

# THE LETTER TO TITUS



An Explanation of This Letter  
Especially for You

Ger de Koning

ROCK  
SOLID  
8



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Rock Solid #8 (Part III)

Ger de Koning

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## Abbreviations of the Names of the Books of the Bible

### **Old Testament**

Gen – Genesis

Exo – Exodus

Lev – Leviticus

Num – Numbers

Deu – Deuteronomy

Jos – Joshua

Jdg – Judges

Rth – Ruth

1Sam – First Samuel

2Sam – Second Samuel

1Kgs – First Kings

2Kgs – Second Kings

1Chr – First Chronicles

2Chr – Second Chronicles

Ezra – Ezra

Neh – Nehemiah

Est – Esther

Job – Job

Psa – Psalms

Pro – Proverbs

Ecc – Ecclesiastes

Song – Song of Songs

Isa – Isaiah

Jer – Jeremiah

Lam – Lamentations

Eze – Ezekiel

Dan – Daniel

Hos – Hosea

Joel – Joel

Amos – Amos

Oba – Obadiah

Jona – Jonah



Mic – Micah  
Nah – Nahum  
Hab – Habakkuk  
Zep – Zephaniah  
Hag – Haggai  
Zec – Zechariah  
Mal – Malachi

### **New Testament**

Mt – Gospel of Matthew  
Mk – Gospel of Mark  
Lk – Gospel of Luke  
Jn – Gospel of John  
Acts – Acts of the Apostles  
Rom – Letter to the Romans  
1Cor – First Letter to the Corinthians  
2Cor – Second Letter to the Corinthians  
Gal – Letter to the Galatians  
Eph – Letter to the Ephesians  
Phil – Letter to the Philippians  
Col – Letter to the Colossians  
1Thes – First Letter to the Thessalonians  
2Thes – Second Letter to the Thessalonians  
1Tim – First Letter to Timothy  
2Tim – Second Letter to Timothy  
Tit – Letter to Titus  
Phlm – Letter to Philemon  
Heb – Letter to the Hebrews  
Jam – Letter of James  
1Pet – First Letter of Peter  
2Pet – Second Letter of Peter  
1Jn – First Letter of John  
2Jn – Second Letter of John  
3Jn – Third Letter of John  
Jude – Letter of Jude  
Rev – Revelation

## Explanation of general format

PERSONAL PRONOUNS are capitalized when pertaining to Deity.

BRACKETS [ ] are used in this commentary in the Bible text to indicate words which are not found in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek but implied by it.

SHARP BRACKETS < > are used in this commentary in the Bible text to indicate words possibly not in the original writings.

When ASTERISKS \* are used in New Testament quotations, it is to mark verbs that are historical presents in the Greek which have been translated with an English past tense in order to conform to modern usage. The translators recognized that in some contexts the present tense seems more unexpected and unjustified to the English reader than a past tense would have been. But Greek authors frequently used the present tense for the sake of heightened vividness, thereby transporting their readers in imagination to the actual scene at the time of occurrence. However, the translators felt that it would be wise to change these historical presents to English past tenses.

ALL CAPS in the New Testament quotations are used in the text to indicate Old Testament quotations or obvious references to Old Testament texts.

## The Letter to Titus

### **Introduction**

Just like both previous letters which are addressed to a person (Timothy), this letter is also addressed to a person: Titus. Timothy and Titus are not random people. They belong to the fellow workers of Paul. You have learnt some things about Timothy from the book of Acts. If you want to learn about Titus in that book you will search in vain in it. He is not mentioned there. But you can learn about him from some letters of Paul, especially his second letter to the Corinthians. If you read there what Paul says about Titus you will notice that he very much appreciates him.

The work of Titus in Corinth is an example of his dedicated service. From references to Titus in the mentioned letter we can conclude that he became a mature believer through spiritual growth and experience. Paul desired the support of Titus (2Cor 2:12); he experienced comfort through Titus (2Cor 7:6); he knew the joy of Titus and the refreshment of his spirit about the good that he saw in the believers (2Cor 7:13); he knew about the love that Titus had for the obedient believers (2Cor 7:15); he testified to the willingness of Titus of committing himself on behalf of poor believers (2Cor 8:6,16).

He calls Titus his “partner and fellow worker” with the Corinthians (2Cor 8:23). Titus has the same goal like Paul, that’s why Paul appreciates Titus very much in the work for the Lord. He also sees the same unselfishness with Titus which characterizes himself (2Cor 12:18). In both the work and the motives Paul has an exceptional co-worker in Titus.

Because Paul calls Titus his “true child” (Tit 1:4) we may assume that Titus heard the gospel from Paul and came to conversion. It is not clear whether he went together with Paul immediately after that.

The first time we find Titus together with Paul somewhere is in connection with the controversial question of whether believers from the Gentiles should be circumcised (Gal 2:1,3; cf. Acts 15:1-2). In that way Titus is soon confronted with the legalistic pressure that the Jewish believers want to ex-

ert on the believers from the Gentiles. He experiences and learns how Paul deals with that. The great counterpart of the law is grace. Titus gets a great impression of that too. One and the other appear to be a good preparation for his task in Crete of which you learn from this letter.

The last reference of Titus in the letters of Paul is in his second letter to Timothy (2Tim 4:10). Without any further explanation Paul writes to Timothy that Titus had traveled to Dalmatia. Most apparently Titus went there to serve the Lord.

When Paul has been in Crete is not to be concluded from the Scripture. It has been assumed that he was accompanied by Titus in Crete after his first imprisonment in Rome. He left after churches came to existence there, but not without leaving his co-worker Titus there, out of his concern for the newly founded churches. The churches have been founded, but still need many instructions with a view to their daily practice. In this view Paul has not been able to finish his work. Titus had to do that. Paul already gave orally as an apostle the authority to Titus and now he does that in writing too.

The assignment to Titus is twofold. He has to set in order what is lacking and he has to appoint elders in each city (Tit 1:5). The letter therefore deals with the maintenance of order in the local churches of God. This order is not seen here so much in relation to the gatherings of the church; it is more about the daily believer-to-believer relationships and their conduct in the world.

## Titus 1

### **Tit 1:1 | Sender, Faith and Knowledge**

*1 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,*

V1. Paul starts his letter with mentioning his own name. It is not that he wanted to put his own person in the foreground by that. The important thing for him is the service he was called for. For that reason he connects to his name two tasks, that of a bond-servant and that of an apostle. He starts with “a bond-servant of God”. By that he puts himself next to Titus and you. He is first a bond-servant of God, like you also are in the first place. If you take the humblest place you are most able to serve (cf. Lk 22:26).

After he introduced himself as bond-servant he calls himself “an apostle of Jesus Christ”. As an apostle he took a position of authority. Therein he doesn’t stand next to Titus and you, but above him and you. It is a good thing to repeat that he calls himself first a bond-servant and then an apostle. Exercising authority according to the will of God can only happen in the mind of a bond-servant. If a person wants to be a good leader he ought to know first what it is to be a bond-servant or a servant. But he also calls himself an apostle. As an apostle he has a position and a task that grant him authority that demands obedience.

Then he delivers the proof of his apostleship. Nowhere does he do that so comprehensively and strongly as here. It is remarkable how close he connects his apostleship with the believers. You will see that in verses 1-3. The particular way in which he presents the believers is also remarkable.

His apostleship is above all “for the faith of those chosen of God” (Rom 8:33; Col 3:12). That rules out an apostleship according to the law or in connection with an earthly nation. The apostleship of Paul does not belong to the law but to faith. Law and faith exclude each other (Gal 3:12).

Paul doesn’t submit his apostleship to the judgment of the law, but to the judgment of faith. The important thing for him is not obedience to rules

and laws, but obedience that comes from faith. This faith is present in “those chosen of God”. Because it is about the church here, it is clear that you may think of being chosen “before the foundation of the world” (Eph 1:4). You believe, don’t you? And you are chosen by God, aren’t you? Then you will surely acknowledge Paul’s apostleship.

Application: Today you can say that every spiritually minded leader considers the faith of those who have been chosen and exerts his authority accordingly. He doesn’t impose a yoke on them but stirs them up to obedience of faith. Thereby he doesn’t focus in the first place on the outward of the believers but on their heart, their inward spiritual life.

There is a second feature of Paul’s apostleship. It is also to (or: in accordance with) “the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness”. You can also put the apostleship of Paul to the test by verifying the way he presents the truth. He doesn’t present the truth about God and the Lord Jesus and the church etcetera, as a doctrine, as truths for you to learn by heart. With Paul you see that he connects all his teachings to a life in Godliness. That means that you see the true acknowledgment of the truth being implemented in a life that shows a deep reverence for God and everything He has said.

Application: Today you will recognize a spiritual leader by the fact that he lives to the honor of God by practicing the knowledge of the truth in his own daily life. Such a leader doesn’t demand a submission to a theory, but presents the truth in his speech and his deeds. Today there are many who claim to be bond-servants of Christ, but who want to serve according to the latest so-called knowledge of science or the latest arguments of unbelief. But the faith and the knowledge that are meant here are not the faith and knowledge of the world, neither that of Christianity, but of ‘those chosen of God’.

Now read Titus 1:1 again.

Reflection: What criteria for spiritual leadership do you discover in verse 1?

**Tit 1:2-4 | The Promise of Eternal Life**

*2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, 3 but at the proper time manifested, [even] His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior, 4 to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.*

V2. A third test of Paul's apostleship is that it belongs to "the hope of eternal life". Here eternal life is presented as something you still are to receive. That seems to be in contradiction to what John writes about that. John speaks about eternal life as something you already have now (1Jn 5:11). Still, that is no contradiction because life is presented in two ways.

Briefly said: John speaks about the life through which we live, Paul about the life in which we live. The one is the life in you, the other life is about the life around you, your environment. In the first case you may compare it with living a healthy life and in the second case with an urban or rural life.

You have eternal life in you, but you still live in a world that lies in sin. When you are in heaven, then the whole environment and atmosphere wherein eternal life is being lived and enjoyed, will perfectly fit with the eternal life in you. Eternal life doesn't indicate only the duration or length, but also the quality.

Application: Today you recognize the true spiritual leader by the fact that he encourages the hearts of those who are chosen by presenting to them the heavenly glory at the end of their journey.

You can be sure that you will enjoy eternal life in that life atmosphere, for it is promised by "the not-lying God" as it is literally said. God cannot lie, He is not able to, it is impossible for Him to lie (Heb 6:18). That stands against the character of the Cretans who apparently cannot do other than lie (verse 12), and against the deceitful nature that each human has (Rom 3:4). God is perfectly faithful in His promise of eternal life.

I almost wrote: the eternal life is promised to you. That wouldn't really be wrong either. After all you have been chosen before the foundation of the world. The promise is indeed for you, though it is not written like that. It is said that God has promised "long ages ago", literally "before times eter-

nal". When I think of that I prefer the thought that God has promised this eternal life to the Lord Jesus, for only He was there then. Not that eternal life was promised to the Lord Jesus as something He didn't possess, for the Lord Jesus is the eternal life (1Jn 5:20). No, God promised Him eternal life to give it to His chosen ones (Jn 17:2).

You wouldn't have known anything about that promise if God had not revealed it. Isn't it impressive that God makes you familiar with something that was a topic of conversation in eternity between the Father and the Son? Isn't it mind blowing if you consider that your name was mentioned by the Father to the Lord Jesus for giving you eternal life?

V3. To manifest this promise God waited "at the proper time", that is His own time. First the heart of man toward God had to be revealed. That has become fully clear at the cross. There man let the Lord Jesus, God revealed in goodness and mercy, die the most horrific death.

That lowest point in the history of man is at the same time the moment that God fully exposes His heart and reveals what is the breadth and length and height and depth of His counsels (Eph 3:18).

And how does God do that? Through "His word, in the proclamation". This proclamation was entrusted by Him to the apostle Paul (cf. Rom 10:14-17; 1Cor 2:7-10). That Word we have now in the Scripture (Rom 16:25-27). In that way the revelation also reaches you (1Cor 2:10-14).

Paul has not taken this ministry himself or fulfilled it in his own way (Gal 1:11-12). His apostleship and the ministry that is connected to it, is "according to the commandment of God our Savior". This name of God shows Him as the One Who brings salvation – He is a Savior – to all men (cf. Tit 2:11; 1Tim 2:3-4). The preaching that was entrusted to Paul is therefore twofold. On the one hand he preaches the gospel to all people through which they receive salvation. On the other hand he unfolds the full truth to all who have received the gospel and have been saved.

Application: Also today something has been entrusted to each spiritual leader to pass on to believers. What they pass on must cause that believers learn to live with one another to the honor of God.



V4. Paul addresses Titus whom he calls his “true child in a common faith”. The word ‘true’ means ‘legally begotten’. That doesn’t mean that Titus is physically his own son. The addition ‘in a common faith’ makes clear that it is about a spiritual conception (cf. 1Tim 1:2; 1Cor 4:15; Phlm 1:10). Titus came to faith and was born again through the ministry of Paul. The Gentile Titus and the Jew Paul confess the same faith (cf. 2Pet 1:1). They both belong to the church in which is no Jew or Greek (1Cor 12:13; Col 3:11).

Paul concludes his introduction with the usual blessing of “grace and peace”. ‘Grace’ is at the front. Titus can only do his work if he is aware that he needs God’s grace for his task. He will never be able to execute his task by his own strength. If he is aware to be dependent on the grace that God is giving him, he will be able to do his task with the ‘peace’ of God. He will not easily be discouraged if he continuously faces adversary or if there is no cooperation or if his work doesn’t seem to bear fruit.

Grace and peace are wished to him from “God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior”. That puts Titus in the relation of a child to his Father and to the Lord Jesus as his Redeemer. The one gives confidence and the other works commitment and efforts.

Application: A spiritual leader knows God as his Father and entrusts himself totally to Him. He also knows the Lord Jesus as his Redeemer Who has set him free that he may live for Him. The price the Redeemer paid and the awareness that in that way he has been redeemed is the greatest exhortation to serve Him.

Now read Titus 1:2-4 again.

Reflection: Which criteria for spiritual leadership do you discover in verses 2-4?

### Tit 1:5-9 | Elders

*5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6 [namely], if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.*

V5. After his introduction Paul comes to the main point of his letter in verse 5. He has founded some churches in Crete. That he speaks about “every city”, gives the impression that the gospel has been accepted on a large scale on that island, due to which possibly in every city in the island a church has come into existence. However, Paul has not had the opportunity to build up and confirm the churches in the truth. There was still something missing regarding the teachings.

If you read the next chapters you may think for instance of the teaching on the relationships among the believers (chapter 2) and the attitude toward the government (chapter 3). Although Paul himself is not able to provide what is lacking, he provides in the person of Titus someone who is capable to replace him.

Besides, it is not the purpose that Titus stays in Crete. Paul will have him to be replaced by someone else (Tit 3:12). Every ambassador of the apostle will be of great support to the believers in order to live their lives as Christians. But there is also qualified leadership needed among the believers that will not be changed. Therefore Titus receives the direction to appoint elders in every city where there is a church. That's what the greater part of chapter 1 deals with.

The Cretans are wicked people by nature (verse 12). Paul knows them. Therefore he knows what qualifications elders should have to be able to lead the churches in Crete so that they meet the will of the Lord.

In order to keep them in line or to bring them into order, Paul doesn't develop a church order. He doesn't order Titus to introduce church regu-

lations that seem to be most suitable for their way of life on the island. That has certainly happened in church history, but that is not in accordance with the Bible. I will try to explain what it takes to appoint elders.

There has always been a lot of discussion about appointing elders. There are continually questions like: 'Who is going to appoint?' and 'Do we still have elders nowadays and how do you recognize them?' In order to find correct answers to these kinds of questions, you should consider some things. One of them is to bear in mind that elders occupy a position of authority and that they are put in that position by a higher authority.

You notice that where you read about the appointment of elders in the New Testament (Acts 14:23; 20:28; Tit 1:5) they are appointed by apostles or their representatives. So appointment cannot be done by the church. It would be strange if the church itself determines who exercises authority over it. That's why this letter is addressed to Titus and not to the church in Crete. No, authority always comes from above.

Titus receives the direction to appoint elders on behalf of the apostle. The appointment of elders is necessary here because the church doesn't have the complete New Testament yet. An official appointment gives the authority to elders to take action against people who pretend to be spiritual leaders, but who actually are deceivers. The church ought to listen to the elders and will as a result experience the blessing. In our days it is not necessary to have that official appointment, for we have the complete Word of God.

The question whether elders are still to be appointed is not that difficult to be answered if you consider that elders can only be appointed by a higher authority. There are no apostles anymore and neither are there people who can act as representatives of an apostle. Therefore it is not right to appoint elders in our days. But that doesn't mean that they are not anymore to be found. The Bible more often speaks about elders without saying that they are officially appointed (e.g. Acts 11:30; 1Tim 5:17; Jam 5:14; 1Pet 5:1-2).

The word 'elder' indicates in both the Old Testament and the New Testament a mature person with life experience. In that sense there are fortunately still 'elders', including those who have a leading position, pastors, the gift of leadership (Acts 15:22; Rom 12:8; 1Cor 12:28; 1Thes 5:12; Heb

13:7,17,24). They all have no formal authority, but you are willing to submit yourself to them if you notice that they act in accordance with God's Word.

V6. Then the qualifications follow an elder must meet. Before I deal with those I want to point out to you that those qualifications do not only apply to an elder. It is a good thing to ask yourself to what extent they are present or absent with you. You may say that what is required for an elder as a qualification, is required to you as a rule of conduct.

The first qualification is that an elder must be "above reproach". That means that he shouldn't be accused of anything, that he is not to be blamed for anything. The first area where that applies is his marriage and family. He must be "the husband of one wife". If he has more than one wife, as a result of his life in sin, he cannot be an elder. And in case he has children, they also have to be believers. And not only that. Those children should not be known as money wasting freeloaders, who cannot be controlled by their father.

Therefore the family of the elder may not be blamed for anything. For if he doesn't manage his family well, how will he be able to manage the church (1Tim 3:5)? Does it seem to ask too much of you? It may be, but can you imagine God to lower His standards to fit our practice? That's not possible.

It is absolutely grace if the children come to faith, for faith is not a heritage. But there is also the side of human responsibility. God assumes that in a family where there are believing parents, the children are also believers. It is God's purpose to save someone with his household (Acts 16:31; Jos 2:18; Exo 12:3; Gen 6:18; 7:1).

Application: Spiritual leaders are responsible for causing their children to desire to follow the Lord Jesus.

V7. After the family the personal qualifications of the overseer follow. Have you noticed that Paul spoke about 'elders' in verse 5 and about "the overseer" in verse 7? As it has been noticed already (see the explanation of 1 Timothy 3:1-5) this clarifies that the elder and overseer are the same person.

1. As the first personal qualification, now apart from his family, it is said again that he “must be above reproach”, i.e. not to be accused of anything.

2. He must be aware that it is about a task in God’s house. He is a “steward” there and not the owner. He has been entrusted to manage something that belongs to Another, God. Therefore he is also responsible, concerning his conduct, to Him.

3. When an overseer is conscious of that, he will “not” act “self-willed”. He will not claim any authority and obedience without any reason.

4. He recognizes the right of the others for explanation whether something is good or bad. When questions rise he will not respond “quick-tempered” as if being stung by a wasp, even if he has the presumption of evil intentions. He is not quick to anger, but has self-control.

5. That self-control is also there over his lusts. He is not to be tempted by alcohol, he is “not addicted to wine”. There is nothing wrong with drinking some wine at times (1Tim 5:23), but to desire it is wrong.

6. An overseer is also not a brawler, he is “not pugnacious”. He doesn’t seek to overpower other people, neither with his fists nor with his tongue.

7. He is also “not fond of sordid gain”, which implies that he doesn’t exercise his service to make financial profits.

V8. After the characteristics in verse 7 (of which six are negative) Paul reminds Titus of a number of positive characteristics in verses 8-9. Being a Christian is not only characterized by the absence of negative things, but especially by the presence of positive things that are also to be developed. Instead of seeking his own interest and profit the elder ought to seek to be meaningful to others.

1. That is especially expressed in being “hospitable”. He not only invites friends for a cup of coffee, but he has an open heart for needy believers who may be unfamiliar to him.

2. As one “loving what is good” (or: ‘a friend of the good’) he has a heart that is wide open for everything that is good and useful. That doesn’t make him thoughtless, a person who gets excited about everything, without distinction.

3. He is “sensible” or thoughtful, well-balanced in his view and deeds.

4. He acts “just” toward other people: he deals fairly and uprightly with others.

5. He is “devout”, which means that He is focused on God and lives in devotion to Him.

6. As far as he himself is concerned, he is “self-controlled”. That includes more than only with regard to the consumption of alcohol. It is about a person who can control himself and who is able to control his desires and lusts.

An elder must therefore be just toward people, holy toward God and sober-minded toward himself.

V9. An elder also has to deal with contradictors, especially from the Jews – ‘those of the circumcision’ (verse 10). These people are always and everywhere active against the truth. They try to confuse the thoughts of people in a devious way. The overseer is not to try to resist these people with his own words, but with a word that is in accordance with the teaching of the apostle. He ought to exhort and convict with a word that comes from the Word, for that alone is truly trustworthy because it comes from God, and Paul passed it on.

The overseer is actually a man with authority, but he himself is also under authority, that is the authority of the Word of God that has been taught by the apostle. This is called “sound doctrine”. It is sound in itself, not mixed with strange, human thoughts. Its effects are also sound. Therefore you will grow sound in faith if you listen to it.

Now read Titus 1:5-9 again.

Reflection: Which of the characteristics do you want to be seen in your life? What do you think you could do about it?

**Tit 1:10-16 | False Teachers**

*10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not [teach] for the sake of sordid gain. 12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. 15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. 16 They profess to know God, but by [their] deeds they deny [Him], being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.*

V10. The work that Paul has achieved in Crete was much blessed. In many cities churches have come into existence. However, where the Lord is at work satan also becomes active. The adversary has not only sneaked a few insubordinate people into the churches to destroy the work, but "many". That's why formal authority in Crete is so useful and necessary.

These "many rebellious men" are people who are baptized and who profess to be Christians. They have taken their place in the church, but they are wolves in sheep's clothing. They openly resist the truth that is revealed by God and preached by Paul. By opposing sound doctrine they reveal their rebelliousness. These people have no respect at all for authority.

Paul also calls them "empty talkers", who spit out only empty words that lead to no good at all. They possibly are eloquent people, who have a ready tongue. Believers who have no spiritual discernment are being deceived by this empty talk. That's what it is all about for this people. They are "deceivers" who fool the thoughts of the believers, misguide them and lead them in the wrong direction. They are not people who sincerely think that they are right, but swindlers who confuse the believers inwardly.

Most of these false teachers are "of the circumcision", so from Judaism. They are Christians who are originally circumcised Jews. They have never been totally freed from the law and are trying to impose the law on the Christians in Crete. Also today there are many of such people to be found in professing Christianity where so much Jewish religiosity from the Old

Testament is present. A Judaist spirit of outward form service and legalism pervades professing Christianity. It is in contrast with the spirit of the Scripture to introduce elements of the Jewish religion, especially the law.

There has been a contention about this in the early church. This contention had come to a solution at an apostles' meeting in Jerusalem (Acts 15:5-10). There it was decided that the law is not to be imposed on the believers 'from the nations'. The law cannot be the rule of life for the Christian. You are not legalistic if you live strictly for yourself and at the same time give freedom to the other. You become legalistic only if you impose your rules of life on others.

V11. We should combat legalism radically, for it permeates whole families. In the letter to the Galatians Paul also sharply responds to these false brothers (Gal 2:4-5). Their doctrine is wrong and it is preached from evil motives. Paul commands here in general, so also you, that they must be silenced. 'To silence' is to muzzle the mouth, that it is not able anymore to do any harm. That is only possible through the power of God's Word and through His Spirit (cf. Mt 22:34).

You cannot take a passive attitude toward false teachers. The moment they get an entrance in a family, if for instance a member of a family joins them, they disrupt the whole family. They ruin families by sowing confusion regarding sound doctrine. The motive that is hidden behind it, is the greed for money (cf. Acts 20:33).

V12. These Jewish false teachers easily find entrance because of the depraved national character of the Cretans. If someone comes to faith, he fundamentally doesn't belong to a certain nation anymore. Still he bears with him the national nature with its evil characteristics. He always has to be alert that it will not control him again. Paul point this out to Titus. It is necessary to take a stand and act with authority against the expressions of this evil national character, that the believers may remain sound in faith.

This assertion about their national character is not just a view of Paul, but is confirmed by one of their own prophets, a certain Epimenides. He states without circumlocution that Cretans always lie. Their mendacity is even proverbial. 'Speaking like a Cretan' means lying.



Their own prophet compares them also with an evil, wild beast. Such a beast doesn't want any bridle, for its nature is rebellious. It wants to bite and has a propensity for cruelty. A 'lazy glutton' thinks of nothing else than the satisfaction of his own lowest needs. He has an uncontrollable gluttony.

V13. Paul underlines the truth of their own prophet. Although Epimenides is not a prophet of God, God acknowledges his testimony through the mouth of Paul.

The false teachers are being led in their evil practices by this depraved national character. Paul knows what he is talking about. He has experienced during his stay in Crete that they are troublesome people. Therefore he tells Titus to act sharply against the outbreaks of that national character in the church. The goal of this action is that they may be sound in the faith.

V14. Paul connects another goal to this action. Titus must severely rebuke fantasies, human statutes and traditions. They are evil plagues in the church of God that stir Him up to jealousy and that are in contrast with His grace, for they exalt man. That applies to the believers in Crete and that applies to all believers at all times all over the world.

It concerns in the first place "Jewish myths". Those are all kinds of fantasies and fabrications about the origin of spiritual beings like angels and demons. Those are all speculations without even a modicum of truth. It may seem interesting and books are written about it that also find readers. But to be sound in faith the believers should turn away from it. We must not pay attention to that, we must totally ignore it.

In the second place it concerns "commandments of men". The commandments of men put man in the middle and make him imagine that he can earn salvation by complying with certain traditions and rituals. That can happen by additions to a commandment of God or by a distortion of a commandment of God. Jewish scribes are excellent masters in that. The result is that people neglect the commandment of God, while they keep the traditions of people (Mk 7:5-13).

In both cases there is mention of a "turn away from the truth" (cf. 2Tim 4:3-4). You recognize it today in many protestant churches where human statutes (reverends and pre-programmed services) play a major role and

in the roman-catholic church where traditions (fables, mystics and idolatry) also play a major role.

V15. The Christendom that the Scripture shows us, doesn't know any external rituals, except baptism and the Lord's Supper. It comes down to the innermost being (1Sam 16:7; Psa 51:6). He, who is inwardly pure, is allowed to freely make use of all things, without any fear to get defiled. Such a person is not guided by his fleshly lusts, but by love (Rom 14:20).

"All things" doesn't refer to morally evil things of course, but to external things like eating and drinking. Nothing of that is impure in itself (Rom 14:14; 1Tim 4:4). But those who have defiled themselves by sin and the unbelievers, defile everything they come into contact with. That's because their mind and also their will and all their desires and goals have been blemished and defiled. That goes also for their conscience, their inward awareness. They have lost the ability to discern between good and evil. Where the mind and the conscience are defiled, there can be no purity.

V16. It is not about plain apostates. They claim to be fully informed about God and so join the ranks of believers. But profession and practice with these people are opposites. If you see what they are doing, it has got nothing to do with God. This denial of God by their deeds makes them "detestable" or 'abominable'. The word 'detestable' is also used for an idol image and then it is indicated by 'abomination' (Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14). Here lies a close relation with the performance of the antichrist. These false teachers are breathing his spirit.

Another characteristic is that they are disobedient to God and His truth. They do not want to bow to it, but oppose it. There is not "any good deed", i.e. everything that is useful, of such people to be expected; they are totally "worthless" for that.

Now read Titus 1:10-16 again.

Reflection: How can you recognize false teachers and how should you protect yourself against their influence?

## Titus 2

### **Tit 2:1-3 | Older Men, Older Women**

*1 But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. 2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,*

Chapter 1 deals especially with the flock of God and the dangers that threaten the flock. Therefore the Lord gave elders, pastors and leaders. They can lead the flock and keep them from dangers. The practical things are connected with the doctrine and with those chosen of God. That shows how precious the believers are to God's heart. That is what should determine the behavior of the leaders and what makes their responsibility great in dealing with them.

Chapter 2 deals with, as it is said at the end of this chapter, an "own special people" for the Lord Jesus who are zealous for good works. We are His own special people. The Lord Jesus wanted to have His own people or nation in this world, a people who are a joy and pleasure to Him. That sounds in each group that is being addressed in this chapter. He wants to have the older men, the older women, the young women, the young men and the bondslaves for Himself. He wants to be able, in the midst of all nationalities, to point to a nation or at people of whom He can say: 'They are My people.' Kings and rulers have their people, He has them too.

Our task is to live in such a way that He can really say with joy, without being ashamed of us: 'They are My people.' Then certainly not only the gatherings are the point here, where we are visibly together from our living environment and people see a nation or a unity of people. It is about what the Lord Jesus sees when He looks at us in our houses and at our working place. He sees all of those different groups in their environment, not gathered, but often as a solitary individual in the midst of so many who do not belong to His people. He not only loves to see His people when they are together, but also in everyday life in the midst of the world.

V1. To make sure that He can look at us with joy, Paul commands Titus to speak things which are proper for “sound doctrine”. By the way, this verse starts with: “But as for you.” That indicates a contrast to the previous. He should not stop to minister the saints with the sound doctrine by speaking about it again and again. This is the best remedy against the influence of the false teachers.

Titus doesn't receive the command to teach the sound doctrine, but to 'speak the things' that are fitting for it. This may have to do with the fact that the work of Titus is not so much that of a teacher, but more of a pastoral worker, which implies that he often has individual conversations. Public preaching is often not sufficient to meet all needs. A person who especially ministers as a shepherd, once said to me: 'From what you bring in the meeting as doctrine, I take small chunks which I use for an individual believer who needs care.' This is how to complement one another and this is also what the Lord purposed.

The starting point is the sound doctrine. That's the doctrine which is sound in itself and which also makes all people sound who take in this doctrine. It is like fruit. In healthy fruit there are no worms or rotten spots. When you eat healthy fruit, it improves your health.

Apparently Titus is still a young man. This makes it more necessary that he only speaks things which are fitting for sound doctrine. Only then the different age groups will accept his exhortations. Each category has a doctrine that is fitting for that certain group. Titus has to talk about that with each separate group. The differences between the groups will then not cause the believers to live separately from each other, or worse, in opposition to each other, but on the contrary in harmony with one another. In that way the sound doctrine will have a sound effect.

You may say that a sound church consists of the four categories mentioned. The phenomenon 'youth church' ignores this and isolates the youth of the larger whole of the church. In a church as it is presented here, you see a mixture of the maturity and experience of the older people and the energy and activity of the youth.

Paul doesn't address the groups directly, as he does in the letter to the Ephesians and the letter to the Colossians. He gives instructions to Titus

on how he should properly minister each group by age and gender so that they may walk in accordance with their profession. First it is important to consider that each position that is mentioned here, is given by God (age, gender) or is acknowledged by Him (bondslave, master). As long as you are in that position, you ought to act in a way that is fitting for that position.

V2. The first category that is being addressed is the “older men”. Not all older men are elders. Spiritually these older men are not much older than the young people, but they certainly are regarding their age and wisdom of life. Still, their old age goes together with its own dangers. When they get older a feeling of uselessness can arise or not knowing what to do anymore.

1. The danger arises that they open themselves for influences that cause them not to be “temperate” anymore. In that case they are no example anymore for the young people who look upon them. A sober person is free from exaggeration and excitement in words and deeds.

2. Their behavior should not be like that of a puppy, necessarily wanting to act like a young person, but “dignified”. An older man ought to have an attitude with a certain dignity.

3. He will be “sensible” and adopt a tactful reservation. He no longer needs to assert himself so much.

4. Another danger of getting older is that conversation become limited and one-sided. Therefore he must be instructed to be “sound in faith”, which means: sound in what he believes. Then he will be balanced in his speech about the truth, whereby he doesn’t overemphasize certain truths and neglects other truths.

5. Also “in love” he ought to be sound, that it goes out to all God’s children and is not limited to a select few.

6. The last thing that Titus must tell the older men is that they must be sound “in perseverance”. The older you get, the more the danger increases to become despondent. The feeling can arise that nothing makes any sense at all. Weariness of life may occur.

The older men may bear in mind that the Lord has His purpose with their stay on earth until the last minute of their life. Professor Gunning said it

this way when he grew old: 'I will not give death that honor to wait for it.' He looked forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus. The expectation of Him with perseverance also renews the strength of older men (Isa 40:31).

V3. After the exhortations to older men now those to the "older women" follow. Their behavior, which means their whole visible performance in daily life in words, gestures, clothing, decoration, ought to be "reverent". That means that they are continually aware to be living in God's presence. Anna is a wonderful example of such a woman. You read of her that she "never left the temple" (Lk 2:37).

The abuse of the tongue by "malicious gossips" is a great danger for older women. Anna did not commit that sin. On the contrary, she spoke about God. She also served God night and day. She was full of God and praised Him (Lk 2:38). Therefore she was "not enslaved to much wine". She did not have to turn to the bottle out of boredom to get a kind of happy feeling by drinking wine (cf. Eph 5:18).

Titus must instruct older women that they should spend their time in a good way by "teaching what is good". Older women do not have to care for a family anymore and therefore they have less domestic occupations than when there were children to care for.

You may be thinking: 'But isn't it written that the woman is not supposed to be teaching' (1Tim 2:12)? You are right about that. However, here it is not about explaining certain truths of God's Word, but about how something is to be done. They do not perform as teachers before the whole church, but their teaching is only focused on just one certain category: the young women. The teaching here regards the efforts to make clear to young women how they can be good witnesses in daily life.

Now read Titus 2:1-3 again.

Reflection: Do you know older men and older women in your environment with whom you see something of the characteristics mentioned?

## Tit 2:4-10 | Young Women, Young Men, Bondslaves

*4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 [to be] sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. 6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; 7 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, [with] purity in doctrine, dignified, 8 sound [in] speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. 9 [Urge] bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.*

V4. Titus is not commanded to teach “young women”. That would not be fitting for him as a brother. Brothers cannot teach a young sister much regarding their relationship with her husband and her children. He must instruct the older women that that’s their responsibility. It gives older women the opportunity to bring the warmth of motherly relations in the church. Titus passes on seven admonishments to the older women on behalf of the young women. Apparently these admonishments are necessary because of the false teachers who are “upsetting whole families” (Tit 1:11).

What counts most is that there is an atmosphere of love in the family. The young woman ought to have that love to her husband and her children. The housekeeping and maintaining the family can take up so much of her attention that she may have no time and attention for her husband anymore. To what occupies his mind, she doesn’t get around to it. There is also often no time to really show attention to the children.

In our days there is the danger that the career becomes more and more important. Then husband and wife have their own agenda. The relation with one another and also with the children (if at least they are there) happens by leaving notes to one another or through social media. Love stealthily grows cold. However, the environ notices it and the results become visible in the long term. The beautiful and attractive character of the Christian family is shown by the faithfulness and love of the wife for her husband and her children (Pro 31:10-31).

V5. “[To be] sensible” implies that she acts calmly and with deliberation. She must learn to think carefully before she does something. She will not fall into extremes by on the one hand acting impulsively and on the other hand by underestimating what is necessary.

The fourth thing that has to be made clear to young women is that they should keep themselves “pure”. They should not defile themselves with other men, even not in their thoughts. They should neither cause men to have impure thoughts by wearing defiant clothing or seductive make-up nor by looking seductively or using tantalizing language.

She has an extensive task at home. That is her working area. “Workers at home” does not only mean to look after the external things, like clothing and food and drink, but also the spiritual nourishment of the children.

It is important that she is behaving “kind” in doing so. Due to the workload, she can come under such a stress that she may be tempted to do the evil things.

As the seventh aspect older women should instruct their younger sisters to be “subject to their own husband”. Indeed the woman is equivalent to the man, but she is not equal to him. That doesn’t mean that the husband is the master or commander of his wife. He is certainly the head of the wife (1Cor 11:7-10), he has the leading role and makes decisions, of course after deliberation. This is how God has ordained it in creation and it is not wise to deviate from that. He who does, will reap the bitter fruit of that.

There is another aspect connected to deviating from God’s ranking in creation: if what God had ordained is being put aside His Word is dishonored.

V6. Then it is the turn of “the young men”. Titus must ‘urge’ them. The only exhortation that Titus is to speak out to them, is that they must be “sensible”. They ought to control themselves in each territory and aspect of their life.

To be sensible is connected to almost each category mentioned here (Tit 1:8; 2:2,6). Therefore it should be a ‘core activity’ of the Christian. Young people especially run the risk to act uncontrollably and hastily, due to their inexperience.



V7. The rest of Titus' exhortation to the young men must consist of his own "example of good deeds" and indeed "in all things", which means that he should be an 'all embracing' pattern (cf. 1Tim 4:12). He is not supposed to expect things of his contemporaries that are not visible in his own life.

First of all he will be known because of his "purity in doctrine". To compromise with the Word of God is unfamiliar to him. You cannot catch him on explaining God's Word in a way that suits him best.

Furthermore the reverential character of God's Word will be made clear from his whole performance. Due to his great respect for God's Word he will guard himself for trying to make the Word attractive by using popular words.

V8. Each word that Titus speaks must be "sound" and "beyond reproach". Ambiguous words or untrue or far-fetched explanations will give opponents the opportunity to deliver just criticism. If you do not behave yourself like a Christian, it gives the opponent the opportunity to speak evil about you. If you make sure that he cannot speak any evil of you, the reverse will happen: instead of you being put to shame, "the opponent will be put to shame".

V9. As the fifth and last group Titus must exhort "the bondslaves". This group includes people of all previous groups by age and gender. Yet they are clearly distinct from the previous groups. Men and women are created as such by God. It also goes together with creation that there is a difference in age. Regarding the bondslaves it is different. Slavery is not a part of creation, but it is a consequence of the fall. Does it mean that slavery has been abolished by the introduction of Christendom? No. That's also not the purpose of Christendom. Christendom doesn't change social evils, but changes hearts of people, including those of bondslaves.

It is certainly a blessing that slavery has been abolished for the greater part, due to Christendom. But that doesn't mean that what is being said here to bondslaves doesn't count for today. You can apply all instructions for the bondslaves in our time, in any case to all people who are an employee in the service of an employer.

The word for "master" is 'despot', that is a person who has absolute authority and unlimited power over other people, in this case over a bond-

slave. The bondsman in that time was totally delivered to his master. The bondsman is here being told not to be grumpy and feel compelled, but to be active and willingly “subject” to his master. He ought to do the best he can to be “well-pleasing” in everything, even to the capricious master who is hard to be pleased. If that applies to that relation, then how much more should Christian employees be subject to their superiors.

That will not be easy in all cases, but the believing employee is certainly able to satisfy his superior in the strength that the Lord gives. A beautiful example of someone, who as a faithful bondsman was well-pleasing in all things in miserable circumstances, is Joseph (Gen 39:1-6). Also the little maid of Naaman’s wife did not only do her duty, but sought the well-being of her master (2Kgs 5:2-3). The Lord Jesus, Who as the perfect Slave always did what was well-pleasing to the Father (Jn 8:29), exceeds these examples.

Now you have seen the general behavior, still some details of their performance follow. A bondsman is for instance to be expected to obey without being argumentative. This goes beyond not giving brutal answers. It is more about not obstructing the master, not hindering his master to be met in his desires. Today that may mean that you should not argue with your supervisor and that you do not undermine his authority. Of course that doesn’t have to stop a sound deliberation, but it is about your motives.

V10. A bondsman is also told not to be pilfering. He will quite surely have that tendency. The bondsman could have the thought of being entitled to, after all he has been stolen from his family. Thereby he could have the feeling of being greatly underpaid or think that what he pilfers is only the appropriation of back pay. But the wrong that is done to us, does not justify us to do the same injustice. This prescription of not pilfering can for instance be applied today by using the Internet with the device and in the time of the superior or by submitting unjustified or excessive claims.

The bondsman must show the opposite by “showing all good faith” to his master. It is about ‘good’ faith. If the master demands him to lie or to pilfer somewhere else, he is not to obey that (Acts 5:29). If the bondsman shows all good faith, then he is ‘an adorning’ for “the doctrine of God our Savior”. That brings being a bondsman to an awesomely high level!

The knowledge of Him Who has redeemed him from his sins, brings him to a life in which the most beautiful features of the Lord Jesus become visible in an impressive way. What joy God must find in a life in which He is so reminded of His Son's life on earth. Don't you too long to be such a bonds slave?

Now read Titus 2:4-10 again.

Reflection: In which category do you belong? What applies to you most?

### **Tit 2:11-15 | A People for His Own Possession**

*11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. 15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.*

V11. This is the beginning of a new section. Yet there is a clear connection with the previous verses. You can derive that from the word “for” which indicates that everything that is said previously has its meaning through what follows. And what is it that follows? That is the instruction of “the grace of God”. You could say that all previous exhortations can only be realized by the instruction of the grace of God. In that instruction the teachings of our Savior-God is being explained. However, not as a theory, as a theological dogma, but as something that is to be seen in our life on earth, which was seen in the life of the Lord Jesus.

The grace that appeared was revealed when the Lord Jesus came to earth in humiliation. Especially the Gospel according to Luke exposes Him as the One Who revealed the grace of God to the whole of humanity. Already in the very beginning of that Gospel you read how people wondered “at the gracious words which were falling from His lips” (Lk 4:22; cf. Psa 45:2).

When Christ came to earth by being born as Man, the grace of God appeared in His Person. In the Child in the manger you see how God opens His heart for all people. With that Child salvation comes to all people without exception. God’s salvation is not limited to a certain people. God had chosen a certain people to be His people. He had provided that people with all possible means in order to serve Him and testify of Him toward all other peoples. He gave them His law. But that people were worse and more corrupt than all other peoples.

When God sent His Son, it became evident how corrupt that people were. All of their murderousness came to light. They killed Him because they couldn’t bear Him. Man is so depraved that he cannot stand God revealed in goodness. That was the end of all God’s efforts to make man serve Him.

Then an awesome change came into God's way of acting. When man had delivered the proof of his absolute incorrigibility, the way was now opened for God to reveal His grace. That grace is present in the same Christ Who was killed by His people. Only, the offer of that salvation is not made to only one nation, but that offer is for all people. This offering fits the appreciation God has for what His Son has done. Salvation is being offered to all people.

V12. Everyone who has been saved, old and young, man and woman, learn to know grace in still another way, namely as a teacher, for grace is "instructing us". Grace gives us the necessary instruction on how to live as a believer. Therefore grace is for 'all' people, is being offered to all people, but is instructing 'us', which implies the believers.

This instruction of grace is a continuous process. Through this instruction new people are being made able to honor God in their new walk of life. The most important thing that is shown in this instruction is that the past has been condemned. In order to live to God's honor, it is important to have a good view of your past. Before your conversion you lived without God. Your life was ungodly, which means that you did not ask for God. You pursued worldly lusts by focusing yourself on all things that the world can offer. That is what you lived for.

Through the instruction of grace you understand that "ungodliness and worldly lusts" can in no way have any room in your life anymore. You "deny" them. It is not a command to do that, but it is a matter of course. You have renounced these things as a conscious decision with a continuous effect. It is something you are to live up to on a daily basis.

If you have turned your back on ungodliness and lusts in this way, there comes room for the new life. You live your new life in the present, "in the present age". Indeed that is an age, a territory of power which is so terribly evil that it rejected the Lord Jesus, but from which you have been delivered by the work of Christ and the will of God (Gal 1:4). Yet you still live in it, but as a new man with very different characteristics than before.

1. You live "sensible". That indicates how you yourself are. You do not let yourself be dragged by the delusion of the day; you can control yourself.

2. You live “righteously”, touches your attitude toward others, like your brothers and sisters, your family members and colleagues, the world.

3. The third characteristic regards your attitude toward God. You live “godly”, which is in fear or reverence to God and you serve and honor Him.

In Job and Simeon you have examples of such a life (Job 1:1,8; Lk 2:25).

V13. After you have seen the instruction of grace in verse 12 for the past and the present, this instruction continues in verse 13 with the future. While living in the present, you may look forward to a great future. The focal point in that future is “the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”. With a view to that Paul speaks about a “blessed hope and the appearing of the glory”.

Our ‘blessed hope’ is that we will see that glory when He will come to take us, the church, up (1Thes 4:15-17). Regarding the world we may look forward to ‘the appearing of the glory’. All sin and the misery it has caused will come to an end when the Lord Jesus returns to earth. He is ‘our great God and Savior’. The Man Who once was on earth in humiliation to be the Savior of the world (Jn 4:42) is also the eternal God. He, Christ, can justly be called ‘great’ (Lk 1:32; Mt 5:35; Lk 7:16; Heb 10:21; 13:20).

V14. When Paul speaks about the glory of Christ he cannot help but speak about the great love of the Lord Jesus and about the great work He has accomplished. Jesus Christ “gave Himself for us”. He loved us that much that He not only gave everything He had (Mt 13:44-46) and was willing to become poor for our sakes (2Cor 8:9), but beyond all that He gave Himself. You read somewhere else that God gave His own Son (Jn 3:16; Rom 8:32), but here you read that the Lord Jesus gave Himself. And how did He do that? By giving His life a ransom for many (Mt 20:28; Jn 10:11,15). He did that voluntarily. He died for you and me while we were still sinners (Rom 5:8).

What did He have in mind when He gave Himself? He wanted to make us “a people for His own possession”. To achieve that it was necessary that He redeemed “us from every lawless deed”. To redeem here means as much as ‘to ransom’, ‘to release’. With this meaning this word appears another time only in 1 Peter 1 (1Pet 1:18). There Peter writes that we are not ‘redeemed’ with corruptible things like silver or gold, but with the

precious blood of Christ. That means that a price has been paid for our redemption, which is nothing less than the precious blood of Christ. We have indeed been bought at a price that cannot be valued in money (1Cor 7:23).

But, as it is said, that price is paid for our redemption, our liberation from a power by which we were completely captivated. That power was lawlessness. Lawlessness is the essence of sin (1Jn 3:4). Lawlessness means that you rejected any form of authority that comes from God. The Lord Jesus has redeemed you from all lawlessness (cf. Psa 130:8) so that you may acknowledge Him as the only Commander. You belong now to a people He calls "His own possession" (cf. Exo 19:5) and to whom nothing of the uncleanness of the nations of the world is attached.

The only way that this people could come into connection with Him was that He cleansed them. That also happened through His blood (1Jn 1:7). Through His redemption you are His possession. Through His purification you answer to His holiness and you are able to serve Him by being "zealous" in doing "good deeds". 'Good deeds' is everything you do in obedience to the Lord, for that is the way God is glorified and others are blessed.

V15. Paul urgently asks Titus once more to definitely communicate to others all that he told him. If people do not want to heed this call because of their negligence, he should exhort them. And if he notices that his words are resisted, then he ought to openly reprove them. He should not hesitate, but he must speak with all authority. After all, he is a representative of the apostle. But he must behave himself in accordance to his position. If he does not live up to what he says, others will despise him and his words will be in vain (cf. 1Tim 4:12).

Let us also speak on a regular basis with one another about the topics covered in this chapter. We may hold these things up to each other. If it appears that there are hindrances to practice the sound doctrine, let us get rid of them or make the necessary changes. The Lord is worthy of it. He has redeemed us and cleansed us for Himself.

Now read Titus 2:11-15 again.

Reflection: What do you learn in these verses about the practice of your Christian life? How does that become visible in your life?

## Titus 3

### **Tit 3:1-6 | Once and Now**

*1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. 3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and [His] love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

V1. In the previous chapter Paul speaks about how the different groups must behave in the house of God. In this chapter he deals with the attitude of the Christian in the world. The Cretans may know that they are redeemed from their lawless deeds (Tit 2:14), but that doesn't mean that they should ignore the authorities (cf. 1Pet 2:13-14; Rom 13:1).

They know indeed that they ought to subject themselves to the government, but it seems that they have forgotten that. Titus must remind them of that. They possibly are influenced by their former life. In those days they did not care about anyone, even not about the civilian authorities.

How is that with you? Do you also struggle with acknowledging the authorities? How do you comply with the traffic instructions or filling out forms for a student grant or your income tax declaration or other forms of the government by which you claim to be entitled to a certain compensation? It might be necessary for you to be reminded not to be swayed by the spirit of rebellion against authority or the softer form of civil disobedience. I certainly need that.

Besides, not only obedience is required, but it is expected of you that you are "ready for every good work". In this case it implies that you cooperate with the government in all things what is good for the nation and society. That means that what you do, has to meet the will of God.



V2. In this verse it is not only about the government, but about “all men”. What is written here applies toward all people. How do your neighbors, fellow classmates or colleagues know you? Be careful not to speak with contempt about your unbelieving neighbor who may live like a ‘lazy glutton’ or an ‘evil beast’. How do you consider your unbelieving colleague? The command “to malign no one” regards the unbelievers here. I hope you do not participate in a gossip that may be going around about a colleague.

I also hope that you are known as someone who is “peaceable” and not as someone who is argumentative or contentious, but much more as someone who is “gentle”, kind and helpful. It cannot be right that you are kind to your brothers and sisters and in the meantime quarrel with your neighbor because he parked his car on the very spot where you normally park yours, even if he did that on purpose just to annoy you. You then miss the chance to show “every consideration for all men”. ‘All men’ is not ‘all men except for your annoying neighbor’.

If you show gentleness you show a wonderful feature of the Lord Jesus, Who says to you that you can learn this from Him (Mt 11:29). In that way people will see that you are a citizen from another realm. The whole conduct radiates gentleness, always kind and helpful to ‘all men’, not only to nice people.

V3. The remembrance of how you were will help you to bring the previous into practice. Then you will be able to show people the same love that God has shown to you. The most terrible things that other people may possibly insult you with in the heart of your being, do not come from a source that is more evil than your old nature. Therefore, remember that you too can come to the most terrible deeds if the Lord does not keep you. Therefore you cannot speak with contempt about a criminal, how great and just your abhorrence may be about his deeds.

How were you yourself once (and unfortunately may possibly still be at times)?

1. You were “foolish”, which means: without reason. That is not flattering for people who think of themselves to be very smart.
2. You were also “disobedient”, not be willing to do anything you were asked to do.

3. You also did not see the purpose of your life, you were “deceived” or were “wandering”, for you were just wandering without knowing in which direction you would come out.

4. That led you to a life where you were ‘addicted to’ and were “enslaved to various lusts and pleasures”.

5. You were spending your life “in malice and envy”. You did not tolerate the other to enjoy anything he had; you wanted to have what he had.

6. Your whole performance was “hateful”, revolting.

7. The pleasure you had was fake, for the atmosphere where you abided was one where people were “hating one another”.

V4. If God had dealt with you according to your behavior, you would have perished. But fortunately He did not. Instead on the contrary He dealt with you in His “kindness ... and [His] love for mankind”. Therefore you are still alive and you have not ended up in the ditch, and will not, what is still worse, end up in hell.

His ‘kindness’ has totally changed you. That kindness is supposed to be seen in you by people. You are not kind because others are kind to you, but because you are a Christian. While you were hateful He showed His ‘love for mankind’ to you. In that way He showed you that He cares about you because of who you are as a human being. Speaking with reverence, God acted that way because He could not otherwise. That love for mankind must be visible in you for others, not because they show you love, but because you cannot otherwise.

V5. How did God save you? Certainly not on the basis of your own works, for those were all unrighteous before your conversion. Even your so-called good works of which you thought that God should consider for righteousness were condemnable (Isa 64:6). You were absolutely totally unable to present anything to God that He could reward with salvation.

But what you were not able to do, God did as an expression of “His mercy”. Instead of pouring out His righteous wrath over you He held that back and gave you in His grace what you could never achieve: salvation. Mercy presumes the greatest need of its object and also the necessary means for help, in order to fulfill the need.

So God has saved you because He is merciful. To save you He used two means. The first means is “the washing of regeneration”. Although regeneration looks very much like the new birth (Jn 3:3-6), yet it is not the same. While the new birth happens in you, inwardly, the regeneration is more an outward matter.

You can conclude that from the only other time that the word ‘regeneration’ appears and that is in Matthew 19 (Mt 19:28). In that case regeneration refers to the time that the kingdom of God has outwardly come, whereby the Lord Jesus reigns on earth and His own reign together with Him. Creation will then be regenerated as it were. All things you will then see are new.

What then will be the general situation now already applies to you personally. To you that new condition has come already. The sins you were living in once (verse 3), have been washed away. This washing happened through the Word (Eph 5:26; cf. Jam 1:18; 1Pet 1:23). Due to that your behavior has totally changed. What people see of you is not anymore what you once were, but is from the world that is to come.

Nevertheless the only way for you to live like that is because something has happened to you inwardly. Your outward life happens from the inside, where “the renewing by the Holy Spirit” has taken place. The renewing by the Holy Spirit means the renewing that comes from Him and is worked by Him. Through this renewing work of the Holy Spirit you have received a new spiritual ability through which you are able to see and think in accordance with God (Rom 12:2, the only other place where the word ‘renewed’ is used). The Holy Spirit is the source of a completely new life, of totally new thoughts.

V6. There is not only mention of the work of the Spirit, but also of the gift of the Spirit. He has been given to you (Eph 1:13) and gives power to the new life, that this new life may be expressed. He works a daily renewal in you and also liberates you from the old life you lived. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is a one-time event that has taken place on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33; 1Cor 12:13). The Lord Jesus has received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father as a result of and because of His work, Whom He then poured out. He did not do that scarcely, but “richly”.

Think about it: You are not only born of Him, but He works in you and is available to you. He dwells in you and abides in you and reveals everything to you what is yours in Christ. Because of the Holy Spirit you can richly enjoy the true life, the life in abundance (Jn 10:10).

Now read Titus 3:1-6 again.

Reflection: What are the differences between the past and present in your life?

### Tit 3:7-15 | Heirs, Instructions and Greetings

*7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to [the] hope of eternal life. 8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. 9 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. 12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them. 14 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.*

V7. Now you get to learn about the purpose of salvation. God has saved you, so that you could become ‘an heir’ “according to [the] hope of eternal life”. In the previous verses you have seen what God has done to that end. He appeared to you in His kindness and love to mankind; He showed you mercy; He cleansed and renewed you. But there was still something else to happen to make you an heir, for as an heir you ought to be fully in accordance with the righteousness of God. As a true heir your ‘right’ to the inheritance is not to be questioned.

The Lord Jesus also took care of that through His work on the cross. He has perfectly fulfilled the right of God. Through faith in Him and His work for your sake God passes on His own righteousness to you (Rom 3:21-22). You are a new creation in Christ. You have new life, life of God. You are a child of God and therefore also an heir of God (Rom 8:17). God sees you in Christ Who became to you righteousness from God (1Cor 1:30). It will be evident that you owe that justification only to God’s “grace” (Rom 3:24).

It is not mentioned here what the inheritance entails. That doesn’t mean that you do not know what the inheritance consists of. It is after all everything that Christ inherits, because we are His fellow heirs (Rom 8:17; Eph 3:6). Here the inheritance is connected to ‘the hope of eternal life’. The

word 'hope' doesn't indicate insecurity, but focuses you on the future. You will enjoy the inheritance in the same way as you will enjoy eternal life in the time that sin cannot possibly exert its pernicious influence.

You and all believers will then be perfect and therefore the circumstances will also be perfect, without any chance for sin to penetrate again. The full result of the work of Christ will be seen and enjoyed in all His glory and through all eternity. And you may partake of that. That is quite an awesome perspective, isn't it?

V8. What Paul just said is an absolutely trustworthy statement. You can count on it. But it must not stop with nice reflections. Titus must urge that the believers believe this statement and arrange their lives accordingly. Just pass on the things you just learnt to others who also believe in God, which means that they believe Him without questioning His Word. They may not all know this, but if you start to tell them about these things you will notice that they are encouraged and helped by it.

Just like you they will then focus themselves on "good deeds", which means that they will carefully examine for themselves which good deeds they can do. They will work with deliberation. If you are occupied with good, honorable works you do not harm or burden other people, but on the contrary you are engaged with things that have a "good and profitable" effect for the people in your environment.

V9. Concentrating on good deeds prevents you from wasting time on things that are not good. You will avoid those things. Paul mentions some of those things. Titus must avoid "foolish controversies", which are disputes that are useless and make no sense at all. He must also remain far away from figuring out and discussing about "genealogies" because the wildest fantasies were expressed about them.

He must also not partake of strife and disputes about the Law by the Jewish scribes to add all kinds of commands to it. All such empty rhetoric is without any sense and content. It produces nothing else than hot heads and cold hearts. He who mainly talks about outer things doesn't understand much of God's kindness and love to mankind.

V10. Among the people who produce such foolishness, "a factious man" can reveal himself just like that. Therefore it is not surprising that in line

with this, Paul gives Titus an instruction how he should deal with a factious man. A factious man can be a false teacher (2Pet 2:1), but not necessarily. The Pharisees were a factious group or a sect (Acts 15:5; 26:5). They made a controversial point of many things and excluded others who did not share their opinion. Still you could not say that they proclaimed a false doctrine. They were pure in doctrine, but added to God's Word, rendering it powerless (Mt 15:6).

A faction or a sect is a group of believers that distinguishes itself from other believers by putting an excessive emphasis on certain parts of the truth. In order to have fellowship with them they require that people embrace their concept about those parts of the truth. A sect comes to existence if the conditions to have fellowship are more than the Scripture requires. Nevertheless not everyone who belongs to a sect is a sectarian or factious man, but the leaders of the group certainly are.

Then Paul tells Titus, and you too, how to deal with a factious man. Note carefully that this is a personal letter and not a letter to a church. Therefore it is about a personal attitude toward a factious man. There is also no mention of the command to 'remove from among yourselves' (1Cor 5:13b), but about 'warning' and 'rejecting'. The moment a person exposes himself as factious he must be warned once or twice. Only if it becomes evident that the warnings do not help, it can be determined that a person is a factious person and then rejection should follow. Such a person persists in his deviation in such a way that further efforts to bring him to repentance will be in vain.

V11. Titus must reject such a person because he knows that that person "is perverted and is sinning". Further contact will be harmful to himself (1Cor 15:33). Due to his stubborn attitude the factious man is condemning himself without really being conscious of that.

V12. In a totally different tone Paul speaks about some fellow servants in his concluding words. He would love to have Titus with him. But Paul doesn't want the believers at Crete to be without any leadership. Therefore he promises to send someone to replace Titus. He still doesn't know whether to send Artemas or Tychicus. Of Artemas we do not know more than what is written here about him. He must have been a faithful fellow

worker of Paul. Of Tychicus we know more (Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2Tim 4:12). Only when the replacement has arrived Titus could travel to him in Nicopolis, where Paul decided to spend the winter. Then he will be able to continue his journey in spring in the company of Titus.

V13. Artemas and Tychicus appear to be fellow workers of the apostle who are able to represent him elsewhere. That doesn't apply to someone like Apollos. He determines for himself in dependence on the Lord what his task is and where he should go (cf. 1Cor 16:12). It is a danger if you see the way clearly for yourself, to then define it also for others. That is not what Paul does. Zenas and Apollos will also come, but not sent by Paul, but by the Lord.

Paul is not jealous that others come to the area where he has worked, but on the contrary, he is happy about that. He sees no competition, but a supporting one another. Because Zenas has knowledge of the law he is able to respond to the Judaic false teachers. Apollos is mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24). Paul asks Titus to make sure that these two servants will have no lack of anything.

V14. The believers in Crete can give their contribution to that. Titus must exhort them to focus on this kind of "good deeds". Then they will not remain "unfruitful". "Our people" are in a direct sense all believers in Crete and in the broadest sense all believers on earth. We are not to limit that to those who go 'with us the same denominational way'.

You can learn to engage in good deeds. Are you also that eager to learn how "to meet pressing needs"? This exhortation becomes increasingly more topical, because we live in a world where people are building their lives for themselves alone more and more. This spirit also affects Christians more and more. That is to the detriment of lost sinners and needy believers.

V15. Paul concludes with conveying the greetings to Titus from all who are with him. Wherever he is he has fellowship with other believers. In his turn Titus must greet without distinction all believers in Crete, from Paul and from those who are with him. He presumes that all believers in Crete love him and all who are with him as believers. He wishes grace to all in Crete.



In that way he says goodbye. In that way also you and I may say goodbye to one another. We wish one another on our separate ways that grace will guide us and that we will be aware of that.

Now read Titus 3:7-15 again.

Reflection: What was Titus to avoid and what was he to cooperate with?

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