

"...set in order the things that are lacking."

- Titus chapter 1-2

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1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, 2 in hope of eternal life which God, who

cannot lie, promised before time began, 3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior; 4 To Titus, a true son in [our] common faith: Grace, mercy, [and] peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. 5 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— 6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9 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. 10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans [are] always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. 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.

Chapter 2 - *1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: 2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; 3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 [to be] discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. 6 Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 7 in all things showing yourself [to be] a pattern of good works; in doctrine [showing] integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. 9 [Exhort] bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all [things], not answering back, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*

1:10-11

The original KJV renders this "unruly and vain talkers." "vain talkers" means empty talkers...speaking but saying nothing except perhaps "look at me, I'm so great." Sadly, once again, this is a problem. Self-righteousness is a hearty and resilient foe of Christianity. Even within the pastorate. The lies I have heard come off the lips of those who claim the pulpit is astonishing.



There will always be those who profess with their lips, but deny with their lives. The mention herein “especially those of the circumcision” tells us that the issue will often come from those who claim the mantle of religion and even pastoral authority. Both then and now.

We should take a lesson from Paul here as to the attitude to have concerning “unruly and vain talkers.” The Greek word used here for “stopped” is not found anywhere else in Scripture. This is a singular emphatic use, for a singular emphatic case: “Restrain, bridle in, put to silence or muzzle.”

I don’t go out of my way to tangle with these guys, but when God puts them in my path I will call them out. How do we know therefore who to trust in light of such an environment? Transparency is a big plus. Hiding, ducking, avoiding honest discussion is a sure giveaway that what you have there is a weasel. Such a battle should be fought on the ground of the pure Word. For it is “sharper than a two-edged sword.” (Eph 5:11)

“*For the sake of dishonest gain*” can mean more than trying to get some sort of financial payout. We certainly see those guys out there on TV, but some guys will do anything, say anything, in order to be able to hold the position and have a flock. It’s a power thing more than a money thing. So the bottom line is that there will always be those guys out there, and while we all have plenty of shortcomings to personally deal with, we still should not simply let evil stand without speaking up. To do so is a serious breach in loving others. If we DO love them, we will say something! If there is simply a miscommunication or misunderstanding, then let’s sit down and talk it out. That is God’s mandate.

1:12-13

“Prophet” here may be a poor translation. This word used here in the original is also translated elsewhere as “poet”.

Paul doesn’t have much good to say about these guys. But then, neither did Jesus. He held his strongest rebuke and harshest criticisms for those who knew better yet used their cloak of religion as a way to personal power or gain.

“rebuke sharply”

Paul knew well the danger facing the church there, and he knew they could not afford to be passive and purposely blind. There is a time, *for the sake of the flock*, that a man of God must deal with things with a heavy hand. Meek yes, but weak no. A pastor needs to have some backbone. To quote Wiersbe, “The church is a body, and the pastor must occasionally be a ‘spiritual physician’ and set some bones.”

It is popular thinking today that a pastor should be soft and gentle in all circumstances. A verifiable milk-toast. But that is not the “men of God” in the Bible. This idea of pastoral hyper-passivity comes from our desire to continue in sin and division... free from chastening. Again, transparency and an openness is what is needed to keep everyone honest and aboveboard.

These guys are elsewhere called “wolves.” Not puppies or hamsters! They are serious predators, and should be dealt with as such!

1:14

“Jewish fables” probably refers to the mystical superstitions and traditions of the Jewish church that bore no truth. One of the devil’s greatest ploys is to mix a little fable with a lot of truth. But like the yeast that Paul speaks of, that little untruth works its way through the whole of the body of Christ, and ultimately corrupts the

whole body. Such acts like a cancer. It starts small, but corrupts and finally kills. It cannot be ignored nor minimized. It has to be cut out...

1:15

This verse is not a license sin...to indulge in whatever we please because we are born again. For those who are born again are instructed elsewhere to “come up from amongst them and be ye separate”, as well as “be holy , as I am holy.” What it does do is to reinforce the understanding that as Christians we are free from a path of “righteousness through the law...through rule keeping.”

Jesus saves us, keeps us saved, and makes us righteous by belonging to Him. We cannot be saved or righteous by works or ritual. (Eph 2:8) Note that this passage does not free us from doctrine and direction given elsewhere in scripture. It releases us from legalism and non-Biblical issues, and any attempt to stand in God’s presence through our own works.

But for unbeliever, nothing is pure. Whether an action is morally evil and fleshly, or moral and kind, or even religious! It means nothing, because their hearts are not, they cannot, be pure and right concerning that action. *“Without Christ, we can do nothing.”*

1:16

This, in follow up to the previous verse, is clarification. While works do not *make* us right in the sight of God, they do however *show we are right before God!* “Fruit production” in a believer is not an option. It is evidence of a changed life. (Note John 15, Eph 2:10)

What is the baseline therefore in this chapter’s message? Scripture. Without such we are flying by the seat of our pants. We are simply making it up as we go along. And that is as descriptive of much of the greater church today as it was for Titus there in Crete.

Paul was saying “don’t let it happen.” Fight for what is right. Stand on what is truth, and reject the rest. This is a very serious message for everyone who claims to be a child of God today. Do we deny God by our works or lives, and yet continue to call ourselves a believer?

Many of us frankly “deny Him” every day in the living out of our lives. We speak the right things, but our lives say something totally different. We cannot...*for the sake of our very soul*, separate the two.

Chapter 2

2:1

The “sound doctrine” that Paul speaks of here is that of the Word itself. Paul is instructing Titus to keep his opinions, traditions, fables, and dogma out of the pulpit. If he were here to verbally instruct us today, he would no doubt include our modern-day denominational leanings also!

According to Paul, a pastor/teacher is called to teach the Bible. We are not to add to the Word, nor take away from it. In fact Revelation 22:19 warns us *“if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.”*

Nor is the pastor to spend his time teaching highbrow Hebrew eschatology and Greek Philosophy. He is to teach the Word in practical aspects that can actually be applied to our lives. Teaching that will make a difference in how we live, not just how we believe.

Back in Acts on a place called Mars Hill, Paul found out what the results of extra-biblical debate were. Paul seemed to learn his lesson that day and according to 1 Corinthians 2:2 said, “*I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*”

2:2

Please note this call that is being made specifically to the older men of the church. Frankly, this group is most often the hardest to move, the most difficult to change, the most prideful and stubborn, and the slowest to minister to others.

Let us remember that we are all called to take our place within the structure of the body of Christ and the fellowship that we are called to be a part of, *no matter our age*. And the truth be told, it is a maturity of stability in older believers that is so needed today within the church as a whole. It is easy to step off of that need with a “well, we’ll let the younger folks do it” attitude, without realizing that those of younger years, as well as those of younger Christian maturity, need a Godly example of mature believers, which is becoming increasingly hard to find.

“**sober**” means “not a drunk, but rather vigilant in the living out of the faith.” If you have ever met such a man or woman on your spiritual journey, you know what a divine affect that they can have on your life.

“**reverent**” speaks of having an honorable character. Someone living upright and yet expressing the joy of living in the faith...of being a child of God at any age.

“**temperate and sound**” means self-controlled and having a sound mind. Nothing is more painful than watching an older believer unravel his or her life, or even fail to maintain a steady course. We expect the younger believers to sometimes struggle or stumble. But an aged believer? At what point will the roller coaster emotional walk of faith cease to be your M.O.?

“**love**” is of course simply that, love. Except this speaks of the real thing, not the world’s version.

“**Patience.**” If you can’t expect patience from a mature believer, where then can we expect to find it?

It is easy to get lazy in these areas as we grow older. Time has a way of lulling us into a false security and self-indulgence if we are not diligent. And it is exactly then that we are the most vulnerable.

2:3-5

Paul’s speaks now to the older woman. And while the counsel is well to be received by men and women alike, he seems to address issues specific to woman, and woman of any generation. Women are herein called to live in “reverence”. Not merely in a mental state or a prayer life, but in their actual behavior. That speaks of a life of holiness...or a life that seeks to be like Christ in all matters.

“**Not Slanderers.**” They are not to be “false accusers”. They are to control their tongues and avoid gossip and finger pointing. Ladies, let me tell you frankly, that this is still epidemic in today’s church, and so easy to let slide.

Paul says you are not to ever be under the control of alcohol, and to instead be “teachers of good things”.. *both in example and word*. This is addressed to all of you...not just the ministry community!

The mature women are to ‘teach the younger.’ Please hear this call ladies! Even if you do not have the gift of teaching, you teach by your lifestyle. You are to control your emotions, your passions and your desires, and to live lives of love and steady commitment to Christ as well as to your families. Note that if you are being asked to live a life of self control, then such is not only possible but critical.

It is a sad admission, but we actually have few godly examples of older female saints within the body of Christ today. Few who “finishing well.” Today the fact is that there are so many even older women falling prey to emotional instability, isolation and self-centeredness, while exercising a perceived license for worldly latitude instead of spiritual example.

Sadly, the result is that we have few examples of the power and joy of Christ left for young woman to look up to. Again...this is not only for our relationship with God, but also for the reputation of the faith out on the street.

“Discreet” means to be in control of one’s *emotions* and “chaste” means to be in control of her *actual living*. The term “homemakers” does not mean that a woman is never to leave the house or have outside activities. If this was so, then Lydia of Thyatira, and Priscilla in Acts would have been soundly rebuked by Paul!

But the woman is to be diligent within the home also, and not neglect the care of the home and family. This is not meant to be sexist or demeaning of women. There is nothing here to absolve men of the same responsibilities, or to exempt them from doing the laundry or washing the dishes!

Don’t like what you are hearing? Then don’t get married or have children and you can avoid such responsibilities and biblical mandate. Too often today, a woman wants it all. Children, a family, a loving relationship with a husband, along with a career and the freedom of movement that comes with being single. You can bet for sure, that something in the mix is going to suffer...

2:6-8

Paul goes on now to instruct the young men in Christ to be examples...to testify with their lives a surrender of body, soul, and mind unto Jesus Christ. This is not to be an occasional pursuit or a sporadic venture: it is to be his ‘pattern.’ There is to be a “pattern” of good works. Meaning that service unto God and kingdom is to be a very real and a central aspect of a young man’s lifestyle.

It seems we must be repeatedly reminded that service unto God is a very natural and expected fruit from a Spirit-filled life...not something that should need constant motivation and prodding! If we are indeed in that latter camp, we should honestly be concerned about our standing in God...perhaps even our very salvation! When we fail to have time for God and kingdom, we have some serious issues that must be addressed. Matters of idolatry, ...lack of spiritual presence, ...who is sovereignly in control of your life, ...and again, your very salvation state!

Because you see for Paul, this “pattern of good works” was a “non-optional” lifestyle. Furthermore, it was simply a natural fruit of his redemption. Yet for many of us such a manifest remains optional and an occasional event. Incredibly, that fact doesn’t seem to concern a lot of folks.

Paul goes on to lay down some daunting character traits that are to be present also: examples listed here are integrity, reverence, incorruptibility. These things require strength and discipline, and is acquired through a close walk with the Spirit. (1 Thess 5:23) By the way ladies...this would certainly serve as a “short list” for when you are questioning whether a particular man might be received into your life!

“**Sober minded**” means to be able to curb your passions and being ‘sound in the head.’

“**Integrity**” is a purity and unwillingness to allow the world to lead him around by a ring in his nose!

“**Reverence**” is a showing of respect and dignity in his lifestyle. That doesn't mean stoic or boring. It means being a leader not a follower.

“**Incorruptibility**” is self-explanatory. It means that you are in control of your life... someone else is not in control!

Paul adds the issue of “**sound speech.**” Meaning this young man doesn't have a “potty mouth” and can carry on a conversation on a larger level than sports and cars.

And lastly, this guy has a reputation which proceeds him. One that is “**above reproach.**”

2:9-10

Slavery...albeit quite different than the 1800's American version, was widespread in Paul's day, and many of those slaves had become believers. Yet despite the still obvious distasteful idea of such a practice, Paul still calls on those slaves to be Godly examples even through the difficulty of the situation! Let's face it, it's easy to walk the faith path when it's a comfortable journey with no adversity or 'bumps.' But who and what we really are truly manifests itself when we are under fire...when we are in a “less-than-ideal” situation.

So let's not ignore this passage! Whether in the workplace, or in any other difficult personal relationship, we are not released from the call to Godly living and example.

“**pilfering**” means embezzlement, or in simply application, “stealing.” Like so many other aspects of our lives, we are apt to cut ourselves a lot of slack here because in our weird minds we can think we deserve it or that it doesn't matter. After all... “I'm not paid enough,” or “they don't appreciate me as they ought so I am going to have to take matters into my own hands!” Face it. No matter how you paint it, it's stealing!

“**all good fidelity**” (gr) speaks of caring for that which belongs to the “master” or the in our case, “the boss.” If we are Christians, we should therefore be exemplary employees. Again, by doing so, we glorify God in the workplace, and show to those we work with that a Christian is truly a changed and “other-centered” individual. Not just at church, but publicly out in the world! With Christ in control of us, we WILL be hard-working, honest, diligent, and other-centered, *period*.