

# Titus

## Importance of Good Works

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**PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS**  
**Importance of Good Works**  
**INTRODUCTION**

THE GOSPEL was taken to Crete by persons who from there attended the Jewish feast on the day of Pentecost - Acts 2:11. Titus was a Greek by birth. He was present at the great apostolic conference in Jerusalem. Compare Gal. 2:1 with Acts 15. The word "messengers" (2 Cor. 8:28) is "apostles," which proves that Titus was one of the seven church apostles. He was an evangelist and an overseer, having charge over the assemblies in Crete, which he had planted in that island. The word "good" occurs 10 times in the Letter; hence, "good works" is the keynote. These notes fittingly follow those on James and prove our interpretation of his Epistle. They read like a heart talk of a father to his son. We quote especially from the Revised Version, which is clearer on some points.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO ELDERS**  
**CHAPTER ONE**

Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the Truth which is according to godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal" -Vs. 1, 2. "Eternal life" was a great theme with the Apostle Paul. He mentions it twice in this epistle with special emphasis. Note verse 2 and chap. 3:7. God had promised eternal life before times eternal or before the ages of time, or before the world began. Therefore, from Adam to Christ, people were looking for life everlasting. According to 2 Tim. 1:1, 9, the promise of eternal life was in Christ Jesus according to God's own purpose and grace, which were given us in Christ Jesus. Rom. 1:2 indicates that the Gospel, of which eternal life is the quintessence, was foretold by the prophets in the holy Scriptures; that is, the Old Testament. These words to Titus agree perfectly with Eph. 1:4 - "According as He (God) hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love," etc. And since eternal life is in God's Son (1 John 5:11, 12), eternal life was revealed to mankind in the birth of Christ. The hope, of which Paul wrote to Titus, took form in the lowly Nazarene.

Now when we receive the Spirit of Christ in the new birth, we possess eternal life. "That being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs (heirs of God - Rom. 8:17) according to the hope of eternal life" (Chap. 3:7) ; that is, the hope entertained from the beginning till Jesus came. Very wisely did Peter exclaim, when some disciples went away from Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" - John 6:68. For these gracious words, we have been looking and longing all our days. Shall we now turn from them? Nay! NEVER. People who fight the glorious doctrine of eternal life, do so for one of two reasons. Either they do not understand what eternal life means, or they do not want God's grace, but say, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it? -- John 6:60, 66. To reject eternal life is to reject Jesus Christ, the purchaser, the author, the possessor and the first preacher of eternal life in some measure.

"The faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth," according to which Paul was a servant of God and an apostle of Christ, were in hope of eternal life. The proclamation of life everlasting was entrusted to Paul as its chief advocate after Christ's ascension. See again 2 Tim. 1:1. Here he passes the publishing of it on to his son Titus.

Although he pronounces the Cretans, "liars, evil beasts, idle bellies" (unfruitful); yet he does not once say that they are on the way to hell. But he sends Titus to teach them and lift them out of their carnality and worldliness. Therefore, "sound doctrine, sound speech, and good works" are dwelt upon in the Epistle. The phrase, "the faith of God's elect," means the faith of Abraham and of the prophets, who looked for the Messiah to come.

The hope of eternal life was wrapped up in Him. That faith came by the Word of God, spoken to them - Rom. 10:17. Paul said, "I live by the faith of the Son of God" - Gal. 2:20. The three Persons of the Godhead are held distinct in this epistle, as in all Paul's writings. "God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior" complete the introductory words, even as "God" and "Jesus Christ" begin them. Jesus is never termed the Father; neither are they ever mentioned as one and the same Person. It is exceedingly sad that would-be Bible teachers are hurling confusion amidst God's people by attempting to destroy the Trinity and Tri-unity of Deity. In chap. 3:4-6, the three Persons of the Godhead are distinctly named. God saves men by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, having poured out the Spirit upon them copiously (Acts 2:4 and 10:44) thru Jesus Christ. Compare John 7:39 with Acts 2:33. Had

Jesus not redeemed humanity by His death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit could not have been poured out upon them. Everywhere, as clear and distinct as words can make it, the three Persons of Deity are named. Only men blinded by their own conceit and by Satan, jumble the three together and rob them of their respective and distinctive honors and glories. In this Epistle, God is mentioned several times as "our Savior;" for He is the Originator of our salvation. Jesus is also called "our Savior," because He is the channel thru whom salvation has been provided. This does not mean that Jesus is the Father and God is Jesus, as some nonsensically teach.

## Elders and Bishops

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge" - V. 5. Verses 5 to 9 name the necessary qualifications of elders, or bishops. We need not dwell upon these 16 marks of ministerial character. They are all very simple and plain. Every honest person will take them deeply to heart. If anyone is too dishonest, or self-willed to observe them, he has no business with the office of elder, or bishop. The title "elder" is derived from the custom of giving older men places of responsibility under the Old Covenant. For example, see I Sam. 16:4-6. The offices of "elder" and "bishop" were in some sense interchangeable, in Paul's day, as these verses indicate. In I Tim. 5:17, it appears that some were termed ruling elders, while others were rather advisory elders, because of their age and experience. Some elders also ministered the Word. A ruling elder was called a "bishop," which means an overseer. He always knew and gave forth the Word. All elders and bishops should have a shepherd heart, or spirit - I Pet. 4:1-5. Those officers were not elected by a vote of the people, but appointed by an overseer - Acts 14:23 with Titus 1:5. The seven letters to the seven churches in Rev. 2 and 3 indicate that in these closing days the offices of elder, or bishop and deacon are not emphasized. The Lord, the Head of the church, is dealing with individual assemblies thru "the angel of the church;" that is, thru the pastor, or shepherd of each congregation. (The word angel means messenger.) He holds the angel in His hand and expects him to feed and lead the flock and keep out all error, even as an angel, or bishop. And Jesus is dealing with individual believers also.

Note several traits of an accepted bishop, or pastor. "The bishop MUST be blameless, as God's steward; not self-willed, etc." Let young ministers take this deeply to heart. "Holding the faithful Word; exhort with sound doctrine and convict the gainsayers." Paul always emphasized the Word of God, and especially the Gospel committed to him. Men travel around and say, I do not preach doctrine. Of course such fellows disobey the Apostle's injunctions. How can anyone preach prophecy, lead sinners to Christ, or build up the saints without doctrine? What is doctrine, but teaching? "Sound doctrine" is called "healthful teaching" in the margin. If ever healthful teaching was needed it is greatly needed today. The following twelve marks of unfaithful teachers are cited as proofs of the absolute need of sound doctrine.

Empty, Harmful Vessels. In verses 10 to 16, Brother Paul names these traits. He describes them as "unruly, vain talkers, deceivers, liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons, turning away from the truth, defiled, unbelieving, Christ-deniers, abominable, reprobate." What a catalogue of evil garments for a Gospel minister to wear. The Apostle says, "Their mouths must be stopped." Therefore, "reprove them sharply." Do you censure us then, for speaking out against such Christian(?) workers? Do you insist that we should show love? We do show love to the Truth and to those who proclaim it; but we have no pity for those who deliberately, with their eyes open, go against God's Word and destroy His people. Note the Lord's rebuke of the angel, or pastor of the Pergamos Assembly - Rev. 2:14-16. Men may get by today without feeding the lambs and sheep, as Jesus instructed (John 21), and fleece them instead; but oh, the shame and rebuke that awaits them. Remember that judgment begins at the house of God, and primarily with the shepherds, the stewards.

When We Think Not  
The time is drawing near.  
May be this present year,  
That Christ may call His chosen home.  
Perhaps when we think not,  
But cumbered with our lot,  
We're apt in fields of gloom to roam.  
The thought brings joy and cheer  
That Jesus might appear  
Before the end of forty-one.  
Oh, I think not so soon,  
Say some, but at high noon  
Of tribulation days half run.  
O Bride of Christ, why fear?  
You are to Him most dear.  
He's shuffling furniture on high  
For your supreme delight.  
He's your most august Knight.  
When we think not,  
He may draw nigh.

## PURPOSE AND POWER OF GRACE CHAPTER TWO

But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine." Again teaching is made prominent. Also sound, or healthful things are emphasized. He speaks of being "sound in the faith ... sound doctrine," "sound speech," that the whole assembly may be scripturally healthy and growing and fruitful. "The Word of grace" builds up the saints; and nothing else does. Eloquent speakers and glib talkers may entertain the people and get their money; but the hearers are left empty-empty hearts, empty minds and empty purses. Healthful teaching will be crowned with a blessed future also. "An inheritance" will reward the preaching of the Word of grace - Acts 20:32. Oh, brother, feed the flock on the pure Gospel. Give babies "the sincere milk of the Word," and "strong meat" to adults in faith. Let others gather and hold the crowd by giving them froth and foam, flattery and fables; be thou satisfied with feeding the few hungry ones. These will be your crown in the glory, when the deceived will arraign the flatterers for fooling and fleecing them. Sound doctrine begets sound faith; sound faith begets sound speech and sound speech begets good works.

Who to Teach. The aged men, the aged women, the young women, the young men and servants are properly named as subjects of instruction - Verses 2 to 10. The purpose of teaching them is, that they may love the "good."

Ten times the word "good" occurs in the Epistle. Five times "good works" are mentioned; not as a means of salvation, but as the supernatural and logical result of being saved. God has ordained good works for all His people, in which He expects them to walk by the power of the Holy Spirit - Eph. 2:10. The Cretans were by nature such loose and reckless characters, both old and young, that they needed special teaching concerning the practical, everyday life. "Sober mindedness" is emphasized again and again. Then the Apostle supplements his instructions to Titus by exhorting him to "show himself an example of good works." He had to treat them as children. His clear example would have great weight in confirming his instruction. Paul gave Timothy also similar advice to be an example to believers - I Tim. 4:12. Nothing turns people against a minister quicker than for him to teach beyond his experience, or exhort them to do what he himself fails to do. The supreme object of a godly walk and of good works is, "that the Word of God be not blasphemed," and that we "may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things"- Vs. 5 and 10. Let the reader, old and young, therefore meditate upon the instructions that Paul gave to Titus for the Cretans. Are we blaspheming God's holy Word by bad conduct, or fruitless works? Do we make the doctrine of God appear hideous and repulsive by our unchastity, lightness, carnality, or untempered zeal? Oh, let us compel people to come along the full Gospel way by our upright, victorious, loyal, faithful and unselfish conduct and service. "He that winneth souls is wise." Jesus said, "Compel them to come in," not by argument, not by force and awkwardness, not by over-persuasion, but by love and holy living.

"For the grace of God hath appeared to all men, bringing salvation, instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present age" - Chap. 2:11, 12. We, who teach divine grace, are accused frequently of offering a do-as-you please message to sinners. We deny such a charge. We agree with Paul's doctrine and practice. Such accusers misunderstand the meaning of grace, which is a wise teacher. Grace shows us our need, our weaknesses and our dependence upon the mighty God. It instructs us both negatively and positively, what not to do and what actually to do. Ungodliness and worldly lusts, the former life of sin, must be ignored and abandoned. Grace came to deliver us from the career of the old creation. Grace instructs us to "live soberly;" not melancholily, or affectedly pious; not flippantly or effusively, but sanely, seriously. It teaches us to "live righteously," to do right to others, pay our debts - debts of finance, of love, of pity, of brotherly kindness. It teaches us to "live godly;" that is, as God lives; love as He loves. He is unselfish, always seeking to bless humanity. He shows grace. So He means for us to do. If we live godly, we will live righteously and soberly. Now let no one think that he can do these things by stamping his feet and biting his lips and resolving to do them. No. Take Christ to live this life in you. Settle it as Paul did - "It is no longer I that live; but Christ that liveth in me" - Gal. 2:20. With your eyes fixed on Him, you will live to God's glory and the good of your fellows. Grace teaches us how to live and furnishes the wisdom and power to do it. Here is another important item of this victorious life - "Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" - V. 13. Notice the word "appearing." We saw before that the grace of God "had appeared." The Greek verb is "epiphaino," which means to appear, as stars - Acts 27:20. It means to give light, or shine upon, as Luke 1:79 and Eph. 5:14. It refers to Christ's first advent in 2 Tim. 1:10 and in Titus 3:4, which see. Elsewhere it refers to Christ's advent in behalf of the church and must be kept distinct from His "coming" or presence (parousia Gr.), which occurs especially in the Gospel records, because it refers chiefly to His revelation from heaven to the Jews. See Matt. 24.

"The blessed hope" means the catching away of the bride. "The appearing of the glory" may include His revelation. In 2 Thes. 2:8 is a very peculiar statement, "the brightness of His coming." The Greek reads, "epiphaeneia tes parousias," or the appearing of His coming, or presence. In 2 Tim. 4:1, it is distinct from the kingdom, and agrees with verse 8, which speaks of those who "love His appearing." But the space between His

appearing for the Bride, called the rapture, and His revelation to Israel, is so brief, that the one implies the other. The Greek word for "appear" in Heb. 9:28 is another word, which means to see, to behold, to observe, and refers to the Jews, who will be looking for their Messiah and King. "Looking for the blessed hope" is the same as "loving His appearing" - 2 Tim. 4:8. This is the qualification for the catching away. Real overcomers love the soon coming of Jesus and look for Him steadfastly.

Basis of Every Hope. "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works" - V. 14. Christ gave Himself for those good-for-nothing Cretans, but in hope of making something glorious out of them. Thank God, He redeemed us from "all iniquity." And now He undertakes to "purify unto Himself" every one that believes on Him. The saving and purifying are His tasks, not ours. He does it as we yield to His workmanship. The phrase, "peculiar people (Authorized Version), or "people of His possession," occurs also in I Pet. 1:9. The Greek for peculiar means "made to remain, over and above, protected, preserved, purchased, acquired for oneself." Such a Gospel appeals to the weak and helpless, the poor and needy. It appealed to the "ragtag" Cretans. The God of abounding grace ventured to make of such hopeless material, a people protected, preserved (not consigned to hell), because they were purchased by blood, acquired for Himself at infinite cost; hence a people over and above man's expectations, a people built to remain. Let us preach Paul's Gospel of unmeasured resources and unthinkable possibilities. Many hearts are starving for this Gospel, not knowing where to find it, or how to get it. Paul's Gospel of grace is fitted to bring down the self-righteous pharisaical egotist and make a lowly saint of him, or lift up the beggar from the dunghill and the vagabond and unruly from his immoral filth and set them among princes. "Nothing is too hard for the Lord." Mark the Apostle's stern charge in conclusion -- "These things speak and EXHORT and REPROVE with all authority. Let no man despise thee."

### **SCRIPTURAL HUMILITY CHAPTER THREE**

Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work, to speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men" - Vs. 1, 2. The Scripture thru-out teaches us to obey the powers that be, as the servants of God. We are not to sling mud at them, even though they do not rule to suit us. Obedience to superiors is a rare grace. Saints should not forget their relations to others, and to one another. And we should not forget that we were no better than other sinners, when we were unsaved - V. 3. "All have sinned." Then see how adroitly Paul again brings in the Gospel of wondrous grace. He magnifies the kindness and love of God, and exclaims, "Not by works of righteousness, which we did ourselves; but according to His mercy He saved us." Oh, that everyone would deeply acknowledge, that salvation is absolutely of mercy and grace. By what means? "Thru the washing (laver) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" - Vs. 4- 6. In John 1:12, 13, Jesus Christ announced our right, or privilege to become children of God thru the new birth, if we received Him. In chap. 3, He taught the nature and necessity of the new birth. "Except a man be born of water (the Word) and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In chap. 13:10, He taught the new birth by symbol, saying to Peter, "He that is bathed (laved) needeth not save to wash his feet." The priests washing their hands and feet at the laver was symbolical of the new birth - Ex. 30:21. Jesus did not teach saved one day and lost the next, or the possibility of being born again more than once. The same Greek word, "louo," rendered wash, or bathe in John 13:10, is used in Eph. 5:26 and Titus 3:5, all three referring to the new birth. The double statement, "the washing (or laver) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, is simply another way of saying, "Born of water and of the Spirit" - John 3:5. The Word of God is the sufficient means (I Pet. 1:23) and the Holy Spirit is the efficient Agent of the new birth.

Hence, human effort availeth nothing. We are not saved by the catechism, by water baptism, by speaking in tongues, by doing penance, nor by weeping; but by believing on Jesus the Saviour - Eph. 2:8. Therefore, the conclusion - "Being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;" that is, the hope entertained by the patriarchs and prophets, which was realized by the first advent of Christ. It does not mean that we, who are born of the Spirit, are hoping for eternal life, which we shall have if we hold out faithful. Nay, the new birth is eternal life.

"Shun foolish questionings, genealogies and strife's and fighting's about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain." We are to be occupied with matters of great importance. "Maintain good works" is mentioned twice in closing (Vs. 8, 14) as of paramount importance. After exhorting a heretic twice, avoid him. We saw that sound doctrine, sound faith and sound speech are to be emphasized in view of glorifying God by noble deeds.

Concluding Words. The Apostle desired Titus to meet him in Nicopolis, north from Philippi, where he hoped to winter.

He wished Artemas, or Tychicus to take his place in Crete for a time. Artemas means safe and sound. He is mentioned here only. Evidently he was living up to the meaning of his name, or he could not have been a successor of Titus. He compared favorably with Tychicus, which means fortunate. The latter is mentioned four other places. He was one of the faithful seven with Paul when he wrote to the Galatians - Acts 20:4 and Gal. 1:2.

Possibly Paul wrote to Titus before leaving Ephesus (Acts 19:21, 22) and spent the winter thereabouts. If so, this was his second Epistle, as the Letter to the Thessalonians was his first. Doubtless the same companions were with him then as when he wrote to Galatia. Compare verse 15 with Gal. 1:2 and Acts 20:4. He was also deeply interested in Zenas, who was an able teacher of the Mosaic law before he accepted Christ. Paul loved Apollos, known for his eloquence and fervor in preaching the Word of God - Acts 19:24-28. This unique Epistle closes with the Apostle's usual benediction - "Grace be with you all."

### **AN ODE TO TITUS**

Paul to Titus once has written.  
From his heart the Truth flowed out;  
For legality had bitten  
Many saints, thus tossed about.  
Like a brother to a brother,  
Tho' in Christ his son indeed;  
For he scarce could find another,  
Who so tenderly would feed  
Hungry hearts, and guide them rightly  
To the overcomers' goal.  
Paul gave charge, that daily, nightly,  
Some to warn and some console.  
Goodly deeds were made emphatic.  
Sound in doctrine led the van.  
One who reads it, grows ecstatic .  
And would tell it ev'ry man.  
No ambition to be greatest.  
One ambition -- to be true.  
Despite conflicts, hottest, straightest,  
Heaven's plan he must pursue.  
Onward till the Lord's appearing,  
Faithful be to God and man,  
Paul his son was always cheering  
From Beersheba unto Dan.

### **THE OTHER COMFORTER**

The other Comforter ascended to abide.  
To send Him, once the Savior died.  
The other Comforter now teaches me to pray  
And gain the vic'try every day.  
My Jesus knew the other Comforter Divine,  
And gave Him that He might be mine.  
He came from heaven to guide us into all the Truth,  
To fill the elders and the youth.  
Not only does the Spirit comfort and caress;  
With power He doth also bless,  
For wonders, signs and miracles He doth command,  
That Christ be praised thru-out the land.  
The other Comforter a Training School is too,  
That we may run the race straight thru.  
Without Him, who can hope the Bridegroom to win?  
Without Him, none would e'en begin.  
Be not deceived. He did not come to earth in vain.  
He's here, that we the best may gain.  
Should we not emphasize this truth today,  
Lest compromise impose delay?  
The bridal crew must like the Bridegroom surely be -  
Immersed, in love and hope, yea free.  
The other Comforter alone can make them so,  
Prepared in the first rank to go.