

MAINTAINING GOOD CHRISTIAN WORKS

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Summary and Historical Background

In chapter one, we learned that Titus was to maintain good church order. Paul instructed Titus about the characteristics of the true (1:5-9) and false (1:10-16) teachers and how he should deal with them. It was important that godly men be appointed as elders over the churches and that ungodly men are corrected so that their influence in the churches is stopped.

In chapters two and three Titus was instructed to maintain good Christian works. "Good work(s)" is mentioned in 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14. Paul referred to the importance of good works in the life of the believer. Good works are the result of good character. Good fruit can only come from a good root.

Chapter two specifies the kind of good works expected from different members within the churches (2:1-10); whereas chapter one was specifically concerned with the good works of the elders. Chapter two concludes by explaining how good works are produced (2:11-15).

In chapter three Christians are told how to live among the unsaved (3:1-2). They are reminded that once they also lived wicked lives (3:3), and that only by the grace of God were they redeemed from that kind of life (3:4-7). Therefore, Paul desired that every believer be diligent to maintain good works as a profitable testimony before all men (3:8).

I. Good Works Are Portrayed by the Believers — 2:1-10

2:1 — Paul commanded Titus to instruct the churches in Crete to be sound in doctrine. Sound doctrine refers to correct, healthy teaching according to God's standard (cf. 1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 4:3). This is in contrast to those who were false in doctrine.

A. By Aged Men — 2:2

2:2 — "Sober" - Literally it meant to be free of wine, which had the derived meaning: to be sober in mind, alert, careful in their actions.

"Grave" — They were serious in spiritual matters, who earned respect. They were "men of honest report" (cf. Acts 6:3).

"Temperate" — They were sensible and self-controlled in their conduct.

"Sound in faith, in charity, in patience" — They were well anchored in their faith, love and endurance. Endurance or steadfastness is needed in times of trial (cf. James 1:3, 4, 12).

B. By Aged Women — 2:3-4

2:3 — "Behavior" - Their life was to be reverent, giving honor to God.

"Not false accusers" — They were not to be slanderers, speaking evil of others.

"Not given to much wine" — Not enslaved by wine. This was a common sin in Crete.

2:3-4 — "Teachers of good things" - They were responsible to teach the young women. They were to teach privately in the home by example as well as by word.

C. By Young Women — 2:4-5

2:4 — "Sober" - This word is not in any Greek text.

"Young women" — This probably refers to newly married women.

"To love their husbands, to love their children" — This is basic training for a happy home. It might not come naturally, but faithful, godly older women were to train young brides to learn this practice to make their home a good testimony in a world for the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:5 — "Discreet" - Young brides needed to be sober-minded; self-controlled, sensible in their conduct.

"Chaste" — They needed to be pure in thoughts, words and actions.

"Keepers at home" — These women needed to be diligent workers at home. They were not merely to stay at home, but to be busy at home, caring for the needs of the home (cf. Prov 31:10-31).

"Good" — They were to be kind when they were corrected by their husbands or even disrespected and hurt by those in the home or outside the home. Their example is Christ Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return, but committed Himself to God who judges righteously (1 Pet 2:23).

"Obedient to their own husbands" — This is different than loving their husbands. This is submitting to their husband's authority. Jesus Christ loved His Father, but He also submitted to His Father's authority, so that everything He said or did was exactly as His Father would say or do. That is the example a young bride was to follow.

These are the characteristics that young brides were to learn so that "the word of God is not blasphemed." It is important that these women maintain a good testimony before the world.

D. By Young Men — 2:6

2:6 — "Sober minded" - Young men were exhorted to be self-controlled, sensible. They were to restrain themselves from the lifestyles of unsaved men so they would be able to maintain a good testimony for Christ in the world.

E. By Titus — 2:7-8

2:7 — "Pattern of good works" - Titus was to be an example to all believers by his good works, but especially to the young men that needed to be trained.

"In doctrine" — This refers to Titus' teaching.

"Incorruptibility" — This refers to Titus' integrity; he was to be a solid believer with a sterling testimony. This would enable him to teach the truth in Christ (2 Cor 11:3).

"Gravity" — Titus was to teach with a reverent attitude before God and with dignity before his students.

"Sincerity" — A sincere person is one without a flaw. This word is like the Greek word for "incorruptibility" and is not found in many Greek texts.

2:8 — "Sound speech" - He was to teach sound, healthy doctrine. This was in contrast to the unhealthy doctrines of the false teachers.

The purpose of these characteristics in Titus was to shame the enemies of the Gospel when they could find nothing evil to say against him (cf. 1 Pet 3:16).

F. By Slaves — 2:9-10

2:9 — "Obedient" - They were to be in subjection to their masters; obeying them, not merely fulfilling their obligations, but striving to please them. This would be done by doing it with a good spirit.

"Not answering again" — They were to keep quiet, not expressing opposition to their masters in words or actions.

2:10 — "Not purloining" - They were not to indulge in thievery of any kind, whether large or small.

"Showing all good fidelity" — They were to be faithful in all good works. However, they were not to obey their masters if they commanded them to do evil works. That would not be a faithful testimony to them.

The purpose of these characteristics in servants was to make the Gospel attractive to others, especially to their masters (cf. Mt 5:16; 1 Pet 2:12).

II. Good Works Are Produced by God's Grace — 2:11-15

A. Grace is the Basis for Good Works — 2:11

2:11 — "Brings salvation" - The grace of God brings salvation. Sinners are not saved by good works, but they are saved to do good works (cf. Eph 2:8-10). The good works that please God are produced by His grace. The grace of God has appeared to all people to some extent (Heb 2:9), but it has appeared most clearly in the Person of Jesus Christ (Jn 1:14). God's grace is made known by the preaching of His Word so sinners can know how to obtain His salvation (Rom 10:13-15). Salvation is the basis for producing good works.

B. Grace is the Teacher of Good Works — 2:12

"Teaching" — Grace trains a person by instruction, exhortation, rebuke and even by chastening. Teaching is more than telling a person how to do it; it is training a person to do it.

"Denying" — This speaks of things that must be denied every day (cf. Rom 6:11-13).

"Ungodliness" — Grace teaches us to deny any decision or act done without God's approval, which is ungodliness (cf. Mt 6:33; 1 Cor 10:31).

"Worldly lusts" — Grace teaches us to deny the sensual desires of the unsaved world.

"Live soberly" — Grace teaches us to be sound-minded; sensible in spiritual discernment.

Live "Righteously" — Grace teaches us to be honest and fair in dealing with others.

Live "godly" — Grace teaches us to honor God by putting Him first and imitating His Son as the perfect example for our lives (1 Pet 2:21).

C. Grace gives Hope that Inspires Good Works — 2:13

2:13 — When we hope for the imminent return of Christ, we will work diligently for Him by His grace. Christ is referred to as "the great God," affirming His deity, Whom we serve.

D. Grace Cleanses Believers for Good Works — 2:14-15

2:14 — "Peculiar" - This speaks of believers being a unique possession of God. Christ died to redeem us from sin and to purify unto Himself a people zealous of good works. We must be purified before we can produce good works.

2:15 — Titus was commanded to teach these things by the authority of the Word of God.

III. Good Works Are Practiced before the World — 3:1-15

A. A Pure Life — 3:1-3

1. Toward civil rulers — v. 1. Be a good citizen.

3:1 — A Christian should obey civil rulers willingly (cf. Rom 13:1-3; 1 Pet 2:13-17).

"To every good work" — We should be ready to obey civil leaders in every good work, but not in evil works that they may demand. Our first allegiance is to God. If civil authorities command us to do things that are contrary to God's command, we must obey God (cf. Acts 4:19; 5:29).

2. Toward all people — v. 2. Be a good neighbor.

3:2 — "Speak evil of no man" - We are told not to slander anyone.

"No brawlers" — We must not quarrel or fight.

"Gentle" — We must be considerate, kind.

"Showing all meekness" — We must be courteous to all people.

3. Toward ourselves — v. 3. Remember our past life.

3:3 — "Foolish" - We were senseless or irrational in the way we lived.

"Disobedient" — We disobeyed God.

"Deceived" — We deceived ourselves by being slaves to sinful pleasures.

"Living in malice and envy" — We were mean and jealous, hateful and detesting others.

Remembering what we were like before we were saved should give us an appreciation to God for our salvation and to be patient with the lost as we try to bring them to Christ for salvation.

B. A Promised Life — 3:4-7

3:4 — "Kindness and love of God" - God loved us by sending His Son to save us from our sins.

"Appeared" — God's Son appeared first as a babe, and then lived without sin, so He could take our place on the cross and pay for our sins.

3:5 — "Mercy" - God saved us, not by our own works or merits, but by His mercy. He withheld the penalty we deserved.

"Washing of regeneration" — God saved us by His Word, the instrument by which He washed away our sins (cf. Eph 5:26; 1 Pet 1:23). We heard of His salvation by His Word, which produced faith in that message, and we were saved (Rom 10:13-17).

"Renewing of the Holy Ghost" — God saved us by the renewing work of His Spirit; we are born again by the Spirit (Jn 3:3-8).

3:6 — "He shed on us abundantly." The Spirit has been given to us in rich supply through Jesus Christ. Jesus told His disciples that He would ask His Father to send the Spirit to be with them and dwell in them (Jn 14:17). This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost and He dwells in every believer since that time (1 Cor 6:19).

3:7 — "Justified us by His grace" - We have been declared righteous by God's grace. Grace is God's act of favor toward a sinner that does not deserve His gift. We have been given eternal life, but even more than that, we have been given an inheritance with Jesus Christ to rule the whole earth with Him in His Millennial Kingdom. He gave His life for this inheritance and we are joint heirs with Him (Rom 8:17).

C. A Profitable Life — 3:8-15

3:8 — "Maintain good works" - We should be careful to practice good works. This will be profitable and fruitful for us (cf. 1 Cor 3:11-15). Our good works will determine the position that Christ will give to us in His Kingdom (cf Lk 19:11-19; 2 Cor 5:10).

3:9 — We should avoid unprofitable and vain discussions.

3:10 — "Heretic" - A heretic is one who causes divisions by his stubborn self-will.

"Admonition" — This is a strong rebuke. The purpose of the rebuke is to stop the heretic from causing divisions in the church and to gain him as a useful believer. If the first rebuke did not produce repentance, then he would be given a second rebuke. If that did not bring him to repentance, then he was to be rejected and removed from the church membership.

3:11 — "Subverted" - It means to undermine something. A heretic that is subverted undermines the unity of a church with his false doctrine. Therefore, he is sinning against God. That is why a heretic that is teaching his false doctrine in the church, and will not repent, must be removed from the church. He has condemned himself.

3:14 — "Learn to maintain good works" - Good works do not come naturally. They must be learned and maintained by obeying the commands of Scripture with the help of the Holy Spirit.