

INTRODUCTION

1. Tonight we are concluding our study of the letter of Paul to Titus, so I would like to invite you to turn in your Bibles to Titus chapter 3 as we look at verses 8-15.
2. Our study of Titus as been both informative doctrinally and practically.
3. Doctrinally in that we have learned the kind of men God wants leading his church as elders and practically we are to engage ourselves in good works.
4. Paul will drive that point even more as we look at the final verses of this letter.
5. Read Titus 3:8-15
6. Thomas Adams (a puritan preacher) said, “Naked faith is no faith.”
7. He was echoing what James said in James 2:20 says, “faith without works is useless” or as the NKJV says, “dead.”
8. When God calls a person to salvation, He gives them a faith that works.
9. Ephesians 2:10 says it this way: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”
10. We have been called to “good works.”

11. And it is to those “works” Paul addresses Titus to in these 8 verses.
12. He wants Titus to *affirm* some things and *avoid* some things with the believers at Crete.
13. And as part of that process he is to *assist* his fellow workers in their work.
14. Paul begins verse 8 by saying, “This is a trustworthy statement.”
15. What “trustworthy statement” is he referring to?
16. First we need to see that this expression was common among Paul’s writings to Timothy and Titus.
17. He used it 4 times when writing to Timothy and 1 time when writing to Titus.
18. It was a “common expression in the early church” (MacArthur).
19. In all its occurrences except here in Titus 3:8 it seems to clearly go with what he is about to say.
20. But here in Titus it could go either way.
21. I agree with what a majority of commentators say about this statement—that is refers back to verses 4-7.
22. “The thrust of his argument seems to be that, having been saved from so much by such a great salvation, we should live in a

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manner worthy of our high calling” (William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Tit 3:8).

23. “Because what he had just been saying is trustworthy, Titus should **stress these things** in order to promote godly behavior in his listeners” (John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985). 2:766).
24. “These things” also refers to the “trustworthy statement” of verses 4-7 and Titus is to “speak confidently” about this.
25. The idea of speaking confidently means he is to speak intensively or strongly or “insist” (Louw-Nida).
26. He was “not to be hesitant, indecisive, or vacillating but rather bold and intense, speaking and acting with the firm conviction that he was obediently fulfilling his divinely appointed ministry” (John MacArthur, Titus).
27. The purpose, Paul says, was “so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.”
28. So Paul tells Titus to emphasize the grace of God to the church at Crete.
29. Tell them that God saved them, “not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of water of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our

Savior” (vv.4-6).

30. Tell them He did this “so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (v.7).
31. What else does Paul want Titus to *affirm* in verse 8?
32. That *believers are to maintain good works.*
33. Again, this is what the new birth produces and urges us to.
34. We have been created to good works as Ephesians 2:10 says but we are also to walk in them.
35. This is similar to what Paul said to the Ephesians in 4:1-2.
36. He says, “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.”
37. You have been regenerated unto good works, so walk in them.
38. *Believers are to engage in good deeds.*

I. Believers Are to Engage in Good Deeds (v.8)

The word “engage” or your translation may say “maintain” (proistemi) means, “to preside or to practice” (Strong).

When the word is used in 1 Timothy 5:17 of elders it means “to stand first, to preside.” Paul uses it again in Titus 3 in verse 14.

Here “the word has a technical meaning ‘to practice a profession’” (Rienecker).

“This shows that Paul supposed that the doctrines of the gospel were fitted to lead men to holy living.

The ‘good works,’ here refer not merely to acts of benevolence and charity, but to all that is upright and good—to an honest and holy life” (Albert Barnes, Notes on the New Testament Explanatory and Practical, ed. Robert Frew WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Titus 3").

It is older men being “temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance” (2:2).

It is older women being “reverent in their behavior; not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good” (2:3)

It young women loving “their husbands [and] their children” being “sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored” (2:4-5).

It is young men” being “sensible” (2:6) and leaders being an

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“example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, [and] sound speech which is beyond reproach” (2:7-8).

It is slaves being “subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect” (2:9-10).

It is being “subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed” (3:1).

It is maligning “no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men” (3:2).

That what it means to “engage in good deeds.” It means that holiness is a top priority in your life. It occupies “first place” (proistemi).

Why? Because “these things are good and profitable for men” (3:8).

Let me give you a few other reasons why believers are to engage in good works?

A. Because this is the Fruit of Salvation

Jesus said to His disciples that when you have love for one another all men will know that you are My disciples (see John 13:35).

The evidence of salvation is fruitfulness—righteous living as we have already noted.

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We have already heard what Ephesians 2:10 says but listen to what John 15:16 says.

Jesus said to His disciples, “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”

He “appointed” them to “bear fruit.”

He already told them in verses 4-5 that “a branch cannot bear fruit unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Bearing fruit is the visible result of salvation. It is the result of abiding in Christ.

Believers are also to engage in good works also...

B. Because this is Vital for Evangelism

Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Again our lives are on display before the world and instead of living like the world we are to live an obedient life to Jesus Christ.

A third reason why believers engage in good works is...

C. Because this is our Ministry Toward One Another

Hebrews 10:24 says, “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.”

This is why we are not to forsake the assembly as he mentions in the next verse because when we come together we are to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds.”

The church is not a place where we sit around and complain about our trials but a place where we “stimulate one another to love and good deeds.”

Is our church having that kind of impact in your life?

Before you answer, ask yourself, “Am I having that kind of impact toward others?”

“Am I encouraging others to love and to live holy lives

II. Believers Are to Avoid Sinful Behavior (vv.9-11)

Now in verses 9-11, Paul tells Titus what the Cretans are to “avoid.”

He says, “But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, 11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.”

Now he talks about what is “unprofitable.”

Engaging in “controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law” is always “unprofitable and worthless” but that is not true about righteous living. That is “good and profitable for men.”

Paul tells Titus that he wants the Cretans to “avoid” (periistemi), these things.

Here he has the idea of turning one’s self about “for the purpose of avoiding something” (Wuest).

“Titus, the other elders, and the congregations on Crete were to turn the other way from morally and spiritually destructive false teachers, who not only corrupted the churches but, by their sinful and sordid lifestyles, were a great hindrance to the credibility of the gospel” (John MacArthur, Titus).

In this single verse Paul mentions four specific categories of errors these false teachers were espousing:

A. Sinful Behavior (v.9)

1. “Foolish controversies”
 - a) “foolish” (moros), “dull or stupid, absurd” (Strong)
 - b) “controversies” (zetesis), it means “questions” (Strong) or “speculations” (Rienecker) and “has the basic sense of searching or investigating but came to be used for discussion or debate, especially that

which was controversial and contentious”
(MacArthur).

“In Paul’s day there were stupid **disputes** over clean and unclean foods, Sabbath regulations, and observance of holy days. Arguments arose over **genealogies**, both angelic and human. There was bickering over intricate regulations that had been superimposed on the law” (William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary).

The “foolish controversies” probably refers back to what he has already told Titus in 1:10-14.

- (1) Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:3-4, “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, 4 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.”
- (2) He told him in chapter 6:3-5 that “If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, 4 he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant

friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.”

- (3) In his second letter to Timothy, Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:16-17 to “avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene.”
- (4) In verse 23 he told Timothy to “refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.”

Not only are the believers at Crete to avoid “foolish controversies” but also...

2. “Genealogies”

This is the Greek word genealogia, which refers to “tracing by generations” (Strong).

“Equally worthless for believers is becoming involved in interpretations of genealogies.

Paul was not, of course, belittling the many genealogies that are found in both the New and Old Testaments. Those genealogies were critical for determining the God-given lineage of the priesthood, the kings of Judah and Israel, and even the Messiah.

Matthew’s gospel opens with “the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham...” (Matt.

1:1; cf. 2–17).

Paul’s warning to Titus concerned rather the many fanciful and allegorical interpretations of such genealogies that had fascinated many Jews for centuries.

The fourth century church historian Eusebius reported that when the apostles died, a conspiracy of godless error arose through deceptive false teachers, who arrogantly propagated their insidious lies in opposition to God’s Word.

It is obvious from Paul’s counsel to Timothy and Titus that those godless errors were a serious threat to the church even before all of the apostles were gone” (John MacArthur, Titus).

“Foolish controversies, genealogies. The third is...

3. “Strife”

(eris), “a quarrel, wrangling, debate, strife” (Strong), “discord” (BAGD), this is “a general term that carries the ideas of all kinds of self-centered rivalry and contentiousness about the truth” (MacArthur).

- a) Paul told the believers at Rome in Romans 13:13-14, “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its

lusts.”

- b) Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:24-26 that “the Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

The final vice in the list in verse 9 is...

4. “Disputes about the Law”

This referred to “controversies about the observation of ceremonies, about the distinction of the kinds of food and things of that nature” (John Calvin, Calvin’s Commentaries: Titus).

Paul refers to this problem in his letter to the Galatian churches. “Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised,” he warned, “simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh” ([Gal. 6:12–13](#); cf. [1 Tim. 1:6–7](#)).

The Council of Jerusalem was called for the specific purpose of dealing with Judaizers, including “certain

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ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, [and who said], ‘It is necessary to circumcise them [Gentiles], and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses’ ” ([Acts 15:5](#)).

The first speaker at the council was Peter, who ended his comments with the question, “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we [Jews] are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they [Gentiles] also are” (vv. 10–11).

After Paul, Barnabas, and others had spoken, James, the moderator of the council and probably the half-brother of Jesus (see [Acts 12:17](#); [21:18](#)), closed the meeting with the words, “It is my judgment that we do not trouble [with circumcision and observance of the Mosaic Law] those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles” (v. 19).

For believers who recognize the authority of the apostles and of God’s Word, **disputes about the Law** of Moses and its relation to Christians were permanently settled at that time” (John MacArthur, Titus).

Now Paul turns his attention to...

B. Sinful Men (vv.10-11)

He says, “Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, 11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is

sinning, being self-condemned.”

“Factious” is the Greek word *hairetikos*, “from which heretic is derived.

“The original word simply meant “to choose,” but eventually the term came to signify the placing of self-willed opinions above the truth, refusing even to consider views contrary to one’s own.

In its noun form, it is associated with such serious “deeds of the flesh” as “immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing” (Gal. 5:19–21, emphasis added).

The factious person will not submit to the Word or to godly leaders in the church. He is a law to himself and has no concern for spiritual truth or unity” (MacArthur, Titus).

Warren Wiersbe says, “This is a self-willed person who thinks he is right, and who goes from person to person in the church, forcing people to make a choice. “Are you for *me* or for the pastor?” This is a work of the flesh (see Gal. 5:20). Such a person should be admonished at least twice, and then rejected.

How do we apply this in a local church? Let me suggest one way. If a church member goes about trying to get a following, and then gets angry and leaves the church, let him go. If he comes back (maybe the other churches don’t want him either), and if he shows a repentant attitude, receive him

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back. If he repeats this behavior (and they usually do), receive him back the second time. But if he does it a third time, do not receive him back into the fellowship of the church (Titus 3:10). Why not? “Such a man is warped in character, keeps on sinning, and has condemned himself” (Titus 3:11, literal translation). If more churches would follow this principle, we would have fewer “church tramps” who cause problems in various churches” (*The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989). Tit 3:9).

1. Confront

- a) Rom.16:17-18 says, “Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.”
- b) 2 John 10-11 says, “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; 11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.”

2. Reject

“Reject” (paraiteomai), “is from paraiteomi, which is also translated, “have nothing to do with” (1 Tim. 4:7) and “refuse” (2 Tim. 2:23).

In the first case Paul is referring to “worldly fables fit only for old women” and in the second to “foolish and ignorant speculations that produce quarrels” (MacArthur).

- a) “after the first and second warning” (see Mat.18:15-18)

“Jewish law required several private rebukes before bringing a person before the religious assembly for discipline; this procedure gave the offender ample opportunity to repent.

One severe form of punishment against an unrepentant offender was exclusion from the religious community for a set time or until repentance ensued.

Because Paul uses this penalty only in the most extreme circumstances, the divisiveness in view here must be serious; the person has already excluded himself from the life of the community” (Keener).

- b) “knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned”

“To a believer who is well grounded in the Word, the errors and sinfulness of factious and divisive people in the church should be obvious, knowing that a person who persists in quarreling over foolish ideas is perverted and is sinning, being self

condemned.

Perverted (ekstrephou), has the idea of “turning inside out, or twisting.”

The factious person, who is twisted by his constant sinning, will manifest his wicked condition by his own words and actions, there by becoming self condemned” (MacArthur, Titus).

Paul concludes this letter to Titus with some final instructions concerning his assistance to his fellow-workers in the gospel and he gives a final principle that...

III. Believers Are to Assist Others (vv.12-13)

- A. Artemas - “Nothing is known of this man beyond Paul’s obvious confidence in him” (MacArthur Study Bible).
- B. Tychicus
 - 1. Paul refers to him as “a beloved brother [and] faithful minister” in Col.4:7.
 - 2. He accompanied Paul from Corinth to Asia Minor (Acts 20:4).
 - 3. He carried the Apostle’s letter to the Colossian church (Col.4:7) and possibly his letter to Ephesus (Eph.6:21).
- C. Zenas - “Nothing is known of this believer whose expertise was either in biblical law or Roman law” (MSB)

D. Apollos

1. Originally from Alexandria (Acts 18:24-28)
2. He was a teacher of the Scripture after being acquainted only with the teaching of John the Baptist.
3. Some of his followers apparently formed a faction in the church at Corinth.

Before closing he gives these two...

IV. Final Comments (vv.14-15)

He says, “Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful. 15 All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.”

A. Summary Exhortation (v.14)

1. Maintain good works
2. Meet urgent needs

B. Farewell Greeting (v.15)

1. From his fellow workers in the Gospel
2. Pass our greeting to those who love us in the faith
3. Grace be with you all.

CONCLUSION

1. Are you a believer?
2. Does your life manifest it?
3. Are you engaged in “good deeds ” or sinful behavior?
4. What about factious people?
5. Are you one of them?
6. If not, do you confront those who are?
7. The noticeable difference in our lives should be these things and Titus and every preacher is to speak confidently about the gospel of grace.
8. Survey your life tonight as we pray.
9. Let’s pray.