

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Epistle of Paul to Titus – Part 6

I. Exposition of Chapter Three.

A. Verses 1-2 – “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”

1. “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey...” – The word “remind” has the idea of “keep on reminding.”¹ As mentioned, the people of Crete were quite difficult, so this command to “be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey” was needed to be repeated from time to time. When we consider the whole counsel of God found in His Word, however, we know that no believer is commanded to blindly submit and obey to any ruler or authority if what they demand is contrary to our ultimate authority, God. (cf. Acts 4:18-20). In I Timothy 2:1-4, Paul’s command was to pray for all who are in authority. A. Duane Litfin writes:

“A large part of any pastor’s public ministry is reminding people of what they already know. Titus was to remind the Christians on Crete to be good citizens within their communities, a virtue in which Cretans were notoriously deficient. Though Paul did not repeat it here, his thought was no doubt that this behavior, like that of a Christian slave, will adorn the gospel and make it attractive to others (cf. 2:10).”²

2. “...to be ready for every good work...” – The words “...to be ready...” mean; “pertaining to a state of readiness—‘ready, prepared.’”³ In 2:7, Paul instructs Titus to exhort young men to be a “...pattern of good works...” and in 2:14, Paul states that Jesus “gave Himself for us...” that we might be “redeemed”, “purified” and “...His own special people, zealous for good works.” All of these are emphasizing the idea that, though we’re not saved by good works, good works should follow in the life of the believer. (cf. Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:14-26). Warren Wiersbe offers another thought concerning this:

“Ready to every good work” (Titus 3:1) means ‘cooperating in those matters that involve the whole community.’ Our heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20) does not absolve us from responsibilities as citizens on earth.”⁴

3. “...to speak evil of no one...” – The Greek word for “speak evil” is where we get the word “blaspheme” from. The words mean; “to speak ill or to the prejudice of one, to speak slander”⁵ The common thought here is to slander of malign someone. The definition of “slander” is, “the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another’s reputation”⁶ This doesn’t mean that we are to never speak against those who are in error, whether theologically as Paul did, or politically, if they’re speaking contrary to God’s Word. We just need to be certain we’re accurate in our assessment.
4. “...to be peaceable...” – “not contentious, not looking for a fight”⁷ Not prone to getting into arguments and strife with others. Some other translations use the words “avoid quarreling” or “be no brawlers”.
5. “...gentle...” – “equitable, fair, mild, gentle”⁸
6. “...showing all humility to all men.” – The word “humility” means; “gentleness of attitude and behavior, in contrast with harshness in one’s dealings with others”⁹ Humility is the opposite of pride which seeks to exalt itself. Humility is an attitude that sees its need for God. (cf. James 4:6; I Peter 5:5).

“Remind the believers to yield to the authority of [submit/be subject to] rulers and government leaders [authorities], to obey them, to be ready to do good [whatever is good;¹ every good work], to speak no evil about anyone [slander no one], to live in peace [avoid fighting], and to be gentle and polite [considerate; courteous] to all people.”

Titus 3:1-2 – The Expanded Bible

¹ Robert James Utley, *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 122.

² A. Duane Litfin, “Titus,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 766.

³ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 682.

⁴ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 267.

⁵ H.G. Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), 151.

⁶ Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

⁷ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

⁸ Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 238.

⁹ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 748.

B. Verse 3 – “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” – Paul tells Titus, and all other believers, that the reason we need to have proper attitudes towards unbelievers, and new believers I might add, is because we all, at one point, were as they are, to one extent or another.

1. **“...were once foolish...”** – **“pertaining to unwillingness to use one’s mental faculties in order to understand—‘foolish, stupid, without understanding’”**¹⁰ Paul also uses this word to rebuke the Galatian believers who were attempting to embrace the law and mixing it with grace. (cf. Galatians 3:1-3).
2. **“...disobedient...”** – Dr. Bob Utley writes: **“This is the term ‘believing’ negated. It was used of (1) King Agrippa in Acts 26:19; (2) pagans in Rom. 1:30; Eph. 2:2; 5:6; (3) Jews in Luke 1:17; Rom. 11:30, 32; Heb. 4:6; and (4) the false teachers in Titus 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:2.”**¹¹
3. **“...deceived...”** – **“to cause someone to hold a wrong view and thus be mistaken”**¹²
4. **“...serving various lusts and pleasures...”** – The word **“serving”** mean; **“be a slave, serve as a slave (Jn 8:33; Ac 7:7); be controlled by”**¹³ The word **“lusts”** means; **“deep desire, longing; lust, coveting, craving”**¹⁴ **“Pleasures”** means; **“desire for physical pleasure, often sexual”**¹⁵ (cf. Ephesians 2:1-3).
5. **“...living in malice and envy...”** – **“Malice”** means; **“badness, evil, wickedness, depravity”**¹⁶ The word **“envy”** means; **“a state of ill will toward someone because of some real or presumed advantage experienced by such a person”**¹⁷ This is one of the **“works of the flesh”** (Galatians 5:21; See also I Peter 2:1-3). Many people believe that people are **“basically good.”** The Bible, however, teaches differently. (Romans 3:9-20).
6. **“...hateful and hating one another.”** – **“to dislike strongly, with the implication of aversion and hostility”**¹⁸ (cf. I John 2:9-11; 3:15; 4:20).

C. Verses 4-5 – “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,”

1. **“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared...”**
 - a. **“...kindness...”** – Thomas Lea writes: **“God’s ‘kindness’ includes his generosity and goodness, especially toward humanity and for humanity’s benefit (cf. Rom 2:4).”**¹⁹ (Also see Ephesians 2:7).
 - b. **“...the love of God our Savior...”** – Kenneth Wuest writes; **“Love toward man’ is *philanthrōpia*, from *phileō*, ‘to be fond of, to show affection to,’ and *anthrōpos*, the racial term for ‘man.’”**²⁰ In Part 2 of this series, we stated, the word **“Savior”** is found six times (1:3; 1:4; 2:10; 2:13; 3:4; 3:6) in this epistle and means; **“to rescue, to save, 21.18) one who rescues or saves”**²¹
2. **“...not by works of righteousness which we have done...”** – The word **“righteousness”** means; **the state of him who is such as he ought to be; the condition acceptable to God”**²² It’s also defined as **“right-standing”** and **“acquitted.”** (cf. Romans 3:21-28; Galatians 2:16).
 - a. **There are Two Aspects to Righteousness by Faith.**
 - 1) **Judicial Righteousness** – This is the Righteousness Imputed to the Believer. **Romans 4:1-12; II Corinthians 5:21.** (Jesus is our Righteousness – I Corinthians 1:30.)
 - 2) **Experiential Righteousness** – This is the Righteous Living which comes as a result of Imputed Righteousness.

¹⁰ Louw and Nida, 385.

¹¹ Utley, 124.

¹² Louw and Nida, 366.

¹³ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Louw and Nida, 291.

¹⁶ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

¹⁷ Louw and Nida, 759.

¹⁸ Ibid., 762.

¹⁹ *The New American Commentary*, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus, Vol. 34, Thomas D. Lea & Hayne P. Griffin Jr. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1992)

²⁰ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 199.

²¹ Louw and Nida, 240.

²² Thayer, 149.