living. He mentions mature women teaching younger women how to love their husbands and how to love their children. What young woman doesn't think that she already does that well? But older mature women can expose weak areas that could be shored up, share mistakes they have made in the past that they are seeing duplicated in the younger women, and showing them in concrete ways how to improve their love. All the other things are one-on-one

training, not conferences. I believe that husbands should be very involved in encouraging their wives and daughters to seek out a specific woman for specific kinds of mentoring. These two D sections have a lot of practical advice on discipleship that will adorn the Gospel and help people to have a good testimony to all. Not only are elders and deacons needed, but each member of the church is needed to be involved in ministry if we are to all grow in grace.

### **The central E section - What true grace produces (2:11-15)**

And the true nature of grace is the heart of the book and the heart of the chiasm. So we will finish with the central section of the book - chapter 2:11-15. We live in an age where there is a great deal of ignorance of grace. And you might think, "What? People talk about grace all the time!" But they misunderstand the grace that they talk about.

Let me illustrate. On the one hand, there are people who confuse grace with works righteousness. You can see that with the World Evangelical Alliance's coziness with Rome. On the other hand, there are evangelicals who think that grace is somehow contrary to law and if there is any law-keeping, there is no grace. They fail to remember that it took Christ's perfect law-keeping to make grace possible, and that grace has as one of its goals to transform individuals after they are justified.

Some think grace is only needed for conversion (that is, for justification), but then spend the rest of their lives thinking that we can live the Christian life apart from grace. Galatians 3 tells us that is utterly foolish. Others define grace in a way that you would think that God really doesn't care about sin. And others think that grace can be completely lost when you sin and that therefore we need to get justified over and over, and as a result they have no sure footing on which to grow. And so we are going to let the Scripture tell us what grace teaches. Verse 12 says that grace teaches us something.

### **The school of grace opens our eyes to the only way of salvation (v. 11)**

First, we see in verse 11 that the school of grace opens our eyes to the only way of salvation. We totally misunderstand grace if we think that we can somehow earn, deserve, or even contribute in some small way to God's favor. Let's break the verse down word by word. The word "grace" is a word that simply means God's favor. The word "salvation" implies that we were lost – we were deserving of hell. But notice the order in which God's favor comes. Verse 11 says, "for the grace of God that brings salvation." So the first thing that we need to notice is that God's favor came upon us before we were saved, otherwise grace couldn't bring us the salvation, right? But if God had favor on us before we were saved, that then means that God's favor came upon us before we were changed; before we converted; before we had anything good in us. That means that there was nothing in us that contributed to God's favor. This is why we define grace as undeserved favor. God's favor began in eternity past when He elected us before the foundation of the world. And that eternal, undeserved favor brought every aspect of our salvation into being. Scripture says that we are born again by grace, we believe by grace, are converted by grace, understand by grace and are sanctified by grace, and we persevere by grace. Every aspect of salvation flows from God's prior favor.

## The school of graces teaches us to be sanctified (v. 12)

Verse 12 says that grace teaches us next to be sanctified. Grace is “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” If verse 11 dealt with regeneration and justification (which is the beginning of our Christian walk), then this verse deals with sanctification (which is the growth of holiness in our walk).

And this sanctifying grace has both a negative and a positive side. First, grace is against something; it stands in opposition to something; it denies something; it says “No” to something – or (as William Hendriksen translates it) it renounces something. Verse 12 says that true grace denies or renounces or says no to ungodliness and worldly lusts. And if your grace is not working in you to the denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts, then it is a counterfeit grace. If it doesn’t stand against anything, it is a counterfeit grace. Now sometimes you have to repeatedly renounce these works of the flesh, but there must be a standing against those works of the flesh.

Second, it stands *for* righteousness. But notice the order: you’ve got to stand against something before you can truly stand for something. Here’s what it stands for: “that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” The word “soberly” is the same word for “rationality.” You see it earlier in verses 2,4, and 6. And I love the fact that Paul wants us to be rational. We have been saved to be rational! Grace teaches us to think with our head. But unfortunately there is a common notion of grace that you find in some circles that tells you that if you are really spiritual, you will believe contradictions. And Paul says, No. Grace teaches us to be rational. I have met people who believe that barking for Jesus and slithering on the floor is a sign of spirituality and revival. And Paul says “No.” Grace teaches us that we should live rationally! Some believe that if you haven’t had irrational experiences you haven’t been baptized by the Spirit. And Paul says, “No. Grace teaches us that we should live rationally.” Some say that they are allergic to theology and all God wants is our hearts. But what does Scripture say? It says that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind. That’s a pretty interesting lesson of grace, isn’t it?

The next thing that grace teaches us is that we should live righteously. Any conception of grace that says we can sin so that grace may abound is a false and heretical view of grace. Paul says that true grace teaches us to live righteously. God is interested in righteousness. He is interested in how we live. Not only is it compatible with grace, righteousness *always* flows from grace. You are not even saved if you are not beginning to live righteously.

The next word deals with a life devoted to God. That we should live godly. Some translate that as devotion to God. Grace stirs up the heart to seek after God; to commune with Him; to have a life that is wrapped up in God. And so God doesn’t just want an intellectual Christianity. He wants all of us. Grace was given to make us totally devoted to God, and devotions and worship is one of the awesome fruits of grace.

But there’s one more phrase in verse 12 – all of this is to be in this present age. That implies that it is possible to be rational, righteous and devoted to God in this present age. We don’t have to wait till we get to heaven. Nor do we have an option of waiting till we get to heaven,

as the carnal Christian theory teaches. Grace teaches us that we are to live this way in the present age. And literally that is in the “now” age. To me this is encouraging. You can overcome.

But the interesting thing about grace is that it does this gradually, not suddenly. The word for “teaching us” is from the same stem as pedagogue. As Hendriksen points out, a pedagogue leads children step by step. And grace too, gently (but firmly and consistently) leads and guides us forward. We don’t get there overnight. We grow in grace gradually. And so any form of perfectionism that says a Christian can instantly be perfect or live above known sin is also wrong. Grace is a pedagogue that gradually, gently leads us along teaching us principle upon principle of how to live.

### **The school of grace teaches us to be driven by the future (v. 13)**

But there is a third point that I see in verse 13. Verse 13 is continuing the sentence that begins with what God’s grace is training us in. The third major point that the school of grace teaches us is to be driven by the future. Verse 13 says, “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Notice first, that Jesus is clearly called God here. And notice too that grace causes us to look to the future; to be future oriented. All of history is heading toward a goal and grace is part of God’s process of achieving that goal of reversing everything affected by the Fall of Adam. Too many people are driven by past failures. This calls us to be driven by God’s future for us and for planet earth.

### **The school of grace teaches us to have zeal for God’s law (v. 14)**

Fourth, the school of grace teaches us to have a zeal for God’s law. For many modern Christians this is the most surprising lesson of grace since they have been taught the exact opposite. Verse 14 says,

who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Notice the purpose phrase in this verse *that* He might redeem us from every lawless deed. There are three things that I want to highlight from this phrase.

#### **We were redeemed from lawlessness**

First, if we are redeemed from lawless deeds that means that redemption not only saves from hell, it saves us from our sinful actions themselves. And that’s exactly what the angel told Joseph in Matthew 1:21 that this was the whole purpose of Christ’s incarnation – “for He shall save His people from their sins.” You have not learned the lessons of grace if you think that you have a free ticket to heaven and now you can live any way that you please. Jesus did not die to make us comfortable in our sin. He died to save us from our sins and to make us law-abiding.

### Sin is defined by the law

Second, notice that sin is defined by the law. We are redeemed from every lawless deed. 1 John 3:4 says, sin is lawlessness. That means that sin is anything that is against the moral law of God. Sin is not some nebulous bad thing that has no relevance to Old Testament moral law. Sin is lawlessness. And Hebrews 1:9 says that Jesus hates lawlessness. Let me read that verse. It says, “You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.” What does that say about Christians who throw out the law of God today? On the day of judgment Jesus will say, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness (Matt 7:23). Obviously God continues to be interested in the law, and those who resist the law are resisting God’s whole purpose in sending Jesus. They are ignorant of the lessons of grace. You have not learned the lessons of grace very well if your version of grace teaches you to ignore the law. This is what Virgil Walker means when he talks about these unbiblical gracists. True grace is antithetical to lawlessness. Grace enables us to keep what we could not keep in our own strength.

### Grace upholds the comprehensive claims of God’s law (“every”)

Third, notice how comprehensive this affirmation of the law is. “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from *every* lawless deed.” Any deed that could be described as against the law of God, is a deed that grace was designed to rescue us from. The whole law, and every disobedience to that law is what is in view. This means that grace teaches us to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. And that’s exactly what Jesus taught in Matthew 4:4. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” How do you live by the ceremonial law? By obeying the gospel it teaches; by living by the mathematical, and health, and scientific teachings of that law. Listen to what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:17-19. There Jesus said,

Matthew 5:17 ¶ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. Matthew 5:18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Matthew 5:19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Failing to learn from grace has been extremely costly to our modern generation. Their faulty views of grace have caused many people to throw out the law and to oppose teachers who uphold the law. It’s sad. And it is destroying the family, the church, and our whole nation. But Paul insists that true grace teaches us to flee from lawlessness.

### Grace purifies us

Next, God’s grace purifies or cleanses you. You may feel discouraged and dirty, because no one can fully keep the moral law (and it’s the moral law that is in view here). But you can go to the cross of Christ, ask His forgiveness and be made white as snow – forgiven, and with God’s favor shining upon you. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

### Grace purifies us to Himself

Next, grace purifies you *for Himself*. What's the purpose of purification and forgiveness? It's not to make us feel better. No, it's a God-centered reason. It's to draw us closer to God. Grace is intended to make you close to God and God close to you.

### Grace takes us into the supernatural (meaning of "special")

Next, God is making you to be His own special people. The word "special" means "being beyond usual" (Strong's). In other words, you cannot be the status quo of what the world says is normal. I love the book written by a friend of mine - unquoting the status quo. Jesus is redeeming you to be beyond the usual. You cannot measure what is normal by the world or even by the church. Grace makes us radically different. And it makes us different for Him. It makes us step into the realm of the supernatural. The Sermon on the Mount is filled with commands that no unregenerate person can accomplish. Jesus said that loving someone who loves you is no big deal, but when you can love your enemies, you are giving evidence of supernatural grace. When you can rejoice under persecution you are a special people - you have gone beyond the usual by God's supernatural help.

### Grace makes us zealous for good works

Next, grace teaches us to be zealous for good works. True grace burns within us; it yearns for action and it must be released in action. Wherever true grace is, these characteristics are always present. Which means, many in the church of Jesus Christ are not even saved. They need to come to the cross of Christ to receive His cleansing and His empowering grace.

And so this whole verse is a rebuke to the modern church. Ignorance of what grace is all about has been costly to the church of Jesus Christ. It has left the church in America in a messy shambles. And we need to pray that God would reverse that and pour out His grace upon the church in great measure. And pray that we might be a part of bringing this Reformation.

### The school of grace teaches us to never stop learning and to never stop spreading the message of grace (v. 15)

The last lesson of grace is that we should never stop learning and never stop spreading this glorious message of grace. Verse 15 says, "Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you."

Human flesh may rise up and despise this message, but grace within us makes us attracted to the message. And Titus as a pastor is admonished to never stop preaching the true grace of Jesus Christ and to never stop opposing the counterfeits that have been messing up the church of Jesus Christ. That, my friends, is the message of Titus. Let's pray.

Van Nest especially tried to demonstrate the cohesion of Titus by means of cohesion and shift analysis. He looked first at discourse markers of continuity and discontinuity, and other factors such as "literary form (or subgenre), topic, subject, participants, verb tense,

person, and number, as well as temporal and local frames of reference” (2004:9) to demonstrate the internal cohesion of each paragraph. He looked next at linguistic and thematic links between paragraphs to demonstrate the cohesion of the entire letter. He then developed a proposal as to the macrostructure of the letter. While slightly different than mine, his detailed work was very valuable.