

MR. D'S NOTES ON TITUS



Rev. Stanley L. Derickson Ph.D.

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By Rev. Stanley L. Derickson Ph.D.

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Titus is one of four books that normally are called the "Pastoral Epistles" even though the men they are addressed to, weren't really pastors. The men, in the case of Timothy and Titus, were apostolic representatives to churches. They were to set things in order within the church and as such they contain a lot of church polity type material, thus many retain the "Pastoral" designation. The fourth book is Philemon which is quite often stuck in with the other two for convenience sake. It is very small and makes a good addition to Titus when you are trying to make the books work in a Sunday school, thirteen week series.

Philemon also gives the character of one that cares deeply for another as a pastor does his flock, when Paul intercedes on the behalf of the run-away slave Onesimus, with his owner/master Philemon.

Keathley (Hampton the III in this study, he has a commentary on <http://www.bible.org> which I used as reference for this work.) suggests we consider the fact that the "Pastoral Epistles" were probably the last books written by the apostle Paul. He further suggests that Romans and the doctrinal books came first because the doctrine was more important than polity, though polity is most certainly important.

I would suggest, however that the Pastorals were the last, due to the fact that God did not see fit to include them until last - He is the author of them, and as a result the time keeper of the time line. He wanted the Pastorals written last for a reason.

Now, what the reason was I do not know, but I can surmise that the church was quite small in the beginning and had little use for organization and that sort of thing. To exclude the fact that there was a lack of polity until the Pastorals is misleading in my mind. If you look at Ephesians four, you will see polity. If you look at the Corinthian books you see church discipline - polity - thus the Pastorals are not the only "polity" books nor was polity left till last.

As the church grew, there is an obvious need for more organization. Such it is in our day when

someone starts a little church there is little need for thirteen elders and seventeen deacons, the pastor can handle most of the needs of the church. As the church grows, the polity expands as needed to assure the smooth running of the congregation.

I personally don't see any reason to see "importance" in the fact that these three books were last other than the fact that these three books were last to be written.

AUTHORSHIP:

The book of Titus is usually seen as from Paul to Titus, though there are always some detractors from any position on anything. It is thought that Paul dictated it with possibly Luke recording it.

Keathley properly points out that the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals has not been questioned until recent years by liberal theologians that basically question just about everything. They seek to discredit all that has gone on before.

It is my personal opinion that much of this questioning and "new" information that we see, not only in the liberal camp but across all shades of Christianity, are the desire to find something new and exciting so that the finder can feel important in his find. Many in evangelicalism seem to scrape and scratch their fingers raw trying to find something new from a passage.

This is rather an insult to the godly men of yester-year - it is almost as if we today don't trust their scholarship and intelligence. Not that we should take their findings as law, but we should not try to disprove two thousand years of study so easily. New information does come to light now and then and this is good, but be sure it is new information, rather than manufactured information.

I am reminded of a television show that seeks to verify historical events, yet in their presentation it is obvious that they are attempting to disprove historical facts as recorded by people on the scene. Their whole show is normally based on an early assumption that the record is incorrect, and they then proceed to search until they find "supposed" proof of their assumption.

RECIPIENT:

Paul is writing Titus with apostolic instructions to an apostolic delegate concerning the work that Paul left Titus there to do.

We don't know a lot about Titus, for he is mentioned only in the writings of Paul. He is mentioned in Gal. 2.3 as being Greek, and as being uncircumcised. This tells us that he was probably not a convert to Judaism or he would have been circumcised. He was a convert to Christianity from a secular background.

His parents were Gentile as well, or he would be partially Jewish. Barnes Notes has an extended following of Titus and his travels with Paul if you would like further information about his

relationship to the Apostle (I will include this at the end of this file). From the introduction of the letter of Titus it would seem that Paul was his spiritual father.

At the least he was a trusted friend and coworker of Paul's since he is mentioned, according to Keathley, thirteen times by Paul. As you read some of these passages, you will see the close relationship that the two had as well.

PURPOSE:

Some instructions relating to how Titus is to proceed with his ministry.

DATE:

Again, most hold to a late date in Paul's life for Titus. Probably around 63 A.D.

KEY WORDS:

Keathley suggests three key words and they are "good works," "faith," and "grace." What a trio! Faith accepts grace and good works are the result. How grand a message, and a message that Paul seems to present often. This was a major part of what he talked about in the book of Galatians as well.

CRETE:

The island, today, is kind of a mystery as I can find little information about it as an independent geographical location, unless you want to travel there.

It is of great significance to me that we have missionaries in Crete, and it is also significant that the encyclopedia I checked made no reference to religion when discussing Crete. The Greek Orthodox Church in Crete trace their ancestry directly to Paul and Titus.

This is of interest to the protestant, the Roman church as well as the orthodox church trace their lineage back to the apostles and they are the true church and all others are false religions. Of course there are a number of Baptist types that follow "THE TRAIL OF BLOOD" a book that traces the Baptist movement back to John the Baptist. And of course all others are not the true church so I guess the Romans and the Greek orthodox are the same as some Baptists - well in this one respect, and probably that is where the similarities would end.

There seems to be little semblance of a New Testament church in Crete, unless some of the missionaries are having success.

The island is about two hundred and seventy-five miles long and about fifty miles wide at its widest point.

Acts 2.11 indicates there were Jewish Cretans at Pentecost thus the gospel was taken there, in part, as a spread of the ministry of the Spirit on that day. This may also be where the Judaizers came from on the island. (Titus 1.20, 14-16; 3.9)

Some suggest that the Roman army may have had a training center on the island, thus we can imagine the situation that the church was sitting in. Pagan to total immorality might be the setting. Not all that different from some countries today. America can't be called pagan but it is nearing that distinction in some ways. We are seeing total moral collapse while the worship of God is definitely on the decline, and worship of materialism definitely is on the incline.

I am reminded of similar situations in our own day. There are servicemen's centers around the world that are involved in giving service people a place off base to gather as believers for study, fellowship and recreation. They are usually near the base for ease of transport. Also near the base are normally the bars and the other similar "service" related industries that draw the less than upright citizenry. Add to that the base itself which is blatantly secular and you have a real lighthouse in the midst of a storm.

KEY VERSE:

The key verse is probably 1.5 "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:" This is the reason for the book, this is the reason for Paul writing, and this is the reason for Titus being left at Crete.

I would however suggest that the theme would run along the lines of "church polity" as it relates to this grand salvation that we have in Christ.

BACKGROUND:

It could, and probably should be, surmised that there were multiple churches on Crete at the time of the epistle. It was the habit of Paul to "blast" an area, so to speak, with the gospel. He would go town to town leading folks to the Lord and then later going back to organize them by appointing leadership.

This, again, is an indicator that the late writing of the epistles is not necessarily important. He had been there and planted the church/churches and now, because he was personally unable to, was using Titus to organize the church of Crete.

There are a lot of similarities between I Timothy and Titus. Both are from Paul, to apostolic delegates relating to how to set up the churches. Both deal with the selection of church leadership as well. They are intended to assist in the building and strengthening of the church.

OUR OUTLINE FOR THE STUDY:

Week one: Titus 1.1-4 THE CHARACTERS

Week two: Titus 1.5-9 THE JOB

Week three: Titus 1.10-16 THE PROBLEM

Week four: Titus 2.1-3 THE AGED

Week five: Titus 2.4-8 THE YOUNG

Week six: Titus 2.9-10 THE SERVANTS

Week seven: Titus 2.11-14 THE BASIS

Week eight: Titus 2.15-3.3 THE PAST

Week nine: Titus 3.4-7 THE SALVATION

Week ten: Titus 3.8-9 THE LIFE

Week eleven: Titus 3.10-12 THE HERETIC

Week twelve: Titus 3.13-15 THE WORKS

Week thirteen: Philemon

Barnes Notes on Titus:

"I. THE HISTORY OF TITUS.

"OF Titus nothing more is certainly known than what we find in the epistles of Paul. It is somewhat remarkable that there is no mention of him in the Acts of the Apostles; nor does his name occur in the New Testament anywhere except in the writings of the apostle Paul. From his incidental allusions to him, we learn the following particulars respecting him.

"(1.) He was by birth a Gentile. In Galatians 2:3, he is called a Greek, and it is certain from that passage that he had not been circumcised; and the probability is, that up to the time of his conversion, he had lived as other Gentiles, and had not been converted to the Jewish faith. His father and mother were, doubtless, both Greeks, and thus he was distinguished from Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess, but whose father was a Greek, Acts 16:3. Comp. See Barnes "Galatians 2:3". If Titus had been proselyted to the Jewish faith, it is to be presumed that he would have been circumcised.

"(2.) He had been converted to Christianity by the instrumentality of Paul himself. This is clear from the Titus 1:4, "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith." See Barnes "1 Timothy 1:2". This is language which the apostle would not have used of one who had been converted by the instrumentality of another. But where he lived, and when or how he was converted, is wholly unknown. As to the time when he was converted, it is known only that this occurred before the fourteenth year after the conversion of Paul; for at that time Titus, a Christian, was with Paul at Jerusalem, Galatians 2:1. As to the place where he lived, there seems some reason to suppose that it was in some part of Asia Minor--for the Greeks abounded there; Paul laboured much there; and there were numerous converts made there to the Christian faith, Still this is not by any means certain.

"(3.) Titus went with Paul to Jerusalem when he was deputed by the church at Antioch with Barnabas, to lay certain questions before the apostles and elders there in reference to the converts from the Gentiles, Acts 15. Comp. Galatians 2:1. It is not known why he took Titus with him on that occasion, and the reasons can be only conjectural. See Barnes "Galatians 2:1". It is possible that he was taken with him to Jerusalem because his was a case in point in regard to the question which was to come before the apostles and elders there. It is not improbable, from an expression which Paul uses in describing his visit there-- "neither was Titus compelled to be circumcised"--that the case came up for discussion, and that strenuous efforts were made by the Judaizing portion there, (comp. Galatians 2:4,) to have him circumcised. Paul and Barnabas, however, so managed the cause, that the principle was settled that it was not necessary that converts from the heathen should be circumcised, Acts 15:19,20.

"(4.) After the council at Jerusalem, it seems probable that Titus returned with Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by Silas and Judas, Acts 15:22, and that afterwards he attended the apostle for a considerable time in his travels and labours. This appears from a remark in 2 Corinthians 8:23: "Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you." From this it would seem, that he had been with Paul; that he was as yet not well known; and that the fact that he had been seen with him had led to inquiry who he was, and what was the office which he sustained, That he was also a companion of Paul, and quite essential to his comfort in his work, is apparent from the following allusions to him in the same epistle--2 Corinthians 7:6-- "God, that comforteth those who are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;" 2 Corinthians 2:13, "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother;" 2 Corinthians 7:13, "Yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus." Comp. \2Ti 4:10 2Co 12:18\.

"(5.) There is reason to believe that Titus spent some time with the apostle in Ephesus; for the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus, and was sent by the hand of Titus.... It is to be presumed, also, that he would, on such an occasion, send some one with the epistle in whom he had entire confidence, and who had been so long with him as to become familiar with his views. For Titus, on this occasion, was sent not only to bear the epistle, but to endeavour to heal the divisions and disorders there, and to complete a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem, which the apostle had himself commenced. Comp. See Barnes "2 Corinthians 2:13";

See Barnes "2 Corinthians 7:6"; See Barnes "2 Corinthians 8:6". After this he met Paul in Macedonia, (2 Corinthians 7:5,6;) but whether he was with him when he went with the collection to Jerusalem, and during his imprisonment in Caesarea, or on his voyage to Rome, we have no information.

"(6.) We next hear of him as being left by the apostle in the island of Crete, that he might "set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city," Titus 1:5. This is supposed to have occurred about the year 62, and after the first imprisonment of the apostle at Rome. It is evidently implied, that the apostle had been himself there with him, and that he had undertaken to accomplish some important object there, but that something had prevented his completing it, and that he had left Titus to finish it. This was clearly a temporary arrangement, for there is no evidence that it was designed that Titus should be a permanent "bishop" of Crete, or that he remained there long. That he did not design that he should be a permanent bishop of that island, is clear from Titus 3:12, where the apostle directs him, when he should send Artemas to take his place, to come to him to Nicopolis. If Titus were a prelatical bishop, the apostle would not in this summary manner have superseded him, or removed him from his diocese.

"(7.) He was with Paul in Rome during his second imprisonment there. He did not, however, remain with him until his trial, but left him and went into Dalmatia, 2 Timothy 4:10. For the probable reason why he had gone there, See Barnes "2 Timothy 4:10". What became of him afterward, we are not informed. The tradition is, that he returned to Crete, and preached the gospel there and in the neighbouring islands, and died at the age of 94. But this tradition depends on no certain evidence."

Week one: Titus 1.1-4 THE CHARACTERS

1. Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

"From" is implied in the address of this letter - From Paul, to Titus.

The arrangement of his servanthood and his apostleship is of great interest to me. His servanthood was listed first and so it should be. We are servants first and then God may separate us to other works within the church. All should be servants, but there will be pastors, teachers, workers etc. within the servants of God at a particular location.

He uses the servant idea in Philippians 1.1 as well, but in his other books only calls attention to his apostleship in the introductions. Why he did this in Philippians and Titus would be information only Paul and God would have, but it may relate to those that he was writing to - he may have known that they also knew of servanthood in a practical way, while other recipients may not have come to that knowledge as yet. This reasoning may falter when applied to Timothy, one that seems to have been serving God under Paul's own hand.

We see the apostle set forth his apostleship as well as his servanthood. He truly was a servant, even unto qualifying as a zealot in the good sense of the word.

Apostle is an office or designation of the twelve, as well as a few others in the Scripture. It was a designation of one that was accepted as an authority by other Christians - an authority from Christ Himself. The term relates to being sent or appointed and sent. These people were sent by Christ on a specific mission and ministry.

Paul means small or little and most agree that it may well have related to his physical stature, however it would relate to ego and his feeling of self importance - or lack there of - this we know from his servanthood. One with a large ego seldom submits to anyone for anything.

"according to the faith of God's elect,"

"Faith" is the normal word for faith and relates to a sound belief in something or someone. In this case the faith of God's elect - it seems the faith of Christians was the basis of Paul's apostleship in some manner. "Elect" is the normal term translated elect and means chosen, or picked out. God, before time chose or elected some, and those elected have faith, faith in the God that elected them.

This faith is not because God elected them, though many would disagree with me here, but because that THEY BELIEVE the God that elected them. Many believe that God elected and the elected received faith so that they could believe. In reality faith is believing and it comes from within the individual - it is not something zapped into the elect. (Young translates "elect" as

"chosen")

The question comes to my mind as to why the faith of the elect relates in anyway to Paul's apostleship. Since Paul and the others were appointed by Christ, why would the faith of others relate to the appointment?

The Net Bible probably has the right thought when it translates "according" as "to further the faith" of the elect. Paul was an apostle to go teaching and instructing the elect about the salvation that their election has brought to them. I don't think this does disservice to the text and it fits much better than according. If you think about it a little, why would God elect or choose some to salvation and then base apostleship on the faith of others. Indeed, in other books Paul declares clearly that he is an apostle by Christ not by man. Galatians 1.1 is a fine example of what I have just mentioned. "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)"

"and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;" "Acknowledging" is related to precise and correct knowledge.

Truth is the opposite of false or what is also opposite, a lie. That which is true and based on truth. This is a concept America has thrown out the door. We have no basis for truth in this country. The lie, the innuendo and the falsehood are accepted as truth. In the 2004 campaign there were falsehoods thrown from one end of the country to the other and no one seemed to care, no one seemed embarrassed to use them, and what was worse, no one held the liars accountable. No one demanded facts, no one demanded proof and no one seemed to care what was said, only that it was said.

The term "after" is the same term translated "according" in the earlier phrase.

"Godliness" is translated both "godliness" and "holiness", thus we should be able to gain a clear picture of the concept. Someone that is not living in sin, someone that is living for God, and someone that is normally without sin.

There is a sidelight of truth in this phrase which should be noted in our day. Truth which is after godliness indicates that nontruth is after ungodliness.

Many there are today in Christian circles that use the lie as if it were truth and truth as if it were a lie. John 8:44 ("Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.") tells us that Satan is the Father of lies and we know that God is the source of all truth. Relate this to Corinthians where Paul tells us light and darkness have nothing to do with one another and you wonder how any believer can mix the stuff of God with the stuff of Satan.

Whats more, you are left to wonder how they get away with it. Why do Christians allow other believers to lie to them? Why does God allow them to continue on in their falsehood?

Now, specifically, this phrase refers back to Paul's apostleship. Just how does "and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;" relate to apostleship? In the specific sense acknowledging of the truth speaks of the Gospel. Had Paul not responded to the Gospel when confronted with it, he would not have become an apostle.

I can hear the backbiters screaming already. How could Paul not respond to the Gospel - he was elect, he could not "not respond" is the cry I can almost hear. I respond with "free will" is in the works though a further scream would be raised, "There is no such thing as free will!" they would cry. "If Paul could have refused His election, God would not be sovereign!" would be the next cry of anguish.

Well, in my mind if man has no free will, then God is not sovereign. A sovereign God is one that can do anything He wants to do and what He wants is fact. Free will is not against the sovereignty of God as they assume, it works beautifully with it in my mind. God in His foreknowledge - oh more cries of anguish - foresaw all that would respond to the Gospel and elected or chose them. This does not negate nor even diminish His sovereign will, it indeed enhances it in my mind. He is free to allow man to have free will and still do as He pleases. Now, that is sovereign!

Free will is simply doing what we want. This is acceptable to all those that would reject my thoughts. They realize we choose to sin, we choose many things in our lives FREELY, but they cannot tolerate that same freedom in salvation. Seems a radical idea that God would grant us freedom to do as we please except when it comes to salvation - that we have to be saved, and that we have no choice in the matter.

Some would suggest that the lost elect are regenerated before they are saved so that they can respond to salvation when it is presented to them. This is closer to the truth, and allows for "free will" in their minds, but to me this doctrine does damage to the sovereignty of God. He can't do what He wants to in the elect's life unless he forces the elect to do as He desires. This does not fit will with Scripture in my mind.

I think with my line of thought we have full sovereignty of God and full free will without damage to either and we include foreknowledge as the easy meaning of the term implies instead of twisting it to mean something a little different. I don't mean to demean those that reject my thought, but I do see a lack of faith in the Word on their part when they eliminate foreknowledge and free will because the teaching does disservice to their belief system.

A belief system must rise from the whole of the Scripture, not just the parts that fit the system that we try to impress upon the Scripture. If the Word speaks of election, predestination, free will, foreknowledge and all the other items, we are responsible to find a system that fits ALL

those items presented not just the majority and reject the rest (as the author ducks into his bomb shelter to get away from the incoming blast of the opposition :-). I do not demean those that I have mentioned, for me, for the most part, find them more knowledgeable of their system, more precise about their thinking, and more confident of their belief than most on the other side. They are a people that know what they believe and have a tremendous confidence in that belief. I just respectfully suggest that they may be incorrect.

I find it sad, however, that many of them conclude that I am lost because I do not agree with their system - they would say I disagree with God's salvation plan and thus am lost. I find this sad, in that they lose a great fellowship with many believers and sad that they reject some of Christ's brothers and sisters over a belief system.

I find more commonality with them as believers than I do with the normal Bible believer today, because the Bible believers of our day are so off into their own system of worship that they seldom worry about doctrine. Yet, I cannot participate in their internet boards because I do not agree with their confessions.

That alone says a lot about where their priorities are. I agree with the Bible, but because I don't agree with their confessions (made by man) I cannot participate in discussion with them. This also is sad to me.

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

When my father was on his death bed, I spoke to him again of his eternal status with God. He, for the first time, explained to me his belief. He had tried to live a good life all his life and he was hoping that he had done enough good to get into heaven. He was hoping to make it on his good deeds. This is not God's method of saving people as much as I would have loved to see my father in heaven. We spoke of the true Gospel for a time as we had before, but he never acknowledged to us verbally of his acceptance.

"In hope" - I really hope I make it. No, this is not the thought of the passage. The word used here, carries the thought of expectation of something rather than a healthy desire to see something come to pass.

The author of hope is He who is its foundation - a rephrase from a Lexicon. Also, the author of hope is the provider of that hope. Ah, here I cannot disagree with my reformed brethren. It is all of God and all for His glory!

Eternal is one of those terms some like to redefine to fit their belief system. Eternal is just that - eternal - just as God is eternal, so will our life with Him be. It is never ending, it is without end, it is eternal, if you will. It can never mean that it will last only a few years, a few eons, a few whatever, it will continue to exist for all time, all eternity. Nor, is this meaning that we are eternal, as in pre-existing before our birth. We have eternal life from the point of salvation -

eternal and never ending.

Those that teach that we lived in some existence before with God make fools of themselves with their teaching. If you have always been, why would you need to come to earth in the flesh to always be?

This life is given at the moment of salvation, it is permanent and it is never retracted. It will continue whether you desire it to or not, it will continue for all who have believed on the Lord and placed their faith in Him.

"Life" is the normal word for life - one having breath - one that is living. Eternal is the emphasis here, eternal life, living - eternally continuing in existence in some manner similar to what we are in now. Though glorified, we will be similar to what we are today I would suspect. While we are continuing on in living, the lost will continue on in the death, in that terrible state of pain and suffering.

There is a line of thought that needs to be covered at this point. ALL, are now, since the cross eternal beings, the problem is that some are eternal beings in Christ headed for life, while others are eternal beings outside of Christ and headed for death - not annihilation, but eternal, everlasting death. Read the last part of Luke sixteen for a brief hint of the terribleness of this state.

All are eternal beings, the difference is the cross, the difference is Christ, and the difference is confession of Him as your Savior - I trust if you hear only these words from this study, hear them and act upon them.

"Cannot lie" is one of the clearest statements of the truthfulness of God. How much clearer could this truth be made? He cannot lie, He cannot remove Himself from the truth and indeed He is truth. This same God has promised eternal life to those that will receive His son's work on the cross.

He, the One that is truth, promised us eternal life. Now, refer back to that term "hope" and consider it a moment. It is a surety of what will come based on the God that cannot lie. We have this hope of an eternal life with Him - a surety - a fact to be fulfilled and surely it will be fulfilled.

"Before the world began" is kind of a mouthful and Paul didn't even explain it. Do you suppose he knew that Titus already knew what that meant? I'd guess this was the case. Paul had really taught Mr. Titus Theology 101 and maybe up and through theology 405. He didn't take six pages to elaborate on this grand doctrine, thus Titus must have passed his theology course.

Many have suggested that "in hope of eternal life" relates to the fact that we have to work and work and hope and hope that we will gain eternal life. This is not the teaching of this verse and

you have to totally ignore the plain literal interpretation of Scripture to use it in this manner.

Not so according to those that believe in eternal security. If God makes us His child, then we are his children and we are not able to become an unchild.

I spoke to a pastor of a Nazarene church in Wyoming about security and he felt that you could lose your salvation if you really worked at it. Others feel that if you don't work at salvation you can't gain it.

Both ends of the spectrum are in error when you understand the teaching of salvation as a gift - grace from God. You don't work to keep a gift that has been given freely, nor do you work to gain a gift that is given at the discretion of the giver. Once on an internet board someone posted the question "Is it really a free gift." I responded, "if it ain't free it ain't a gift," and of course he responded with illustrations attempting to discredit the clear falsehood of his question.

If it is a gift, it is free, and if it is free it is a gift. If I have to do something or pay something for it then it can no longer be considered a gift, but a purchase. It amazes me to see how many fail to see the pure logic of the statement.

If you just can't resist digging into this topic further, see my theology under security.

The next thought of Paul contradicts the thought of works to gain salvation. God - who can't lie - promised eternal life before the foundations of the world! The two ideas (working for something promised as a gift before the creation of the world) are inconsistent.

If God promised eternal life, then there is nothing man can do or not do for that salvation. The eternal life is presented for the taking, not the working and worrying.

He planned it before creation, He promised it before creation, and he instituted it before creation. The outworking of the plan has continued on since and will ultimately be completed in the end times. How arrogant the person that says after understanding all this, that they must work and squirm to gain this gift, and keep working and squirming to keep it once they have gotten it. My question. How much working and how much squirming does it take to gain eternal life? How do you know when you have done enough? When do you switch from gaining it to keeping it by your works?

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

'Manifested' means simply that His Word was shown forth or given forth to man. The idea is that it is there for viewing, for inspection, and for consideration. It is not crammed down anyone's throat, it is given forth for all to see.

In downtown Salem, OR, and I would guess many other cities, they have a round cork board, called a kiosk, where anyone in the community can post anything they want. We won't talk about what an eyesore it is, but it is there for the thought of communication of information. Anyone can tell anyone about anything that they want to. They are making manifest their ideas and thoughts to all that will walk up and take a snoop. All residents of Salem are not forced to line up and inspect every sheet, nor are they required to even get close to it, but it is manifested to anyone that is interested.

Now, the modifier "in due times" is of note, for all that have lived did not enjoy this manifestation. The Old Testament saints before Moses had nothing, and after Moses for many they only had the Pentateuch or the first five books of the Bible. Notice that the word was made manifest through preaching. The early church did not have the written word either, but they did have the preaching of the apostles. In this case the Cretans were given the Word through Paul's preaching.

There is a significance to this idea of "in due time." The Word has been revealed in a progressive manner. Some had only a little bit of revelation, while others had more, and finally many of us enjoy God's complete revelation.

From a purely logical and human standpoint, I would have hated to have lived after the time of the prophets. I would have read some of those prophecies and wondered for years what it all meant. The same, I'm sure was true after the revelation of John. Imagine reading the book of Revelation in the first or second century. What a load of questions a person would have to ask. The real frustration would have been that there was no one to ask these questions of, nor anyone to gain your answers from.

"Preaching" is simply the communication from one announcing to one listening. Back to downtown Salem, if they wanted to be really cute in their communications they could hire someone to read aloud all those communications to all that would pass by. It would certainly help the visual clutter, but it would not do well for the noise factor.

Preaching is the proclamation of God's Word. We hold this to be the hallmark of our worship services, but you might want to look at the book of Acts and see how much preaching was going on in the early church. When Paul was around, they had preaching sessions (We won't talk about how long some of them were - it might give preachers today some ideas :-). From a reading of Acts the time of gathering of believers centered on other than preaching. I assume when there was someone qualified to teach that it was done, but I'm not sure they went for Sunday school and eleven o'clock worship services. They consumed their time in prayer, fasting and fellowship.

Just crossed my mind - can you envision a gathering of Christians in the book of Acts being interrupted from their prayer, fasting, and fellowship to rise and mill around the sanctuary greeting one another? Okay so that doesn't relate a whole lot to the passage, but then I just had to say it. Then again maybe it should relate.

"Committed" is not the dedication that we relate the word to, but it is something that is committed to someone - placed in trust with another. It is a related word to the term translated "faith" in the New Testament. It is something that Christ entrusted Paul with to do. In that respect, Christ committed it to Paul. He was very committed to doing that work, but the commitment was from Christ and it was based on His belief in Paul.

Now, let us take that one step further. He relied on Paul to proclaim the Word, and in truth He is relying on us in the same way to proclaim the Gospel to the lost. II Corinthians tells us that we are ambassadors of reconciliation - we are those proclaimers that are to go forth into the world proclaiming the claims of Christ. The question comes - are we as committed to that job as Paul was to his?

"Commandment" is not only something commanded but has the idea of the command coming from someone with the authority to command. Paul knew his preaching was a direct order from God and He was committed to doing it to the very best of his ability - as we should be committed to being witnesses for Christ.

"In due times" refers specifically to the fact that it was on time - in God's time table everything is done and occurs at the time specified in His overall plan of the ages.

As historians and theologians consider the timing of Christ's entrance upon history, they find that there was no better time for Him to have been born. All of history was right for His appearance and the ultimate spread of the Gospel. The Roman Empire covered most of the world which allowed for the Gospel to spread easily. The roads were good for the time, for easy travel. There was basically one language in all countries - Greek. The spiritual climate was corrupt and the population was looking for a "something" that answered their spiritual needs. There was one government that allowed easy access to all countries. There was also a peace throughout the empire which allowed for free travel and preaching.

No, this was not accidental; it was the culmination of God's plan in the bringing of the savior into history. There are no accidents. Daniel pictures God in the process of raising up and tearing down nations for His purpose. He, indeed, raised up the Roman Empire at just the right time to bring about these needed changes in history, man and time to bring His Son to the earth to work out redemption for mankind.

The spread of the Word was determined to be by the preaching of the Word. God has designated His people to be the bearer of His Good News. He has no other way for the Word to go forth, except by the preaching of His people.

The obvious application of that knowledge is that every one of us should be sharing the Word in some manner. Some by preaching, some by teaching, and ALL by witnessing. If you are not involved in spreading the Word, then you are not involved in the work God has told you to do. You are in rebellion against His wishes.

4 To Titus, [mine] own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, [and] peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Titus means nurse or someone that is gentle. Now there are some that would argue that a nurse is always gentle, but NORMALLY they are and this would give insight into Titus character I would think.

Paul labels Titus as his son in the faith. "Son" can relate to a begotten son so this is a close relation that the two men had. It is seldom that this sort of relationship develops so if you have such a bond with another man, you should develop that friendship as much as you can. It will be beneficial to both of you.

Paul goes on to declare that they have a common faith. They have all things spiritual in common, and they are close as a father and a son. I suspect that the common faith is what brought the relationship into existence. It seems to me that oft times age disappears when spiritual things are common.

I fear this is one area of the church where we really fall short of what would be best. The aged have so much to teach the young and the young are not interested in listening to the old folks. In my mind there should be some planning along this line in churches today. The youth need to get to know some of the aged - they would find them more fascinating than they would expect, and all the while some of the wisdom might rub off.

A pastor from the Chicago area told me that his church put together a social time for the youth groups and the senior citizens. Both groups found it very enjoyable and the pastor said that the youth finally realized that the "white hairs" were people too. It was a grand success for the two groups and a great gain for the church.

"Grace" normally is defined as favor extended to one not worthy of favor. The word is used in that way but it is a much broader word. It can relate to enjoyment, of pleasure, of thanks and other variations. In this context I would guess Paul wanted to extend a greeting to Titus that would set him at ease as he started to read this letter.

It is seemingly a simple prayer verbalized, requesting that God would extend grace, mercy and peace to Titus in light of all that he had to do at Crete. Indeed, as the letter continues, it seems that Titus will need just these qualities from some source to work with the people he is going to be working with.

"Mercy" is to show kindness or goodness toward one that is afflicted. This should have encouraged Titus in light of coming verses. "Peace" would have added to this. Peace is that which is absent in wartime. Paul has just asked God to grant Titus mercy and peace - I have to wonder what Titus was thinking at this point in time.

Paul calls upon the Father as well as Christ for this assistance for the man he has set in charge in Crete. The term "Savior" is the Greek word from which we gain our theological term Soteriology, the study of salvation. Paul sets forth Christ as The Anointed one, as God - man, as the Lord, and as Savior. He is God, He is God's Anointed One, He is Jesus born of Mary, He is Lord over all, and most of all He is Savior of all that will have Him as such.

A few further thoughts on the son aspect. There are some things that a Father ought to do for his son, either before the Lord or his son by birth. The parent will have a primary responsibility in all of these areas and may well become the spiritual aspect of his son's life as well; however the person that leads another to the Lord has a responsibility to do as much as he can without causing interference in the true family relationship.

NURTURE: (Eph. 6.4)

EDUCATION: (Deut. 6.7)

DISCIPLINE: (Heb 12.5ff)

ENJOY: (Psa. 127.5 and others)

Don't avoid this responsibility either in your physical children or in your spiritual children. Those you lead to Christ ought to be disciplined and nurtured in their spiritual walk if at all possible. Imagine the joy Paul had knowing that this young upstart Titus was now trained and ready to minister to peoples needs. It must have been of great joy.

I have seen similar joy personally in a couple of men that I followed in their pulpits. It wasn't because I had been trained by the men, but that I was going to be assisting in training people they had been teaching. Both had stepped out of their pulpits to retire, and they had left the church men to seek temporary assistance. I was called as interim. When I told one of the men that I was taking his old post he was overjoyed. The other man the first time I preached he was in attendance, he was beaming, amening, and was over joyed with the pick of his men. We should never be prideful over the training we give, but we can certainly take joy in knowing that we have.

The application that is present here is the free gift of salvation that brought Paul unto the Lord and then Titus. That same salvation is available to all that will accept it.

Many declare that they are happy and at peace without God, but I really do not believe that true peace and happiness can come without God. Peace is God's gift to us as we accept Him.

Peace does not mean the super spiritual high with the ear to ear smile with pearly white teeth, but is the inner peace that allows us to go through all sorts of trials and problems with the assurance that God is with us and that He is caring for us.

We have been introduced to the main characters though some real characters are yet to be introduced. Paul the apostle has given a great responsibility to Titus - a responsibility to set a church in order.

APPLICATION:

1. Verse one ended with the word godliness. Let's take a moment with that word. It is defined in the Lexicon as piety before God, piety meaning living correctly. The Webster's dictionary puts it this way, "A religious life; a careful observance of the laws of God and performance of religious duties, proceeding from love and reverence for the divine character and commands;...." Since we are no longer under the law we know this not to be correct but following Gods commands is certainly what we are to be about.

It is following what God has said. Is that all? Most likely, but within that is a tremendous amount of territory. A major part of it would be not doing what He tells us not to do as well.

Godliness is the opposite of godlessness and holiness is the opposite of sinfulness. Thus a Godly life is a sinless life, it is an obedient life, and it is a separated life - I know that word brings shudders to the backs of so many Christians, but separation from sin is part of godliness no matter how you twist and rationalize the Word of God. You might read I Timothy four if you need an example of the outworking of all this.

Godliness demands an obedient life. Godliness demands a sinless life. Godliness demands a committed life. Godliness demands a servant's life. Godliness demands a truthful life.

Do you get the truth of this? If you aren't godly, you are ungodly, if you are untruthful you are a liar, if you are not holy you are unholy. We can't be on both sides of the fence, either/or is the choice and we must make it.

2. Barnes uses an interesting line of thinking that we might consider. "It is the purpose of God to save his people, but he does not mean to save them as infidels, or unbelievers. He intends that they shall be believers first--and hence he sends his ministers that they may become such."

Barnes introduces the fact that we are not saved completely in this life. He had to change us from lost to His people, then at a point in time He will complete that process. Those that die before the end will go through changes that will adapt them to life in the heavenlies, but in the end time when all is completed we will all be united with him in eternal life.

Now, whether Paul had any or all of this in mind in this passage, I would say none of it, but I thank Barnes for introducing us to that great truth of our salvation in process - even though it is done in God's mind.

3. A point to ponder. Paul uses "servant of God" however, usually he used "servant of Christ" as

do the other apostles (Romans 1.1; I Cor. 1.1; II Cor. 1.1; Philippians 1.1; II Peter 1.1; Jude 1) I wondered if there was a reason that he chose a different phrase here. In James 1.1 James uses both phrases to describe himself.

The question arises, is there a difference between a "servant of God" and a "servant of Christ?" I assume that there is a distinction since two writers use them both to describe themselves and James uses both in the same verse - but just what it is remains to be seen. I will give you a chart and you can fill it in when you do the study on your own. I will give you a few possibles to consider.

I am going to make an assumption relating to this. Being a servant of God is that commitment given to God in general to live a godly life before Him, while I would take it that to be a servant of Christ would be the more practical of how you live that godly life before God. One is the mental while the other is the physical.

SERVANT OF GOD SERVANT OF CHRIST

1. Commitment to serve Serving by way of good works
2. Commitment to worship Glorifying Christ in our speech before man
3. Commitment to witness Talking with people about the Lord
4. Desire to love and grow closer Study of the Word and applying it to life

4. Paul is his Roman name, and Saul is his Jewish name. In Acts 13.9 we see that Saul was also called Paul. It was at this time he started using his Roman name rather than the Jewish. I assume that there might have been two reasons for the change. All Christians and Jews knew who Saul was - he was the great persecutor of Christians. For this reason he may have wanted to distance himself from his former self for the sake of the Gospel. The second possibility might be so that he would relate more quickly with the Gentile people he wished to evangelize. It better fits that ministry as well.

5. We mentioned that Paul was first a slave, and secondly an apostle. The sequence seems to be important to him; however the sequence may well be important to God as well. Only a servant relationship with God can bring about the uplifting to an office by God. Had Paul not become a servant, he would never have been an apostle.

A related line of thought is that the word servant is backed by the Old Testament concept of one falling into debt and becoming a slave to the man he owed money to. At the end of seven years

the slave was free to go, but many knowing the safety of their life as a slave in a terrible culture to make a living, opted to submit themselves to their master for life as a slave. It was a complete and free choice for them to make. This actually gave them a real freedom in knowing that they would always be cared for and would always have someone looking after them.

What is your status as a "free to make your choice" Christian. Have you made a choice to be a servant, or are you out there on your own doing it your own way? Servitude is the path to service. If you desire to serve God then there is a step that you must take to achieve that goal.

Servitude also demands that you will be set aside and God's will taken as your way of life. You can't serve God while doing your own desires.

Another thought - all of us are gifted, but many in the church today are not using their gifts, and some don't even know what their gift is. Might this be part of the problem? Would God bother informing you of your gift if you aren't willing to use it for Him? Would he open an opportunity for you to use your gift before you are within His Will for your life? Doubtful.

This thing of servanthood is a big step and many in the church today don't even know it is on the table, because they are untaught in the Word that we are supposed to be proclaiming.

6. I might draw your thoughts to the purpose of preaching. It is for the edification and training of the saints. It is never a proper activity just for the sake of preaching the Word, it should be preached for the purpose of changing lives. That should be obvious, but I am not sure it is in many churches today.

For your further study on the term "apostle" Keathley states: "As used in the New Testament, it had both a broad or general use, much like our term "missionary" or "messenger" (cf. Acts 14:14; Phil. 2:25; 1 Thess. 2:7; and 2 Cor. 8:23), and a more technical or special use as used of the 12 apostles and Paul (Matt. 10:2; Acts 1:2, 26; 2:37; Rom. 1:1; 11:13; 1 Cor. 1:1; 15:7-9; Tit. 1:1; Acts 15:2, 4, 6)."

7. Paul uses this thought of "entrust" or "committed" in I Tim. 6.20; II Tim. 1.12. It is a high honor for us to be entrusted with the Gospel. God has chosen man to be his messenger. He could have hired skywriters, or His own advertising agency to do the job, but God chose mankind - believers to share the Gospel and to disciple those that come to Christ.

In case you haven't considered it, that is Almighty God placing faith in mankind - that same mankind that thumbed their nose at Him in the Garden. He chose redeemed man to place His faith in. That tells me one of two things. God has a tremendous reserve of faith, or regenerated man is supposed to be very trustworthy. Both concepts are worth further consideration.

8. Rev. 13:8 states "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

This is related to verse two. Two refers to the fact that God promised salvation before creation, and here in Revelation we see that the Lamb, Christ, was also slain from the foundation of the world. Both the gift and the basis of the gift were completed before creation - in God's mind, not in reality. The Word came later as man began to record it, and Christ's death at the proper time.

Now, why is this important? Go back to your understanding of salvation in the Old Testament. It is my contention that the Old Testament saints were not regenerated on the spot of salvation, but only AFTER the cross. This is why they did not receive the Holy Spirit as we; this is why they were contained in Sheol as shown in Luke 16, instead of being ushered into the presence of God as we are at death.

For further on this you can read my work on regeneration but for now, understand that ALL things are completed in God's mind, but not in time. Many misunderstand this great truth and assume that regeneration happens at God's time table - any time and anywhere - even in the Old Testament. This is not possible if the Lamb has not been slain in time. Only after the cross could the Old Testament saints be united with the Father.

This is also why the Old Testament talks about the covering of sins, while the New Testament speaks of the removal of sin. The Old Testament saints sins were only covered over until Christ's blood could remove them. This, to me, is proof positive that my thinking is correct. Sin could not be completely dealt with until the fact of the cross was done - even though all sins are washed away or removed from before the foundation of the world in God's mind.

8. We spoke of the truthfulness of God earlier. This is what theologians call the "Veracity" of God. It is one of his attributes that most seminarians and Bible college students study. I might interject that this does not allow for Christ telling half truths as some missions and missionaries go around the country saying to give credence to their illegal activities on the field. Half truths are lies and God does not lie.

Keathley states that this phrase could be translated "the without deceit God." I really like that statement. He is without deceit, and He cannot enter into deceit. Simple - he IS truth.

This was probably a dagger to the Cretan's heart if any of them read this letter. In verse twelve Paul says "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars, evilbeasts, and slow bellies."

For your further study I have included this section from my theology below.

GOD IS TRUE

Another term you may run into in this study is veracity. Veracity is ".....devotion to the truth: TRUTHFULNESS....." (By permission. From Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary copyright 1991 by Merriam-Webster Inc., publisher of the Merriam-Webster (registered)

Dictionaries.)

God is called the true God. Jo. 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

God is called the God of truth. Ps. 31:5, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." Isa. 65:16, "That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth, and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth, because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from mine eyes."

Strong tells us, "In virtue of His veracity, all His revelations to creatures consist with His essential being and with each other. In virtue of His faithfulness, He fulfills all His promises to His people, whether expressed in words or implied in the constitution He has given them. (Strong's SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY)

Ryrie mentions that God is consistent with Himself. This illustrates truth. We are true to ourselves when we are ourselves.

"True" can be used of the character of an object as well as the knowledge about the object. A gun barrel can be true or straight. We can also know about a gun barrel and know of its true or straight nature.

A man can be a true scientist by nature, but we may know nothing about the man except lies that someone has spread about him. We can know him to be true in nature because of his credentials but not know Him truthfully because we know only of the gossip.

God is the true God for He matches the true God that is revealed in the Word. We can know there is a true - real - God, yet not know Him, or know much about Him. We need to understand BOTH!

God is the truthful God, for His knowledge conforms to His nature, or more exactly IS true knowledge. He is completely accurate, and there can be no inaccuracy.

All truth extends from Him and all truth conforms to Him. He is the ultimate standard of truth for He is truth. (Ps. 31:5, Ps. 119:126-128, Ps. 119:160.)

God's truth is related to many of His other attributes and characteristics. I will just list these for your further study.

Truth and light. Ps. 43:3

Truth and kindness. II Sam. 2:6

Truth and goodness. Ex. 34:6

Truth and uprightness. Ps. 111:8

Truth and righteousness. Jer. 4:2

Truth and peace. Jer. 33:6

Truth and grace. Jo. 1:17

Truth and life. Jo. 14:6

You will see that truth is defined in many ways as you live and learn. For example, Mary Baker Eddy stated that if something was real, then it was truth. The fallacy of this can be illustrated in the fact that Hitler was real but he wasn't truth.

APPLICATION

1. God is total truth so there is no lie within Him. Every promise and every Word are truth and to be trusted implicitly.
2. By a bit far off application, we might run along the following lines for a moment. When we ask the Lord what He wants us to do in a certain instance and He tells us, there is never any need for us to question His answer for one split second. We know He wouldn't josh us! He is totally and completely HONEST, AND HE WILL NEVER LIE OR MISLEAD US!
3. He will respond to us in all that is truth in the manner of our worship and prayers. Jo. 4:24, Ps. 145:18.
4. His judgments will be entirely based upon truth. No one can trick Him into letting them into heaven or out of hell. Ps. 54:5, Rom. 2:2.
5. The holiness and truth of God should dictate our ethics as men and women of God! I fear ethics are out the window in the ministry today. I would like to illustrate this in a number of ways

so you will know what some good ethics are.

a. I was waiting in the office of a large evangelical church in Oregon. I could hear the business manager and the church secretary arguing. They were not heated, though voices were being raised. The high level of volume forced me to hear that the secretary thought that the church board should operate with business men of the community, in a manner consistent with Christian ethics. The business manager stated flatly that they should not operate with Christian ethics. That business manager knew little of proper ethics.

b. I have observed and heard of many pastors that leave a church in a small town and start another church in the same town. When on deputation, I had a meeting in a town of four hundred people with two fundamental Baptist churches. There is no need for two churches, two buildings, two budgets, two pastors. What a waste of God's money.

c. Most churches have a clause in their doctrinal statements and bylaws requesting that the pastor leave if he finds himself in a doctrinal difference with the congregation. There are men who remain, and continue to teach wrong doctrine. Some actually lead the congregation off into their false doctrine.

d. I have observed a pastor moving into an area and encouraging disgruntled people in a church to split, and then assuming the pastorate over their new church. (There were no doctrinal differences involved.)

e. Accepting a church they know they have differences within doctrine and practice without telling them.

f. Candidating in three churches at one time and then choosing the best one that call's you. I have seen this more and more in the late 80's and early 90's.

g. Flying to one church to candidate and candidating at another while you are there on the other people's money.

h. Accepting a church in one fellowship of churches while planning to take it into another fellowship.

I. Counting churches in your fellowship when the church hasn't had any association in years. When on deputation I found an address for a church in a fellowship directory. I was able to set up a meeting with the pastor. Upon arrival at the church the pastor asked me where I had heard about his church. I told him of the directory. He stated that the church hadn't been with that group in more than ten years.

j. Setting up a candidate appointment and calling two days before your date to speak and telling them you have accepted another church.

I trust that pastors, missionaries, and Christians in general will consider how they live their lives. I feel confident in saying that I believe God is embarrassed with His people, in this generation. Many Christians are less than truthful in their personal lives.

May we strive for the holiness and the truth of God in our personal and church lives.

Week two: Titus 1.5-9 THE JOB

PURPOSE OF THE LETTER:

5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

"Cause" is normally translated as it is here, but it comes from a word relating to "speak reproachfully" built into the word - maybe indicating the mind set of the Apostle at the time - speaking of the Cretans and those things wanting in the church. One must wonder.

Paul tells Titus that he is there to set things in order, ordain elders in every city. Seems to be two items of labor, which most likely are intertwined, but still distinct.

"Set things in order" probably included the need for leaders and the ordination of elders would have been needed, though I would think there was further order needed. Had Paul only wanted elders, he would have stopped at telling Titus to ordain elders. The training of men to be elders would also have been needed.

What other items might have been on the apostle's mind in the thought of "order?" I would suggest that he wanted Titus to set up constitutions and doctrinal statements, but that would be pressing today's standard upon the Cretan church. There probably was a certain amount of sorting out of the believers as to maturity level, of doctrinal correctness, but I'd guess the majority of this thought would have been correcting problems of organization, and people problems.

There may have been some lifestyle issues that needed to be dealt with as well. Certainly today there are within the church. The church life style is not too much removed from that of the world in most cases today.

"Ordain elders" brings us to a topic that many have problems with. Actually, two problems. The first being ordination and the second being elders. Let's deal with these one at a time.

Ordination: The term used here simply means to set into office, or appoint. It is not some big procedure to bring about a potluck followed by a seven o'clock service where a bunch of old guys "approve" of a young guys schooling.

If you look at the qualifications coming up in the text, little is said of education, but is mostly about life style and character. Today's ordination is far from what it was in the early church and far from what it should be.

Normally, today a bunch of pastors come together to question the man's belief system and/or tear it down. There seldom is any checking of the character, nor the lifestyle of the man in question.

Seldom are the church leaders involved in this process. In some cases the church leaders are purposely excluded as if they are not related in any way.

In my mind, ordination might run along this line. When you have need of a man to fill a leadership role, you look around your church and see if there are any that would fit the qualifications listed for us in Scripture (I Timothy and Titus). If there is someone that qualifies, has a proper life style and seems to fit, then consider him and have him consider the position. Open the process to the congregation if he is desirous of the office and see if all concur about his qualifications/lifestyle. If all seems appropriate, then ordain him.

Now, just what ordain should entail is the question. It could be as simple as appointing him to the position at a regular service of the church, to a service committed to the ordination, to include challenge, description of the office/qualifications for the congregation, prayer and commitment. It seems open to what the church would desire.

In a case where there is no one in the congregation that is qualified/desirous, then go outside the church. Seek input from other congregations. When it comes to knowing if the person is qualified, have the church leaders interview him, send out letters to his home church, to his employer, to his neighbors and see if he really lives what he believes. If all looks good, install him for a trial period so you can evaluate his qualifications/lifestyle. Then proceed to the ordination when all is confirmed.

I recently watched a thread on an internet board on this subject. I watched for awhile and finally asked for a Biblical basis for ordination. Of course Acts was brought up - when Saul was separated and ordained. I posted back that the text did not mention a council of men questioning/badgering the candidate and that I did notice fasting was a part of the process - I pointed out that most ordinations include pot lucks rather than fasting.

We are far from Biblical in our process of choosing leaders these days even though most deny it and assert how Biblical they are. If you are recognizing the qualifications in a person, if they are called of God, you have prayed and fasted over the subject, then ordain them and kick them out into the ministry they are called to. That process contains nothing about a board of pompous pastors trying to trip up a young man that seriously wants to serve his Master.

Some would ask if I have been to an ordination. My answer would be that I have been in attendance at two. The first was my own, when my church board, which had known me and watched me mature for years, met with me and asked me some questions about the doctrinal statement they had requested. They knew me, they knew what I believed, and they knew my calling, they had been praying about the subject and they ordained me. Now, some would say I am not properly ordained, and that is probably true as far as the "church" is concerned, but I rely on the fact that I was Biblically ordained.

The second ordination I went to was to a minor acquaintance that invited me to be on his board. I

arrived and because I wasn't a pastor or man of renowned I was not asked to sit with the pastors. In fact I was not even recognized by the ordination council as being there or being a part of the council when they were introduced.

The council began the questioning. Many of the questions were sent to the candidate prior to the meeting and his responses were in the hands of the rest of the council. I had not seen them. The council president became infuriated with one point of the man's doctrine and rather than keep his silence which is the norm as president, he blurted out his disdain for the man's comments.

All this time the elders of the church were sitting behind me - also not introduced.

The schedule by the way was the council in the afternoon followed by a pot-luck and then the ordination service. Seemed rather obvious the conclusion to the council was totally forgone.

The council finally drew their questioning to a close, though they did not ask the man of his call from God, nor his call to this church nor much of anything about his character or qualifications for the office. The president stood, asked for the elders of the church to leave, and they voted on the man.

It seems in Acts the elders of the church did all the work and did the ordaining.

I am not sure why they did not ask me to leave - the vote was taken and the man was able to enjoy the pot luck.

That was the last ordination I attended and the last I desire to attend if arranged by today's church. I decided if I wanted to see sanctimonious people playing their silly games, I could go to most any lodge and see similar goings on. Not that there aren't some good Biblical ordinations going on today, but they are few I would guess.

Elders: I won't take time to try to prove this point, but I believe that there should be multiple elders in every church. These men should be from the congregation. A paid pastor might be brought in if needed, but he should go through the procedure listed above. He should be evaluated for qualification/lifestyle.

If you list the terms, elder and elders you will find that the plural is used in a majority of cases in the New Testament. There are some cases that might indicate one elder, but the majority of usages are plural, not singular. If you look to the Old Testament you will find that multiple is usually the case as well.

There is a movement today that says that multiple elders are the norm and that all of them should be paid elders - as in from outside the church. I would challenge anyone to give Biblical basis for this concept.

I think if you do a word study on elder/elders you will come to the thought of multiple elders in each church. There is safety of decision when you have multiple people considering an issue. You also have a multiple set of ideas to consider and evaluate.

Now, in the context, we are speaking of selecting, evaluating and ordaining men to the office of elder in each of the churches. In my view Titus was to ordain multiple elders in multiple churches. Others would reject this thought for the idea of ordaining AN elder in multiple churches. Either way Titus was to set himself about setting leadership in the churches of Crete.

"In every city" indicates only that there were more than one church already existing on the island, and all were in need of leadership.

We might take note of Paul's habit of planting churches and then returning later to set up leadership. I have often wondered if this lapse of time was for the congregations to consider their members and select those they thought fit the qualifications for the office.

Acts 14.21 "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and [to] Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

Barnes mentions that Homer told of a hundred cities on Crete. No doubt many were small, but it is possible that there were many churches that needed the assistance of Titus.

I have mentioned that FASTING was a part of this ordination process. We might have to do a word study on that to see what it is before getting into the ordination process. Not many today have a handle on what fasting is.

Be sure to notice that there is no requirement of schooling, ordination council, nor is there a specific age mentioned. The thought is to ordain elders of proper stature to watch over the believers in the different cities.

The fact that he was to ordain elders - plural - in every city indicates the plurality of elders in a church. Paul had evidently started the churches in the different cities and would not have had time to plant multiple churches in every city he visited.

The lack of mention of appointing deacons is of interest. The churches may have already had them in place at the time, or more likely in my mind, Paul was leaving this to be done when the elders were appointed. It would be properly their place to call for deacons as there was a need in the church for them.

Paul must have planted the churches and then moved on as he did in the book of Acts when he

planted churches on the way out on his journey and appointed elders on the way back. This would give time for the congregations to see the natural leadership emerging from within the body of believers.

Some might suggest that it was not Paul that planted the churches, to which I would respond, this is quite possible, but why would he feel it his responsibility to see to the needs of leadership by sending Titus?

Before we move on there is an important item to observe. Paul wanted Titus to ordain elders in verse five, while he mentions "bishop" in verse seven. The two terms seem to refer to the same office. The term bishop is "episkopos" and the term elder is "presbuteros" - two completely different words. Episkopos relates to oversight, of seeing to it that what needs to be done is being done. Presbuteros relates to age or elder, one of age. It would seem that the idea of elder would relate to the maturity while the word bishop would relate to the office itself rather than the person. The point being - we don't have two offices mentioned here.

Gill has a paragraph relating to some historical letters that were sent to churches on Crete in the second century from a bishop in Corinth. It might interest history buffs.

Let's move onto the qualifications set forth for elder.

6. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Barnes suggests that not accused and unruly relates to the man's children; however Gill takes it to relate to the man. I think Gill is the better line of thought.

THE ELDER IS TO FOLLOW SOME DO'S AND DON'TS! This can't set well to those that preach that we must live by grace, not rules. I have to wonder how they view this list of do's and don'ts that Paul set forth.

THE ELDER MUST BE IN CONTROL OF HIS OUTWARD LIFE:

He must be blameless. Why? Because he is a steward of God. He is a steward watching over the church's activities as well as the church's people. You can't be a good steward if you aren't a right living believer!

If any be blameless = not just without blame, but unrepachable, not someone against which any can accuse of blame. In our society this will be hard as churches are not filled with totally honest, upright people. If there is a "beef" between two people it might well come to the surface as a

“blame game” - these cases will be hard to sort out, but they need to be worked through.

This requires good ethics in business, in life, and in recreation. Keeping yourself clean of all accusation. This is the same Greek word that Paul used in his list of qualifications in I Timothy three.

The husband of one wife = Now until the last generation this seemed to mean one woman type man, a man that was committed to one woman for life. In recent years we have seen this redefined to include all sorts of ideas including "one woman at a time type man" thus allowing for divorced and remarried men in the position.

Since they are to be blameless and remarriage is adultery I don't see the thinking - a person living in open sin, must never be placed in a place of leadership.

This does not mean a single person could not be an elder, though there would be a real need of wisdom in how he conducted his ministry. It does not mean that a widower, nor a widower that gets married are to be exempt from the office either.

What Paul wanted were stable men that were blameless.

Having faithful children - this requirement might bring some discussion. Are we talking about "believing" children, or children that appear to be consistent with the family's standard and way of life?

This is a word that is related to the word that is used of faith unto salvation, so I would suggest that Paul was talking about believing children. Now, this would need to be understood as somewhat variable. A man with a two month old baby should not be barred, nor should a man that has a child that professes salvation. Unless a child has demonstrated a lack of understanding of salvation or a life that is counter to one that is a believer the father should not be removed from consideration. Nor does it bar a man that has no children.

It only refers to men that have children - these children if old enough must be believers.

A number of commentators suggest that the parent can't make a child come to God and this is true, but it does not change this seeming requirement that Paul sets forth. These suggest only that the father is faithful in his parenting. Now, I don't know how much of a Greek scholar Paul was but I'd guess he could have figured out how to say that, if that is what he meant. The passage relates faithful to the children not the parent. These commentators call back to the Timothy passage, but then again we are not told that these are the same lists. It is quite probably that they aren't meant to be exactly the same. If they were to be the same couldn't, Paul have said, "See my work on Timothy for the list that I gave him - that was tongue in cheek - that is what most modern day commentators do to their readers.

Not accused of riot = Not sure this isn't closely related to the first qualification. The word used means riot or excess. Riot isn't an easy thing to get involved in today, but an application might run along the lines of protests that are out of order, or maybe union strike lines that are out of control. Being involved in anything that is out of control? Well if you are into anything that seems to be causing problems for other people, then I would say you should not be involved in it.

Even anti-abortion protests might well be considered riot if they get into shouting/pushing matches with other people.

I guess it comes back to the first qualification - blameless - if you can do something without being accused of something, then you are okay.

Or unruly - this relates to anyone that is not subject to those that are over him. This might be an employer, a church leader, a government official or anyone else that the person is to be subject to.

I once heard a deacon of a church state numerous times that he WOULD NOT obey a simple traffic law (because it was a stupid law). This, in a very minor point, is being unruly.

In 2004 the wise and all consuming government of Oregon decided that all twenty miles an hour speed limits zones at schools that were in normally thirty miles an hour zones would be enforced at the twenty level twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Now, if the school zone was in a thirty five miles an hour normally zone the school zone speed of twenty miles an hour would only be enforced if the lights were flashing - normal school hours.

From my observation at least one percent of the traffic decided to obey this new law. I don't know how many times I was nearly rear ended while slowing for the zone. The city busses seldom abided by the law. In this context, in my mind an unruly man would be one that failed to obey the new law - no matter how ludicrous it was. We are called by God to obey the government placed over us. Glad there was no prohibition to letters to the editor and to the legijesters that made the law.

If a person is not above reproach, they cannot be a proper witness to those around them. The church leader must be even more circumspect in life if he is going to represent Christ and His church in a proper manner.

THE ELDER MUST BE IN CONTROL OF HIS INWARD LIFE:

Not self-willed = I am not sure if this relates to letters to the editor about dumb laws or not - might be close. The elder must be able to control himself and his emotions. This seems to be a state of mind, in that it can have the thought of being arrogant. We all know what an arrogant person is like to deal with so we can imagine what is going on in their mind with themselves - kind of stuck on themselves so to speak.

One of the things I learned while on the faculty of the Bible Institute where I taught was that some were self-willed. They were the ones that wanted their own way no matter what they had to do to get their way. The board, after we left, determined what their agenda was going to be, and changed the constitution to allow what they wanted to do - no matter if the constitution was to be changed in those areas or not - indeed, the constitution had a clause stating that it could not be changed, though they did it anyway.

I am not sure what goes on in the minds of men to give them so much self-importance as to allow them to feel they are above the rules.

Not soon angry - this is simply what it says, someone that is quick to react in anger is not one that is ready for the office of elder. It does not say that anger is never present, but not soon at it. Someone that is slow to become angry would be a good way to put it.

I think the reason for this one is that if you are quick to anger you go off at most any time, while if you are slow to anger, you will probably be through the trouble before your anger surfaces. Indeed, anger is not a real productive emotion in most cases of life. Anger is not wrong in and of itself, but is wrong when it controls us, consumes our time, or is detrimental to ourselves and/or others.

I might mention that the word "not" is the same word in these verses. It is nothing special, but it does indicate "not" rather than anything else someone might rationalize into use.

I may be coming off as a little cynical, but I have seen men dance around these qualifications for years and find that the qualifications of Paul are being ignored in many cases in the church these days.

Not given to wine = I don't think this relates to total abstinence since the Old Testament suggests giving drink in some cases, and since the New Testament is clear that we are not to be drunk - as opposed to drinking now and then.

Given to wine in our own society in America should read, DON'T DRINK, not because drink is forbidden in the New Testament, but because of your testimony before the world, because of your example to your children and your example to the church youth/children. A little drink seems impossible to the average American, we do everything up biggy time here so a little drink with our egos usually ends up being a lot drunk rather than a little drink.

If looking for an elder I would look for non-drinkers, so that the witness of the church would not be hindered. I think that, while the qualifications for elder are elsewhere listed as things ALL Christians are to do, with the exception of teach - the elder should have these qualities intact, in their lives on an ongoing basis. I also think the elder should be a cut above, as in above reproach and in most communities that does not include drink.

No striker = When I was in the Navy, I returned home for leave one time. I was out with some of my friends and found myself in an unwanted confrontation with a young man that was bent on trouble. He punched me in the face; I grabbed him by the neck and pounded his face. I left for my ship shortly after. A friend in the Marines arrived home a few days after I left. He heard from many many quarters about the sailor that had put a young punk in the hospital. My fifteen-second fight was the talk of several towns for many days. At least my first and only fight ended well - I guess - glad I wasn't up for elder. Church leadership should not have this sort of life before the church or the community.

Defending yourself is not wrong, but walking away from disputes is always the preferable. Defense to protect oneself and family is proper. God has placed us in the position of caring for our family and this would be part of that caring.

Not given to filthy lucre - this means not desirous of base gain, not greedy of money. "Given to filthy lucre" is actually only one Greek word. This phrase kind of gives the idea that filthy lucre is okay, you just aren't given over to it. Not quite the thought of the word. Not greedy or eager for money. You know, that wringing your hands with avarice awaiting your lotto ticket winnings.

Money is not wrong, nor is having money, but the greed, the time consuming want, the I gotta have it attitude seems to be out of place for an elder. Not too good a place for any Christian to be either. To think about money, to plan on how to gain money, to concentrate on money is just a waste of time in reality. God provides all that we have and/or need. He will supply if you are to have riches.

This is a real fly in the ointment of the prosperity gospel people that teach God wants us all rich. I heard a man on television that had bilked Christians out of millions of dollars say that God wanted to bless him, thus what he did was not wrong - that all those complainers and people trying to put him away were of the Devil trying to stop God's work in his life.

If God wanted all people rich He would have issued pass books at the time of our salvation prayer.

THE ELDER MUST BE IN CONTROL OF HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE:

But a lover of hospitality = Now, this is one that is really missed in the church today. I was holding meetings across the western half of the United States over a five-year period. Only when attending mission conferences was I offered a place to stay. I think I could count on one hand the times I was offered housing.

I will say, though the food was fantastic and the fellowship was great when I was offered meals, which was almost all the time.

I don't say these things to complain, as it was well with my personality and way of living at the

time. However, I say it for all those missionaries that go on trips and have meetings Sundays and Wednesdays, but nothing between. Where do you expect them to hang their hats? I trust you make facilities available to them. I would guess they wouldn't even mind air mattresses on the church floor.

Consider your hospitality to traveling believers. Consider well your hospitality to your fellow church members. There are churches where we have never been invited into another member's home. This ought not to be. This is where we will gain the fellowship that we are to have with one another.

A lover of good men - this just has to relate to the company that we keep. When I was a teenager, my folks did not always like the company I kept. This is the Biblical basis for a parent being concerned for the company that his child keeps. This is one of the responsibilities of parenting. The teen-ager probably won't like it, but it is the way God desires it to be.

How are your friends? Can you say that they are GOOD men? Are you assured of their good intentions toward you, your family and your God? If not, is it not time to make some changes in your friendships?

A man that has good friends, friends that do good because they are good, are the type of men you want in the office of elder. A man that generates friends and "good" for the benefit of the church.

Sober - this means of sound mind, sane in senses, self controlled in all areas, or temperate. Okay, so a flighty sort of guy won't make the cut, a person that can't control his feelings is not fit, and a person that struggles to control his feelings/emotions should not serve as elder.

The "leaders" of the church must be stable individuals that can lead the rest of the flock to calm pastures when the need arises. When trouble strikes, one that does not control himself will assist in the congregation losing control.

I was asked to interim pastor a church years ago in which their founding and long time pastor had just resigned. The congregation was in a minor panic as to whether the church would even survive or not. A few weeks after I started, I was introduced by one of the leader's wives to another couple as the man that saved their church. My how ego inflating that could have been, but I knew I had done nothing but come on Sunday mornings to speak and met with a couple of prayer groups once a week.

All that I could supply was some stability. The board took over and found me to do the speaking, they had split up most of the pastoral duties among themselves and they found someone to fill the pulpit on a regular basis. This "saved the church" in the woman's eyes. Adding a stabilizing presence in my own eyes. Stability is key in a strong church life.

Many years ago I did a dissertation on church change. I researched and dug and scrapped for all

sorts of ideas as to how you can bring about church change. I found that there were only two real principles that needed to be followed. Preach the Word on a regular basis, and communicate as much as possible with the congregation. These two simple rules will bring good stability in most church change - as long as the change is of sensible principle.

Just = One of the many usages in the Lexicon that I really like is "wholly conformed to the will of God" - now that is rather a stiff standard, but it is the standard set by God via Paul's letter. God wants - ONLY - righteous, or holy men of God leading His people.

Simple - why would he want someone living in sin leading His people into sin? He would not! He wants holy men leading the rest to holiness of life. Sorry, if I don't think this is true in many churches today. I don't think I need to elaborate on the subject to most church goers today.

Holy - this seems to compliment what I have just said about "just."

Just is the action end of holiness, you might say, when I am just I am doing all that is required of me and not doing any of what I am not supposed to do.

Holy is the result of this just action. Because I am just, I will be holy - without sin - free from sin. Just would be the keeping straight while holy would be the resulting state of being. The two will go together, for you can't be just and not be holy, nor can you be holy if you aren't just.

Temperate - this word indicates we are to be in total control of ourselves. It is control over one's being, one's mind, and one's actions. Now, that relates well to the drink issue. They are finding that it takes very little drink to start affecting your driving. When you are affected in your driving you are not in total control.

One of the aspects of this word is "mastering" your being. I'd guess this might relate to all sorts of appetites and habits that we find so easy to pick up now and then. I could list smoking, over eating, over exercising, over indulgent in television, addiction to pornography, alcoholism and probably many more.

God wants men that control themselves in leadership so that they can assist in controlling the church properly.

THE ELDER MUST BE IN CONTROL OF HIS PREACHING LIFE:

Verse nine sets the standard for the elder's preaching life. "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

I have labeled this "preaching life" which may be a little strong as we understand preaching today. This is not the public pulpit ministry, though that would be good for ALL elders, but it

relates to any of his interactions with congregation or outsider. These are essentials for him.

To follow up my comment on all elders preaching publicly, I spoke with a pastor that was considering leaving the church he had founded and pastored over many years to plant another church. I asked him jokingly how his board felt about it. He laughed and said "Oh, they wouldn't care one bit, they all can preach and they would just fill in the hole." He had disciplined his men in such a way that they all were capable preachers, in fact they often filled pulpits for area pastors when that needed to go on vacation or to meetings etc.

Holding fast - this is a broad word but very specific in content - it means to cling to, cleave to, keep oneself directly opposite of another, hold, retain, withstand and endure. We might get the picture that elders are supposed to be the sticky note of all sticky notes. The elder is supposed to be the super glue that holds the steel worker to the girder. The elder is supposed to be the aerodynamic design that glues the race car to the track.

Why? The direct context is what they have been taught and hold to sound doctrine. If we don't hold to the sound doctrine as a leader, then the congregation will not see the importance of it either.

I had a professor in Bible College that was strongly against divorce/remarriage - well for a number of years - until he met a pretty lady that his self control failed him on - he suddenly found Biblical basis for divorce and remarriage. Not to be surprised, many of his congregation soon followed in his footsteps into sin. The pastor left sound doctrine and what an example he set for his congregation.

The elder is to hold fast the "faithful word" - THE WORD OF GOD is to be adhered to, not rationalized away. God gave the Word to be our guide not our multiple choice guide to life.

Hath been taught - this is the Greek word "didache" which means "that which is taught." To the church history student the word has a strong meaning. There was an early church document set forth called the "Didache" which spelled out some strong principles of life that were surely to be followed. It was a very strong statement of living for the day.

The leaders of that early church wanted to teach their people how to pattern their life.

Sound doctrine - this should be split into two sections. "Sound" is actually a verb meaning "be sound" or "be wholesome" or be "of good health," thus the elder is to live their doctrine. They are to teach their proper doctrine.

Doctrine is the normal word for teaching or "that which is taught." Might we say LIVE WHAT YOU PREACH? I think that is a good turn of the phrase. This "sound" is also a present tense so it means that you are supposed to ALWAYS LIVE WHAT YOU PREACH.

Exhort - this is a word that is related to the word "paraklete" which is used of the Holy Spirit. It relates to comfort, admonish, and exhort another. The idea of the Holy Spirit is someone that is called along side - as to assist.

In the area of doctrine it would relate to using the Word to encourage, or comfort one that has a need and that has come to you for assistance. It might relate to sorrow, or sin or whatever someone might need.

Convince - this word has more the definition that we usually relate to exhort. It means to convince, rebuke, reprove etc. It is using the Word to show that there is something wrong in another's life. This can be done from the pulpit or the Sunday school lectern or on an individual basis.

Gainsayers - this is an interesting term. It is actually a verb in the present tense. The word has the idea of gainsay, set one self against another, to disobey, to speak against, or contradict. It is translated "shall be spoken against" in Luke 2.34. In our text it would be that the elder is to be able to exhort and convince those that are actively speaking against - the Word would be the assumption or at least speaking against the Christian way.

The Net Bible translates it as follows: "He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, so that he will be able to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and correct those who speak against it." I think there may be a little interpretation included here with the translation, but it gives the thought of the verse.

APPLICATION:

1. I think there are two important lessons to be learned from Titus and the present state of the church in Crete.

a. A solidly founded church may decline into oblivion. I almost used the word "will" instead of "may" because very few churches and organizations I have watched over the years fail to fall into the decline mentioned. I have watched many churches go from being sound fundamental churches into wishy washy barely sound groups that fall for most anything that comes along.

Sound doctrine is the only key to stopping this decline and we are seeing more and more pastors speak of doctrine and theology with disdain. How sad, to know the Word calls us to sound doctrine while church leaders run doctrine down as being "intellectual" and "useless."

I have also noticed that oft times these churches decline in the tenure of one man. One church, of which we were a part, called a man that had some personality problems (anger) and some poor concepts of whom to associate with. The church was allowing men to fill the pulpit that had vastly differing doctrinal positions before the man was taken home. The church went from a strong witness in the small town to just another of the many churches available to the townsfolk.

b. A solidly founded church may decline into oblivion, and it is not necessarily the founders or the following pastor's fault. Here we have the Apostle Paul founding churches, and we have his personal delegate setting the churches in order, yet over two thousand years or so there is little vestige of the original left.

This is not the fault of the founder, or the founder's delegate. It is the fault of time and decisions made over time. As you study the Roman Catholic Church, you will find that their great divergence from correct doctrine came from little minor decisions that were made along the way. A small compromise here and another there. It is not unlike many of the decisions being made in our American churches. We are making small changes that may or may not be Biblical that will affect things further down the road.

The blame may be on the shoulders of some of the leaders or upon the congregation, depending on the situation. The blame rises from a poor institution of verse nine - sound doctrine was found unimportant at some point in the church's life.

2. The fact that Paul did not appoint elders himself would indicate that there were none that were qualified at the time he was on the island. This would indicate for us the need for maturing enough to be qualified. It also indicates a very important item. **DO NOT APPOINT MEN THAT AREN'T QUALIFIED JUST TO GET THE OFFICE FILLED.** So many have the attitude in church leadership that anyone will do as long as it is a warm body. Not so. Qualifications are listed in two books to be sure that the men are **QUALIFIED**.

I suspect that this was true most of the time when Paul was starting churches - in fact this is probably why he so often returned to visit churches to appoint elders.

3. In Acts 20 we have another proof text relating to the office of elder. In verse seventeen he called for the elders or "presbuteros" and in verse twenty-eight he calls the same men "overseers" which is the term episkopos. Thus elders, bishops and overseers are the same people/office, just different aspects of that one person/office.

Verse twenty-eight is a neat verse, if you are a pastor or teacher see to it that you contemplate it for a while. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." A charge to be taken very seriously.

This passage also indicates a plurality of elders in each church. Note, in verse seventeen, elders/plural and church/singular. Referring back to Crete and the plurality of elders to be appointed, it would require for Paul to have started multiple churches in each town/city for the plural to fit and there is no indication that this was his accomplishment.

Plurality of elders - men from the congregation - qualified - to be ordained as elders. That is the Scriptural method. Many and varied are the methods actually used in today's church.

The Acts passage points out that the one really that does the calling is the Holy Spirit, rather than a congregational submission of the most popular men to the deacons for consideration as is the case in many churches today.

It seems that the Holy Spirit should give the man the desire, then he would share his desire with the congregation, and the congregation then would seek to find out if he is qualified. If the man has been with the church for a long time, then they probably already know if he is qualified or not. This process eliminates the popularity, status and position aspect from the equation and puts the process on a spiritual level where it ought to be.

4. The term "blameless" has been interpreted by a few to mean blameless all their lives. I have questioned a man that held this and I told him that I had been a drinker in the Navy, and wondered if that would disqualify me from being an elder. His reply was a definite yes. His thought was someone that had never done anything that could be used to accuse him.

I think this goes far and above the real meaning of the word. I rather doubt that the man lived up to his own standard. I think that the standard should be high for leaders, but that is not a standard any honest person could meet. The point to me would be that they have lived an adult/saved life that was blameless.

5. Phil. 3:10-14 is a key reference to understand in the context we are considering. We are not perfect in this life, thus we must not hold the elder to the "perfect" standard, but see him "nearly perfect" if you will. One that normally does, and fervently attempts to adhere to all these qualifications. A slip now and then might be acceptable in the areas where testimony is not affected, but in the area of marriage, and sobriety, I think perfect would be the standard. In the other areas I also feel that a "near perfect" be the standard as well.

I went through a process set up to seek to know the qualifications of myself and others for the office of elder. I found in my own mind I did not qualify in one area. I set myself aside for a year while working on that area.

The elder is the visible standard in a church for young people to look up to - to model their lives after, thus a GOOD model is required. Also the man is the leader and if he is less than the standard it will be hard for the people to respect and follow him.

6. I don't think that I mentioned one position in relation to the "one woman man" requirement for the elder. I mentioned that singles would fit with care given to propriety, that widowers that were remarried would fit, but I didn't mention that is was definitely a bar against a man with more than one wife. Two wives would certainly disqualify a man from the office.

Some suggest that barring divorced/remarried men from the office is hard in light of our current society. This is similar to the question of whether a woman can lead if there are no qualified men available (such as on the mission field).

My answer to both is that if we are to find substitute answers due to lack of someone present, might I suggest the following. If my wife goes away for a couple months to care for a relative and I have no one to relate to sexually, may I substitute someone for my wife that is not available? I don't think so, not on the moral side of things and the safety side of things. I would be out of bounds morally and in deep trouble with my wife.

Why do we substitute anything for a failure to do what is Biblical? I have discussed ordination with people and the fact that what we have today is really not Biblical. I have suggested that we ordain people we know - not outsiders. One man asked how in the world we would know if they are qualified. I suggested talking to one another, fellowship on a spiritual basis not on the usual news, weather and sports. His reply was, well we don't do that today. In short he was saying we don't do what we need to do to do what is Biblical so we set up a system that is not Biblical to do what is not Biblical to fit our current society.

I hope you find this as ludicrous as I!

Another passage that relates is Matt. 19.10 when Christ was speaking of the subject of divorce and that it seems to be for life, the disciples seemed to understand the requirements of marriage for life as difficult. "His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with [his] wife, it is not good to marry."

The Bible has a standard and it may well be difficult to live up to it, but it is still there and it is still required. Just because it is difficult, we have no authority to change it for our own convenience or ease.

7. I hate to keep harping on this do's and don'ts thing that some pastors abhor, but here we have another list from God via Paul. These don'ts are in the negative, not the positive. Not all rules need to be positive.

When teaching the board of the school did not like the student hand book because it was too negative. They required the faculty to revamp twenty some years of work from the negative to the positive. It did read nicer but it was not a necessary labor that summer as the rules were the same whether couched in positive terms or not and they were still negative, in that they couldn't do the same thing as before.

We, as believers have a specific way of life to lead and the sooner we adopt it as our lifestyle the sooner we will be pleasing God to the fullest.

8. You might look at this list and wonder why Paul listed some of these qualifications. Wouldn't some of these fit under normal Christian life? Yes, they would, but in the church we seem to have to spell out in great detail what we mean. I mentioned the college student handbook. The length of this work was due to the fact that the students loved to see just how far they could stretch any given sentence and its meaning.

When a rule was written, the faculty had to consider well what all the ways around the simple letter of the law would be, so that they could add in those comments needed to let the student know that not only is the letter of the law law, but all rationalizations and work arounds that they might come up with are also law.

Besides, these elders were coming out of paganism, in many cases, and they did not have the Christian standard as a pattern of life as they grew up. They were learning these things and putting them into practice as they learned of their new life in Christ. Titus was to look for men that had already instituted these principles into life.

There is the side note to this, that Paul had been teaching these basic principles of Christian life to the new converts. Give you any ideas of how to assist new converts in your church? How will they learn of these principles unless they are taught them? They may pick them up by reading the word, but they should be taught them early so that they know what the Christian life is like and how it is to be lived.

9. In relation to filthy lucre, Keathley comments about false gain, "With reference to the false teachers, it would mean adopting a form of teaching for the purpose of material gain." Now, just think of that for a bit - anyone teaching in the church for the purpose of material gain - I know this relates to the prosperity gospel folks that are getting rich on the backs of the poor in their congregation that hope to one day get rich also, but does it ever relate to others in the church? I suspect so. Anyone, even a pastor that is in it for the money is automatically disqualified from the position.

When I told my father I was going to Bible College, he spoke wisely from his denominational background, limited as it was by saying, "Well, there is good money in that." I was appalled at his attitude, but I fear it wasn't too many years before I saw the same attitude in the Fundamental circles in which I was involved.

The purpose of the elder is to minister, and if money comes along, that is cream on the top of all the blessings of ministry. I have read long threads on inter-net forums where pastors were discussing at length what they were getting, or not getting from their churches, and the discussion was not all that pleasant if they weren't satisfied.

Many had their mind made up as to what they were owed and since they were not getting it they were pressuring the board for more. In light of the fact that the Bible does not discuss a full time paid pastor, they have no grounds to stand on except the worldly system that they seem to follow.

Yes, the Word speaks to the elder being given double honor, but that does not mean a pay check in particular. I would assume, given the situation in history, that it meant honor, as in respect, not cash.

10. Keathley lists the following verses in relation to hospitality and I include them for your

further study. Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2, 1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Peter 4:9.

11. Again, in relation to hospitality, would it be a great kindness for a church to provide a bedroom, and bath for visiting missionaries to use during the week when traveling. It couldn't take a lot of money to work this into your building plan. Of course if one of those believers with the huge houses with extra bedrooms and baths could volunteer to have the missionaries instead... I know of many older people that have lots of extra room in their homes. Add a private exit for them to the outside so you don't have to have them coming through the main house if you don't want the interruption, but hospitality is the norm for the believer, not the sometime I will do it attitude that many display today.

12. In relation to the "holding fast" to the word, I wonder what that hold fast means. Can you hold fast to something you don't know? Can you hold fast to something you don't hold in high regard? Can you hold fast to something you can't defend? I don't think so. To properly hold fast to the word you need to study it, know it, and defend it. Many elders today couldn't defend their belief if they were asked to; much less get into a serious conversation with someone that opposed his beliefs.

We are not teaching our leaders the Word, we are not teaching our adults the Word, and we are not teaching our children the Word. If we don't get started on this our children will never be able to "hold fast" to the Word.

In our present world where humanism is the norm for the lost segment of our society, and where lack of morals is held as the moral standard by the lost world around us, how much more important is it for us to know the Word in a way in which we can share it and its message with these that do not know of its truth.

Our country has lost its moral footing, it has decided against God, and has chosen the pleasure of the day as their guide for life. They are the field white unto harvest and we are the workers, if we would only learn enough of the Word to give them the message that we hold so dear.

I have seen the nation do a real turn around in the last few years, and the turn is near complete - totally away from God as a nation. Do you realize the implications of a nation having to legislate what marriage is? Do you realize that Sodom and Gomorrah had made homosexuality an acceptable norm for their society - and are we not in the process of doing the same. I fear the United States is seeking more than fire and brimstone, and I also fear I may see it in my lifetime - and I am an old duffer already!

Week three: Titus 1.10-16 THE PROBLEM

Why have all these qualifications? Because of the following series of cultural/social characteristics evident in the area of the church.

Take a moment and describe your own neighborhood. Make a list of qualities of the people that are around your area. I will just list some of mine so you have an idea. Drug dealers, drug addicts, homeless people, multiple families living in one house, robbers, crass, slobby, garbage collectors, sloppy, loud, obnoxious and generally self centered to the point that no one around them matters in any way. I think you get the point.

Now, as in Paul's day there are people in my neighborhood that are quiet, upright, honest, hard working, trustworthy and all those good traits. The key is getting these qualities into church leadership rather than those that will cause harm to the church.

Paul moves on from the qualifications for leaders to the why, the reason that strong leadership is needed. He describes the Cretans from what he knows of them, most likely his first hand experience while out planting churches.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

"Unruly" is a good translation of this word, it relates to not being subject to the authority. This could mean to school authority, parental authority, employer authority, legal authority or Spiritual authority.

They are people that will need strong leadership because they don't naturally want to follow or be under anyone else.

The term translated "vain talkers" speaks to worthless or useless talk. Someone that engages mouth with or without brain being engaged. Someone that verbalizes their rambling thought life. I don't know that the word carries this thought or not but since it is translated vain talkers, I have to wonder if part of it isn't the thought of their self-important verbalizations, that they think everyone in the world needs to hear. You may have run into someone like this, they verbalize their every thought for all to hear - they seem to feel that the whole world needs to know of their every thought due to its being very very important.

The "deceiver" is one that plays with another's mind to bring to deception. Now, that could include some car salesmen I have met over the years. It could relate to the convincing of someone

that false doctrine is correct. Anyone that is trying to convince someone of something that is not true.

Well, that most likely includes the lie. We will see this later as "liar" is one of the terms used in a later verse.

Again, we see the need for strong and moral leadership in the churches. New converts that are normally liars and deceivers are going to be coming to the church and they will be an influence upon the other believers. Leaders will have to be on their toes to curtail these people and their activities.

Paul even goes so far as to specify that a particular group is the worst offender and these are - those of the circumcision. He undoubtedly is referring to Jews that were living on Crete. He knew them for what they were - he knew their lifestyle and their way of life, he knew their very character and it was not good.

How disheartening it must have been for Paul, a Jew by birth, a Jew by training to have to say such things about his people, about people he may have worked within his earlier years, people that should have known better - these people were raised to honor the Old Testament, but he knew them to be living as pagans from the sound of his evaluation.

We have an interesting phrase here. The word translated "mouth" and the word translated "be stopped" are the same Greek word. The term has the idea of muzzling an animal that is out of control if you want a great word picture. The use of the term indicates, "you must bridle the mouth of those that have their mouths bridled. As if they can cause trouble even if they are muzzled - people that REALLY MUST BE STOPPED FROM SPEAKING THEIR LIES. The term for "must" is a strong word indicating it really needs to be done.

The next phrase "subvert whole houses" is also very strongly put. The "whole" has the idea of "every whit" or every portion, every little bit of, while the term "houses" can be translated household. These people can "subvert" or destroy complete households if left unchecked.

As the Gospel can completely revolutionize an entire household, so can false doctrine do the same thing. The why of this might be important to consider for a moment.

If a parent is convinced of something, they are obviously going to attempt to turn the entire family to that view point because they know it is true. My wife ran into a woman that didn't believe in "proselytizing" so I told my wife to tell her that if she really believes that she has the truth, and that those that do not are going to spend eternity in hell, then isn't it our moral obligation to tell them of what we believe.

It is quite like seeing a house on fire. You know that the people inside are going to die if they aren't warned, thus it is your moral obligation to yell fire, call the fire department and assist the

people in any way possible. To do less would show you as uncaring, inhuman and probably in legal trouble for not assisting, thus if we have the way to heaven and we fail to give that information to others we are spiritually corrupt - in my mind at least.

So, one that is convinced of some false doctrine, will enter into great efforts to convince the entire family of the same.

Now, if that isn't a basis for a pastor using his pulpit and lectern to warn his people of false teaching and false teachers, and false philosophies, I don't know what it is. Many pastors don't want to be negative; they feel that if you give the truth, they will recognize the false when it comes along. This is true, but don't count on it. Many mainline Christians are now Mormons due to the fact that they didn't see the lie to be false, but accepted it as truth.

More than one Christian young person has been engulfed in cults due to their lack of teaching/warnings in Sunday school, church and youth group meetings. WE MUST WARN, WE MUST TEACH, AND WE MUST TRY TO PROTECT or we are not doing our people right.

These deceivers are teaching what they ought not; they are talking to people and trying to convince them of the validity of their falsehood.

On the one hand this must be frustrating to the deceiver - to have to try to convince someone that falsehood is truth. It should be much easier to show truth to be truth - well it should be, but it seems in today's society truth is the negative, and false is the norm. To convince otherwise, you must overcome all that society sets forth as good. The false, in America, is becoming "truth" all too quickly. The Democratic Party has been spewing forth falsehood as if it was truth and no one in the media has called them on it. I rather suspect that Republicans have done some of the same, but I have not seen it done with the viciousness and ranker of the Democrats.

Guess that is one reason I am proud to be an independent, I only wish we had a candidate.

Paul says that they "ought not" teach these things. "Ought" is a word that indicates something that must be done, it is right to do it, while the word "not" is the flat out DON'T DO IT - the thought being you absolutely should not do it. Even though they think it a must, they should not be doing it.

We see the motivation for these people - money. They teach their false doctrine for gain. How terrible to deceive to make a living. Yet, many today do just this. This is certainly in the negative, in the area of false teaching, but I think there is strong warning in it for those that are in the business of teaching Godly principles - don't teach for gain, teach because it is right and proper with no thought to gain. If gain comes along, that is fine, but that should never be the basis for your ministry.

Some suggest that "I have a family to think of." Okay, think of them, get a job and support them

while ministering. If God wants you out of that job then he will provide income from the congregation, but don't EVER minister for money, minister because you want to serve God. You have the truth directly from God, which should be the only incentive that you need. It is your moral obligation to share truth with those that need it. How dare we put the giving of truth subject to the financial gain we might need or desire.

Most of the modern day cults fit into these verses. They are headed up by men that are in it for the money and the glory. They have little concern for their people which is seen in the immorality, poor feeding, long hours etc. that they subject their followers to.

So, pastor how does your congregation sound now? This is quite a bunch of people and Paul isn't even done yet. The list just keeps going on.

12 One of themselves, [even] a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans [are] always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. 13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; 14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

Paul quotes one of their own prophets to condemn them. He isn't just being mean spirited, he is just telling it like it is - they are liars. Gill and others name the prophet as "Epimenides" (a prophet and poet from about six hundred years earlier) and reports that the Cretans believed him to be inspired. Thus an inspired prophet of their own calls them all liars - guess Paul would be safe in calling them the same. Both Barnes and Gill relate the liar idea to the fact that the Cretans told the world the God Jupiter was buried among them, which was widely held to be a lie among the pagans of the world. See Gill for more on this if you are interested.

They don't lie for advantage, they lie all the time. Not unlike many in America. Many lie whether the lie is needed or not, they just say what comes to mind. The truth often would be better, but a lie is quicker to some in our society.

Not only are they always liars, they are always evil beasts. The word is translated properly - a beast. Evidently they were ready to pounce on another at any time to produce evil for the person.

Slow bellies could be translated slow lumbering fat people. The word bellies can relate to someone that is morbidly overweight and we know how slow some of those unfortunate folks are.

Bellies can be used of one that is all belly - this is so very descriptive - one must wonder how Paul would describe our own society. We are fast trying to out do the Cretans in the weight department.

Remember this is their own prophet's accounting of his people not Paul's. Paul was just making his case to Titus. In the next verse he tells Titus that it is the truth, thus sticking his foot into his

mouth for sure if the Cretans were anything like the United States. (I don't think for a minute they were :-). In the present day America we can't call people slow bellies; it would be so terribly unkind and out of character for a good American. We would call them "gravity challenged" but never slow bellies.

I am not one to talk to loudly, but I have to wonder if the overweight preachers of our country haven't given some sense of over eating being okay. Not to suggest that our attitude in some circles about pot lucks might not be at fault. We tend to raise the praises of pot lucks a little too much for healthy living.

The direct context might suggest that Paul is speaking to the spiritual overweight. I think that the terms used indicate the prophet was speaking to the eating habits, while Paul may have been turning the phrase to mean that they are overweight and out of control on their foolish doctrine.

Paul tells Titus to rebuke them sharply that they would be sound in faith - wow - rebuke and do it sharply! Paul seems to be on a bit of a serious bent here. Rebuke them sharply, abruptly, and give them a really loud wake up call. Rebuke has a little thought of shame to the one rebuked, because of his error and his need for rebuke. This rebuke is meant to bring about conviction and change of life.

Now, Paul seems to contradict the current thinking about sin. We don't confront people, but if we have to we do it with great love so that we don't hurt their feelings. Nope, that is not the thought of the text. Indeed, that philosophy is why so many believers live in sin today. They know that no one will rebuke them so why worry about it.

Now, if they knew the pastor or one of the elders was going to come to them and "rebuke sharply" I'd guess the outward sin in the church would be immediately curtailed, or the numbers in the church would drop dramatically. Oops, maybe we just hit upon another reason why "rebuke sharply" isn't a normal way of life in the church today.

The reason for this rebuke is so that they will be sound in the faith. They will know truth and live within truth rather than living in a lie called comfort zone.

Again, this sound faith gives rise to the need of the person knowing what sound faith is, how to assure themselves that they are living soundly, and if they aren't, how to bring themselves to be living correctly. Again, Paul hits the negative side of the question - this idea of not giving time to the false and the untruthful. Concentrate on the faith, not the falsehood that surrounds you might be the line of thought.

I know of many that are sound in faith, but they toy with the false of our society. They tinker with what they know to be untrue; they listen to the television spokes people that have been proven to be false teachers, even if they have some good to them. This is how we get ourselves into trouble folks. There is no way you can listen to Charismatic preachers and guests on television all week

and not have it affect your Christian life, your Christian belief, and your Christian witness.

We have people that enjoy reading the liberal writers of our own day as well as the past. They enjoy toying with the false teaching of these men, and don't realize that it most likely is affecting their own thinking and belief system.

Giving heed seems to have the thought of giving touch to, bringing a ship to land, of giving attention to something. He speaks directly to the Jewish fables, commandments of men that turn from the truth. Indeed, anything you give ear or mind to that turns you from the truth of the Word is to be rebuked sharply. Not only are you increasing risk to yourself, but to your spouse, to your children and their children. You are not alone in life; you have a responsibility to all around you to keep yourself from that falsehood of the world. The truth is to be our master and our life.

If you remember in II Timothy 1.15 some had turned away from the apostle, this is the same word, a turning from one thing to another. In both cases we see a turning from truth to that which is false. See also I Timothy 1.3 for a very similar passage. "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: [so do]."

15 Unto the pure all things [are] pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving [is] nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny [him], being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

The two words translated "pure" are the same word, it simply means pure or can mean purified by fire. The thought is of something that is without blemish - those that are pure see all things as pure. The "[are]" is actually a word that means indeed or verily. The pure see all things indeed as pure - a little surety in their thought might be the suggestion.

What does this mean is the next problem. What is Paul getting at? He has just blasted the Cretans and false doctrine and he switches completely and talks of the pure people seeing all things as pure.

The next part of the verse gives reason for his comment. He is contrasting what should be true of believers, with those outside the faith. To the non-believer nothing is viewed as pure. I think this is quite evident in the 2004 presidential campaign. Nothing has been off limits to the advertising and the spinners. They will attach anything in any way they want whether there is truth in what they say or not. The evil bent of some of these people is evident. Comparing the Bush administration to Hitler - how much stupidity are we to accept folks?

I have seen staunch Democrats that are disgusted with their own party for the way they have

acted this time around.

Relating to "defiled" have you ever inadvertently put a new red shirt in with some white clothes? The result is usually a red shirt and as many pink items as there were white. This is the thought of this word "defiled." It is something that has been stained, ruined by a pollutant. Like the white clothes, the defiled is a permanent case. The term "defiled" is a verb and it is in the perfect tense which means it is defiled permanently.

We will see the implications of this in the application section. Suffice it to say these defiled ones will not be changing nor will their attitude toward the purity of things.

To the non-believer, nothing is pure. Let's consider what Paul is speaking of. The pure, see all things pure, while the non-believer sees nothing as pure. What are the things that Paul is speaking about?

The following verse mentions works and belief system. The previous context was related to false doctrine, so I would assume that Paul is talking about beliefs, or doctrine or belief system. There is nothing pure in the way of belief to the lost, while the pure should see all Biblical doctrine as pure.

The verse goes on to say that the condition of the lost is "even their mind and conscience is defiled." Not a pretty picture. This pictures well the pollution that we have already mentioned. The sin nature from Adam polluted every part of us and something drastic needs to be done to remedy that condition.

The mind is that which stores our knowledge and our memory, it is that part of us that allows us to think and to consider and to choose. The conscience is that part that allows us the moral choices, between right and wrong.

Some would suggest that the person that is lost is totally corrupt, that their moral choice is limited to wrong only. I would suggest you consider this before you buy into this line of thinking that leads to a whole bunch of other doctrines that may not be Biblical. Have you not seen some people that choose to do right now and then? Do not some lost people live morally upright lives? I think you would have to answer yes to both.

The conscience is "polluted," but it can make proper choices some of the time if it wants. Back to the pink shirt - it is still a shirt, even though it is polluted with the dye of pink.

The word "defiled" here is the same word as we discussed earlier, and it too is in the perfect tense.

"They" would relate back to the Jewish people in my mind. They profess to know God, but by their works they deny Him.

The knowing of Him is in the perfect tense. They are even, it seems, trusting in him, but they deny Him in reality. How sad, to think you intimately know God but in fact do not know Him at all and by your works are denying Him.

Ouch! And if that isn't a distinct possibility in the church today - well anyway I will let you contemplate that one on your own.

They make profession, they declare they know Him intimately, yet by their lives deny His existence. The professing Christian in a nut shell. Pastor, beware of these folks. Remember what Paul has said of them. They view nothing as pure - their works will be empty to defiled. Do you not want to assist them to remedy their lives, or if not that help them to move on out of your congregation - after all they are wolves in sheep's clothing!

By his works or by his life the person denies God. A person knowing God would live like a child of the king rather than a brother of the pigs in the pen. Not only are they denying God but they are abominable and disobedient - not qualities of an obedient son of God.

The American Standard Bible translates the phrase "unto every good work reprobate." as unfit for any good deed. It seems that they are not available for good works. They are not usually involved in good works, and they seem to be unable to do good works.

Verse sixteen may be the key to a question that plagues people in our day. Let me illustrate the person for you, by telling you of a person that I once met. He told me that he was a believer; he told me that he knew the Lord, but in his life, he drank, smoked, and swore like a sailor. No offence to the Navy - just the way he was. He would stand around telling dirty jokes after work and make fun of the ministry and ministers. When talking to me the language was quite a little better and he seldom drank in front of me.

I have no idea if he was a believer or not, but based on this verse, I have the Biblical right and responsibility to question him about the reality of his salvation. He professed, but his works seemed to be reprobate or worthless for God. He did some good things for people outside of our work place, but the majority of the time he was living like a reprobate - lost person rather than a child of the King.

When wondering if a person is a Christian you need to understand several things, including their testimony and their living. If they have a good testimony of salvation, but live a life of a pagan, you may question their salvation. Not judge them, but question, beware of them and their testimony. God will be the Judge, but we need to evaluate people now and then. There is the possibility that the person is saved and has not started to grow. Others may have grown but just gotten away from holy living.

It is our place to exhort those that say they are believers and challenge them to good living lest they disgrace God.

Gill says of "knowing God" "That there is a God; that there is but one, only, true, and living God, the God of Israel, as professed by the Jews; and that this God is Father, Son, and Spirit, as believed by the Christians:" I'm not quite sure we can go quite that far from the text even though it might well be true. Since these seem to be Judaizers it might be true, but the way Paul speaks of them I rather doubt that they are even saved (verse fifteen especially).

APPLICATION:

1. In verse twelve Paul uses one of the good methods of argument. If you can make the opposition prove that it is wrong, then you have the strongest argument available. Years ago in college we had a physical science professor that had assembled a vast number of quotes from evolutionists that proved evolution incorrect. Their comments told of the many gaps and holes in their own theories, to the point that few should be able to believe in a system that is so weakly constructed.

The thought of liars is not unique to the Cretans. The American scene is quite similar. I question almost everyone I have dealings with today, be they Christians or lost people. I have had as many Christians lie to me as lost people. Lying is a standard of practice in our country today. I would like to take time to illustrate and prove this for you.

A study of high school students in the US in 1992 revealed that almost all had cheated or lied in some area of life. One of the questions on the questionnaire was to find out if they had lied on the questionnaire, and most of the students stated that they had.

Today we have internet businesses that serve College and high school instructors. The teacher can submit a copy of a research paper from a student and see if the student has plagiarized. Many to most students today go to the internet and find someone else's work and submit it as their own for a grade. This is not an uncommon thing, it is the norm.

A Sunday school teacher asked his all believer teen class if there were any areas of life where it was all right to lie. They came up with five areas where it was okay to lie. I don't remember the five points, but remember thinking at the time that those five points cover any area or situation of life, and these kids thought it okay to lie.

When Christians lie, we place ourselves on the Devil's turf. We are using his tactics according to John 8:44.

2. In verse thirteen we saw the sharp rebuke to keep someone on track Biblically. It is not wrong, indeed, if more people would do it there would be fewer problems in the church. When the board of a Bible Institute in the Midwest began to be less conservative than the faculty, the board created a situation where the entire faculty was forced by their conscience to resign. To my knowledge very few, if any raised a voice of opposition. There were a few of the students that took a stand and I wrote a letter of protest. To my knowledge there was little done to confront the

board with their wrong action. The alumni did not raise protest, nor did the supporters. One mission organization that the school belonged to did remove the school from their organization. The board continued on and changed the constitution which had a clause that stated the constitution could not be changed.

Rebuke those that you know are going away from the Biblical position! You may receive flack at the present, but when all is done you will have been in the right and God will know of your action.

3. In verse fourteen we see the Jewish fables and commandments of men. Again we are right where the cults of our day are at. The man in charge begins to set his own thought as the commands of God and you automatically have trouble. Some of these men have built harems, while commanding no marriage for the rest of their people. Suicide is a commandment of man and NOT OF GOD!

4. Many are the pastor and people that have told me over the years that I am "negative" and I have responded to each of them that I teach the Word of God and some of it is totally negative. This passage is one of the reasons a pastor/teacher should be negative. Paul is negative, why in the world should we put a positive spin on something that he meant to be negative? It isn't Paul alone; we are dealing with God the Holy Spirit and His inspiration. How dare we attempt to make something negative into a positive. Had God wanted positivity, He was capable of communicating that to Paul.

Yes, Paul's comments don't fit well into our politically correct society, but then neither does the outward sin that surrounds us. We ought not to stand still for the overt worldliness that surrounds us. We should at least attempt to keep our children and young people out of it - well for that matter keep ourselves out of it.

I do not understand how Christians can have the filth that they do in their homes in the television, nor the total violence of some of the computer games. We are to be citizens of Heaven, not of this world; we should be attuned to Him and His things not the Devil and his ways/things. Believers subject themselves and their children to some of the vilest language imaginable in the name of entertainment. I'd call it indoctrination into the ways of the world.

Negative? Me? Yep!

5. In verse fifteen we saw that "defiled" was a perfect tense and that it had the idea of polluted by something. I would be remiss to not draw the implications of this verse to your attention. We, as lost people were polluted by sin. We were impure because of this pollution. We were also not believing as those mentioned in the verse.

Not only were we not believers in God, in Christ, nor in Christ's work on the cross, we were polluted. We had a double whammy upon us. We were polluted by the sin nature passed down to

us by Adam. We also failed to believe God and His Word.

There are two items here to be overcome. The pollution and the unbelief. When the person is confronted with the Gospel there are some things that need to be done. We need to turn from our doubt to belief in God. This is imperative. When this happens all that is needed to straighten our beings out before God is done. We are given a new nature, we are loosed from the sin nature of Adam, and we are set in motion as pure agents of God.

This suggests very strongly that ALL believers should consider all things pure. Not just the leaders, not just some, but all believers should see purity as the standard.

I would also be remiss to not point out that the perfect tense that Paul used might well point out the fact that their condition is permanent and unchangeable. There are two sides to the passage. The lost or non-believer is unchangeable, but those of us that were lost but now are saved were changeable. We however were just as the lost in our lost condition.

Yes, this passage may well picture election and some of its ramifications.

6. The passage relating to the professor really tugs at my heart - imagine the shock, the sorrow and the loss that these will feel at the judgment when they are declared hell bound. Thinking that they were right with God, trusting that they had done what was right, and thinking that they KNEW Him.

Oh, so many are in the proverbial boat. I am reminded of Michelangelo's work on the judgment - there is a portion where the ferryman is beating the lost off the boat to the shore of hell. The expressions on the faces of lost men must give some indication of the thoughts of those that were so sure, yet were so wrong.

Oh, is not the urge to witness to some of those folks around you not growing. Some of those self-righteous souls that know they are heaven bound, yet that are really bound for hell's shore.

Not only might this relate to the professing Christian, but to anyone that professes knowing God. It would include the Mormon, the Jehovah Witness, the Muslim and those working their way to heaven.

I especially am reminded of the Muslim. Many of those in the cults have rejected God in His truth, to accept their false God, but the Muslim believes most certainly that the God of Abraham is the God that he follows. He has a sure belief in the God that he has been following, yet he does not believe in the Messiah that can save. He is lost and does not know it.

I trust the truths of this passage sink into your minds and bring about some changes therein.

7. Verse fifteen states "but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving [is] nothing pure; but even

their mind and conscience is defiled."

What a condemnation. Paul was certainly putting a positive spin on these folks wasn't he? Well, this is the state of man without God, it is the state of man just after Adam sinned and it will be the state of natural man until he ceases to exist at the coming of the end.

Only Christ can make a change in this and that is the message that we have to give, that is the message we have been commanded to give, and it is the message that we ought to be giving.

This answers the question many asked in the early 2000's, just how can religious men - Muslims believe in God and yet hack off the head of an innocent man? They are by God's estimation "defiled" and their conscience is "defiled" which makes them lost in their own minds - nothing God has set forth in His word has any meaning to them. They follow a false God, they follow a false book and they follow a false sense of righteousness.

I would be quick to suggest that the use of the Muslim here is for illustrative purposes only - they are in the news - it is their holy war that we hear about. We could just as well insert the term "Christian" in the above paragraph because many professing Christians have lopped off heads in the name of the Lord. The name we give these people is not relevant, the key is that they are lost and reprobate and we need to change that status via the Gospel if possible, otherwise we should avoid them and maintain our purity before the Lord.

8. Let's consider "vain talkers" for a moment. Just how might this apply to our own day?

Barnes suggests that these are those that are quick to speak of their spirituality and can always give reason for their beliefs, but fail to put shoe leather to their faith. They seldom get to the mechanics of living the spiritual life. They seem on the surface to be spiritual, but underneath are void of good works.

Another breed, in my mind, would be those that give super credence to knowing big names and those that go to the big seminars and conferences. They speak as though they have been in the presence of the angels at times. One pastor after returning from a conference began to talk about the main, big name, speaker and started to use his full name, then interrupted himself and said, "Well, I've met him now so I can call him ____ ." inserting the speakers' first name.

I have to wonder if gossip wouldn't fit into this category as well. The idle prating of people about others and their problems, often called prayer requests, might also be included in the "vain" area.

James 1.26 mentions: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion [is] vain." I might suggest this verse may relate to the comment about the prayer requests. Thinking one self spiritual and speaking of things he ought not, "deceiveth his own heart" - in short he thinks he is doing well before God, but in reality he is failing miserably.

I'm not sure Gill was clear in his statement concerning vain talkers, "who deliver out in their discourses empty, trifling, superficial, and frivolous things; which have no solidity and substance in them, nor do they tend to edification; only great swelling words of vanity, vain jangling and babbling about things to no profit." I think he was super clear, in fact I'd say crystal clear.

9. This idea of stopping the mouths - just how do we go about that in the church today. First off, be sure your constitution has a clause in it that any member of the church is willing and will abide by church discipline. Then proceed with the Matthew eighteen formula; go in person, go with witnesses, if these don't work take them before the church. Now, the key to this is to be sure you aren't involved in the same sort of prating and chatter. Be sure that you are on solid ground as to the one you wish to accuse. Be sure you have a good Biblical basis for your comments.

Now and then you may need to stifle someone in a service or class. There are some that love to attempt to confuse and twist the track of the class session. If they become disruptive, you need to somehow stop it with as much love as you can, but abruptness may be the need.

There might be application in this for the family. One of the spouses might get off track spiritually and start to mislead the children. If this happens, the spiritual spouse needs to somehow stop what is going on. This will be a very touchy subject but should be taken up for the benefit of the family.

Barnes mentions Matthew 23.14 in this context "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." Wow, I'll bet they called him negative in his own day!

Barnes goes on with his gentle, loving, laid back approach (NOT!) "The word is used here in the sense of severity, meaning that the reproof should be such as would be understood, and would show them plainly the wickedness of such traits of character, he was not to be mealy-mouthed, but he was to call things by their right names, and not to spare their faults. When men know that they are doing wrong, we should tell them so in few words; if they do not know it, it is necessary to teach them, in order to convince them of their error."

10. The fact that Paul knew of the writings of the Cretans is of note to me. He had somewhere come into knowledge of one of the writers of the local people. He had tucked away that information for future use.

It behooves the preacher of today to know those that he would reach. Know of their background, know of their writers, and know of their leaders. This will allow you to know the people themselves, for the aforementioned items often mold those that live in that surrounding.

This will take some time - time to read, time to hear from those you want to reach, and time to think about what you read and hear to bring it to proper usage.

Just a minor example, my wife is taking community college courses. I sit in the common area to study while she is in class. I hear students talk so I gain knowledge of their mindsets, I see literature on the tables so I can know some of the goings on around campus, and I read the school literature/papers left laying around so I can know of the atmosphere that the students are in. This information may or may not come into play in my interactions with students, but it is valuable to know where they are coming from before I try to tell them where they are going if they don't change their ways.

11. The thought that the Cretans were all liars, is of interest. This was their very nature; indeed it was true of all pagans of the time, but truer of the Cretans. Not unlike our own day in America. You never know if someone is telling you the truth, nor do most of them care if you know they aren't telling you the truth. Verbiage is the important thing, not truth.

Even among Christians one wonders when talking to people if they are being honest and truthful. We have already seen application to the "vain talkers" idea among Christians and this is what we are talking about. Just how honest are we with one another.

A very minor application is your answer to the normal question "How are you today." Are you honest in your answer? I often wonder if anyone cares how you are, as many times I am honest and up front about how I am and there is no response - just a change of subject. This may be why many of us are less than honest - nobody really cares how we are.

12. Barnes pulled no punches when speaking of the stomach issue. "Slow bellies. Mere gormandizers. Two vices seem here to be attributed to them, which indeed commonly go together--gluttony and sloth. An industrious man will not be likely to be a gormandizer, and a gormandizer will not often be an industrious man. The mind of the poet, in this, seems to have conceived of them first as an indolent, worthless people; and then immediately to have recurred to the cause--that they were a race of gluttons: a people whose only concern was the stomach." The term "gormandizer" that Barnes uses means "A greedy voracious eater." according to Webster.

The idea of slothfulness might be something we might consider. Just what is slothfulness? Webster says of slothful "a. Inactive; sluggish; lazy; indolent; idle. He that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster. Prov 18." One definition related that slothfulness led to sleep.

There is a proverb that speaks of the sloth and his bed. I told one of my classes that I always wondered if I were a sloth, as I felt like the sloth in the proverb, but that when I read the next verse I knew that I wasn't a sloth. Prov. 26.14 " [As] the door turneth upon its hinges, So doth the sluggard upon his bed. 15 The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish; It wearieth him to bring it again to his mouth." I always am ready and able to eat.

I sometimes wonder about the full time paid pastor and his activities. I have known some that are

involved in very small churches that have very little going on. Some of them have only one service to prepare for and they have little if any calling to do. Just where is their time spent? A pastor in this situation should never take advantage of the situation to slothfulness. Missionaries may well be tempted to the same problem. They often have no one looking after their activities and it is easy when thousands of miles from their supporters to just linger along with little effort.

Acts 17.27ff speaks of us being God's offspring. This should be in our minds as we are being stewards of our Lord's time and effort - how are we living our lives before Him? Are we being good stewards of the time He has given us or are we being slothful? An evaluation is encouraged.

13. Relating to things pure, consider Romans 14.14,20 "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that [there is] nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him [it is] unclean. 20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed [are] pure; but [it is] evil for that man who eateth with offence."

This does not mean that all we can think of to do is going to be considered pure - definitely not. Let's consider just what this phrase means. Barnes relates this to foods and the prohibitions of the Jews versus the freedom of the believer to eat all things. I am not sure this is the meaning, in that Paul could have articulated that much better if it were the case.

If my thinking on the corruptness of the lost is true, and that they are judged according to their works, this may relate to what the pure phrase is speaking of - possibly all the pure things the saved do are credited to their account. We know we all will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to have our works judged.

Though this truth is Biblical, I don't think that this is the case here in Titus. I suspect that Paul is just declaring that the spiritual see things correctly while the lost are completely otherwise.

Life Application Bible states of this verse "Some people see good all around them, while others see nothing but evil. What is the difference? Our souls become filters through which we perceive goodness or evil. The pure (those who have Christ in control of their lives) learn to see goodness and purity even in this evil world. But corrupt and unbelieving people find evil in everything because their evil minds and hearts color even the good they see and hear. Whatever you choose to fill your mind with will affect the way you think and act." I feel this is a little simplistic but may have some validity by way of application.

Matt.15.10-11 "And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: 11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." is suggested by some as what Paul is speaking of - we as believers know this, but the lost do not understand this truth. (Ro. 14:14-20 Tit. 1:16 are suggested as relating also.) See also I John 2.4 "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to

walk, even as he walked."

It seems best to tie this statement to the context of verses fifteen and sixteen - good works. The pure are involved in all good works while the defiled can do no good works. The pure stand in stark contrast to the lost. They are totally opposite in life, in eternal status, and in standing with God. There could be no further distinction between them than exact opposite.

This extends to all parts of life, physical, mental and spiritual. The pure see all they do as pure, while ... we know the rest.

14. Relating to the lost and their corruptness, Barnes feels that not only is this their condition, but that all their evil is adding to their corruptness. This is a truth that we don't hear often. The Bible states that the lost will be judged according to their works. Revelation 20.12 is very clear on this. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Not that they aren't all lost, but that there is some system of punishment that is based on their works. Some will have a greater condemnation than others. How this will work out in reality we aren't told, but the fact is that it will be worked out in God's way in God's time.

Every sin that they commit will be on their account. They will be sorrowful for every single indifference, every single breaking of God's laws, and every single abuse of God's people. What a terrible thought this should be to the lost as well as to the believer.

15. In verse eleven Keathley suggests that "families" may refer to the degradation of the family unit. That the false teachers were teaching false doctrine that was hindering proper family life. He suggests that the second chapter may indicate this, in that, Paul began to lay out some principles of personal relationships. This may be true. At any rate families were being adversely affected and the process needed to stop.

Week four: Titus 2.1-3 THE AGED

Titus 2

1. But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:
- 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

Sound doctrine has the thought of whole or wholesome as well as sound. This is doctrine that will bring wholesomeness to the saints, wholeness of life to those that profess Christ as the difference in their life.

I am told that Philo used this term of men over sixty, however today the man of sixty isn't equal to the man of sixty of Philo's day. Sixty back then was quite old and fairly rare. I'd guess in 2004 we are talking men in their 75-80 range of years. Some sixty year olds today are not even all that mature.

Aged men would relate to the older men, those mature in years and lifestyle. Indeed, the old seems to be part of the word. It is of interest that this term is somewhat related to the term translated "elder" earlier in our study "presbuteros" - this term is "presbutes." Both terms carry the thought of old or aged. Thus we might apply this to the office of elder, one that is aged or old. This is not popular in our society these days. The elders need to be young whipper snappers that will set the church on edge.

To be "sober" was to be temperate or not using alcohol to excess. It also relates to being vigilant. This makes sense in that the one drinking alcohol is not vigilant in his manner of life or his ability to function properly.

"Grave" is to be honored for your integrity, honorable in all ways of life. Again, this is not necessarily a characteristic of many of our younger men today. It ought to be, but many are far from honorable in all their ways. With the aged, you will find most have found that integrity has meaning and that they have allowed it to become a part of their life. These are qualities to look for in all your old men, but especially in your elders.

This seems to picture one that has some dignity, not something that he puts on but his way of life, he is above the "roust about" ways of the younger, he is more serious in demeanor and in thought life. He is a man that gives himself over to important matters rather than wasting time on meager items of life. He should be one that arouses respect in his younger acquaintances.

At the same time these are qualities that you should be teaching your young men - the future leaders of your church. In fact begin in the Sunday school because they are your future younger men.

"Temperate" would give the thought that one is in control of his life, he is controlling all things so that his life appears to be calm and temperate. It is controlling all of one's senses to give a good, rounded controlled life.

The word "sound" is a verb. It is "being sound" or to "be in good health" - being sound in the faith. The aged men are to be continuing on in the faith in a manner to assure good spiritual health. This most likely won't allow for a man that is drinking or allowing sin to creep in every day or two, this is a man that practices allowing the Spirit to control his life all the time so that he is in good spiritual health.

He is also practicing charity or love as well as patience all the time so that he is in good spiritual health. He is one that walks with God and shows forth the love of God to those he encounters.

"speak things which become sound doctrine:"

SOME POSSIBLE MEANINGS:

- a. Teach things that will become sound doctrine in their minds.
- b. Speak and live the way you should in light of sound doctrine.
- c. Speak and live to bring about sound doctrine in the lives of others.

In the context, it is clear that Paul wants what is spoken to bring about proper living in the lives of the people mentioned. Thus, a and c relate well. Actually both principles are valid teachers. The teacher that lives what he is teaching will find that his students learn much quicker. The specific of the text probably is in the teaching things that will bring about sound doctrine in the students lives.

Now, just why does Paul single out aged men to pick on? First of all the aged or elder men in the Jewish faith and life were the ones that everyone looked up to for wisdom and guidance. They were the roll models of their day, if you will.

Paul was not picking on the old men, but was telling Titus where to start in his setting right of things. The people would look up to the elders of their community and if they saw change, then all would feel that the change was right and proper. Paul was setting forth good strategy for the young preacher Titus.

Indeed, Paul was setting a good plan for church planting in our own day to a point. President Clinton is a prime modern day example of what a roll model should not be. He was doing his own thing - wearing what he wanted - acting like he wanted - not attempting to be the right and proper person he should have been as the leader of one of the most powerful nations in the world.

People look to his office for guidance in living, and just what has he been teaching those people. That it's okay to look like a slob most of the time - that it is okay to lie - that it is okay to go back on your word - that being immoral is okay.

Paul knew that these people needed some drastic living changes, so began to work on them through Titus almost immediately. Again, we have a principle for church planting. Lead the people to the Lord - don't condemn them for their life style - but begin helping them to change their life style. Notice should be made that the attempt to change their life style is via the teaching of the Bible unto sound doctrine. As they see sound doctrine, they will begin to conform to it.

Years ago in the hippie era two hippies were led to the Lord through the ministry of an independent Baptist church in Denver. The men came to church two Sundays before the church folk ran them off by telling them they were scrounge and that they needed to clean up their act. Yes, they looked like the bums of skid row, but they did not know their changed lives, indicated a need for changed outward appearance. They needed to be taught unto sound doctrine.

Now, Paul moves on to the aged women. You know this really hurts, he is telling people in my age group what they are supposed to be like and I'm not sure we are - that means we need to change to come into compliance.

3 The aged women likewise, that [they be] in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

The aged women or "presbutis" seem to relate to the old women. Paul is really stomping all over our cultural norms. He is putting the old up as being important and he is also telling them that they should be living holy lives! When we get old it is the time when we get to kick up our heels in this society, but Paul says no. They have a proper lifestyle.

They are to behave as with holiness - they are to live their outward life in a holy manner - well their inward life as well, though Paul comments on their outward behavior.

"False accuser" is the word "diablos" which is the Devil. It relates to his slanderous ways. The old women are to have none of his slander on their lips; they are to be holy and wise in the use of their speech.

The tense of not being given to wine is a perfect passive which gives the thought that she isn't overtaken by drink on a constant basis. It doesn't say that she can't drink. This is not a passage many would appreciate in that many today feel that the Bible does not allow believers to drink in any manner. The thought of Scripture seems more that we are to do it in moderation if we are going to do it, but in our society I personally feel abstaining from all drink would be best for one's testimony.

Teachers of good things, is one Greek word and simply relates to the teaching of what is good. Or it might go as far as saying teaching goodness.

The old women have a specific job to do in the church and I trust that you will allow them freedom to do it soon if they aren't free to already.

I don't think that many churches are giving thought to this idea of older women teaching. On a forum on the internet I recently asked how churches were seeing to the idea of the older women teaching the younger women to love their husbands. I asked how their church did this. Not one person responded. I took it that there were none of the churches represented on that forum that did anything to assure the younger women were being taught properly in this area. This is sad at best, reprehensible at worst.

The "likewise" refers back to verse one, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine...." Again, we see the older singled out first to be taught. The next verse tells the specifics of why - that they might teach the younger.

Now, this is also the culture of the day in which the old women were the teachers of the younger. Today, however, we have another story. Just how many younger women will listen to the older women? Not many in our society.

Part of the problem is that we wait until the younger women are adults to try to teach them what they need to know. If Christian mothers and fathers would begin in childhood, to teach their daughters, they would be open to listening in later life. Even then we have a real problem trying to accomplish Paul's admonition in our own day.

This is due, in part to the society that we live in; however it is due in more part to the society we have allowed into the church. Our families are not driven by God's Word, but by what society is telling us.

When teaching at a Bible Institute, I was head of the committee that was to provide activities for the married student wives. I gave my wife and the other faculty member's wife this text to teach to the student wives. The response was not all that good to the study. The young ladies found many reasons why they could not attend the studies. They were not interested in what God had to say to them. Holiness was not on their radar screen, they had other things to do - better things to do.

We need to think about this text and its implications on our modern day churches. Why don't we have our older women teaching our younger women in Sunday school classes? Because the younger women, for the most part, won't be told what to do, or how they should be.

American women have bought into the women's movement and its false philosophy to the point that some of them will not even allow God to have any say in their lives. Many Christian

marriages have failed in recent years because the woman would not allow anyone to have any say in their lives - including God.

Before I get into any more trouble, I must state that it is not only the young women, but the young men that have bought into societies norms. Indeed, Christians in general are living more by the world's standard than by the Lord's standard.

When I was growing up I attended a Christian church where an old woman in her 60's - in the 1950's a 60-year old was considered old! - taught the women's class and an old man taught the men's class. I wish churches today would follow that lead.

Some older Southern Baptist churches still follow this format and I applaud them for it.

APPLICATION:

1. This passage should draw us all to evaluate how we view our aged and it should draw the aged to evaluate themselves. Just how do they stack up against this list? How do we allow them to minister in our churches? Are they part of the leadership? Are they in the teaching business?

Or more to the point, do you have any aged folks in your church? Many churches have changed so much that the aged don't feel comfortable there any more. They have left and moved on to other churches or in many cases just stopped going to church.

Many are aghast that older believers would dare stop going to church, but when they can gain more fellowship talking to their spouse than they can with other believers at church, why bother getting out and around to go to church.

The church has bent over backwards to draw in the young, to draw in the lost, to draw in all sorts, but they have done nothing to maintain the elder portion of their church. In fact most churches have alienated their older generation. Sure, it is easy to blame the elders, they are being picky etc. are the reasons given to excuse the concerns of the older folks.

A friend in the mid-west told me of their church's methods in bringing in contemporary music. They didn't talk about it, they just did it. They moved to a completely contemporary service with no thought to how it would be received. When some of the folks gathered to question the elders, who by the way weren't elders in age, only in office, they were told that the music would stay and that the young people liked it.

Now, we see - the church is for the young - not sure what the Biblical basis for this thought was. The people were also told that the music policy had been changed by the elders months before the service and that the contemporary service was the outgrowth of the music policy - a policy which the older folks had never heard of nor had any input into.

No compromise was offered, it was "Here is the reality and if you don't like it, that is too bad." The church lost all their elderly and most of their wisdom it would seem.

On the other hand we see many churches doing worship any old way. Some have informal, contemporary as well as traditional services. That is just another way to split up the congregation so that the aged can't teach the younger.

It should shame these congregations when they read in the Old Testament about the Israelites - of ALL ages coming together to worship God. I would not want to be in some pastors shoes when they give account for the way they ran their churches.

2. Pastors and teachers I would challenge you to go over your next few sermons/lessons and see if they are filled with things that will bring about sound doctrine in your people's lives. Are you feeding them meat that will nourish and build up or are you serving up froth that will not satisfy?

Think of the wasted time in many of our churches and Sunday schools when we have been serving up milk toast to people that have need of mature teaching to build their lives. It is no wonder that many are falling away from the church. They aren't falling away from the Lord, only the lack of teaching and the lack of worship in our churches.

I know many of all ages that have opted to refrain from church on this basis. Many sanctimonious preachers would tell those folks they ought not forsake the assembly. I would charge, make sure you have a proper assembly, one that is teaching sound doctrine, one that is promoting holy living and one that is promoting proper worship.

3. I mentioned the church I grew up in. It was also the practice for the elders to give a devotional before serving the Lord's Supper. I didn't listen to them, because I didn't understand what they were talking about, but I knew that it was a very important time for the congregation. They were all very quiet and attentive to their thoughts as well as the observance.

This church gave me healthy understanding of holiness, of decorum in a church, and of the older teaching the younger. My Sunday school teacher as a child was always an older woman, my mother attended the older women's class and even the ladies aid was run by the older women for the benefit of the younger. A church as it should have been - too bad they forgot to give me the gospel.

4. I have held the church accountable for not using the older folks, but now I must chide them for not necessarily being a ball of fire when someone asks them to take on responsibilities in the church. Many older folks feel they have given their due and that they don't have to do any more. They are retired, and they have no thought of getting involved with those young folks that don't respect them.

Lots of truth on both sides, I must admit, however the older are told to do certain things and they ought to get to it as soon as they are allowed to.

Years ago I was asked to teach an older adult class. I had a ball giving them a hard time about their age and one Sunday it became perfectly clear that they felt they had absolutely no ministry in the church. I, again, gave them the raspberries about what could they do, they were old and couldn't raise a pencil to paper.

They began telling me in no uncertain terms what they could do in the church and we filled a fairly large black board with the jobs they knew they could do for the church. I later wrote the list down and gave it to the pastor and his response was a belly laugh and tossing the list on the desk in disgust. He said that he had been trying to get them to do something for years and that they wouldn't do anything for him.

I left wondering just what leadership qualities he hadn't picked up along the way. The old folks continued to attend but were never allowed to minister to the congregation. It was so sad, that a couple dozen people wanting to minister were not allowed to.

Indeed, the very fact that I was appointed to teach them was in gross contradiction to the Word of God, but that didn't bother the church leaders either.

5. The "old men" and "women" is of interest. Paul was not talking of the office of elder, but was using a general term that is only used here and in two other places. Luke 1:18, "For I am an old man," and Philemon 1:9, "being such an one as Paul the aged." This is clear that Paul was speaking of people with age, not an office.

Let's consider the old folks in our churches. What are they like? What would their qualities be?

I fear that they run along the lines of crotchety, stand offish, opinionated, and uninvolved. These qualities may have risen out of a culture in which they are worthless, abandoned and a pain in the neck. For a moment, young folks, put yourself in the place of being treated as worthless, lacking intelligence, and being isolated from your peers. How would you get as time progressed? Maybe a little isolated, maybe a little cranky, maybe a little fishing or hunting to get away from those treating you incorrectly.

What do we expect our older folks to be in our churches today? How can they come out any other way? Yes, holiness is the answer but it gets tiresome to keep yourself holy when you constantly see younger folks treating you so miserably, in an unbiblical manner and never seeing anyone chasten them for it.

Not giving the old timers a free ride here, just wandering if they were treated with proper respect if they wouldn't become what they are supposed to be in the church.

6. I don't think that most young folks appreciate what the older generation has gone through. I once asked a class of college kids what they remembered in the major historical event time line - in their lifetime. They listed a few major events. I then started listing the events that I had lived through. This list was much longer and they were surprised that I was so old. I then listed the major events that my father lived through. This list was major long, and I think they realized that the old folks in their churches had some major miles on them.

I challenged them as I would the reader - these are the folks that have the wisdom you need to train up the congregation in holiness. Don't throw all that wisdom and knowledge away because you think it worthless.

Can you imagine what wisdom these folks have when assisting young folks with the problems of life? Maybe this is why the divorce rate in the church is so high - we haven't had any of the older folks modeling what marriage is all about.

I recently heard that more Christians feel divorce is okay than lost people. That, I would guess is a direct result of our emphasis on younger people rather than allowing the older folks to teach the younger as they ought.

The church is paying greatly for the lack of respect we have shown our elder ambassadors for the Lord.

7. Keathley raises the issue that all believers are to be fully engaged with the world, rather than totally concentrating on themselves or the future. We are to live as if heaven were our home, but we are also to be fully able to work with the lost world around us.

While in Wyoming years ago I met a couple that were retired. They could have gone off in their camper and done their hunting and fishing, but they did not opt to do so. They belonged to a Christian camper group that took on building projects around the country. They all were self contained in living quarters, and self sufficient in finance so they could pull up and spend a month or two building at no expense to the host church or group.

Not only were they involved with this, they found that as they did their relaxing and traveling that they could be effective in their evangelism. They were fully engaged in their world while fully ministering for their God and raising up reward for the next life.

Many older folks in the church are set aside and totally disengaged from the world. They seldom go anywhere but to church and to buy their needs. This is a sad status for our older believers, and I would trust that you readers will see the need to change it in your churches of the future.

8. It is not specified in the text, but since the false teachers were interfering in the family life in some manner, this might be Paul's answer to that invasion into realms where sound doctrine is the requirement. There may have been false teaching that was undermining good family structure

and relationships.

Now, we can't say that we have this today - well, I'd say we could and that we should. The world's way of life has been accepted as the standard for Christian living. You can't get along with the wife, get a divorce, can't get along at work, be a sloth and quit and go on welfare or unemployment until someone forces you to go to work.

The world is now dictating the Christian life rather than the Word of God. We need some godly, holy people teaching our younger couples, our youth and our children. This is the way to a strong church not the powder puff fluffy slop of the current teaching in some churches.

To see the Vacation Bible schools advertised today you'd think they were sending the kids to a Disney land park for the week, rather than teaching them some serious Bible. Sad to say there is little Bible teaching going on, mostly just entertaining and control.

Keathley mentions a woman that used to belong to the National Association of Home Economics Teachers but the organization had changed its name to the National Association of Consumer Education. The teaching of home economics is a part of American history, not a current part of most educational systems.

9. We mentioned holiness earlier. Let's dwell on that word for a moment. I Peter 1.16 tells us "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Observation one: This isn't an option, it is a command. It isn't multiple choice, there is only one choice. Being holy is the only item up for consideration. Why are we to be holy? Because God is holy. He is the basis of our holiness, He is the reason for our holiness, and He is the way of our holiness. He commands that we be, and gives us the way to be, via the Holy Spirit within.

Observation two: This letter was written to believers so there must have been some that weren't holy in life. Thus we can know that the believer has the choice of being holy or not being holy, though we are commanded to be holy. To not be holy then is breaking a command of Almighty God - realize that before you consciously step off into sin.

What is holiness? Is it something we can maintain all the time? Can we be too holy to be any good to God here on earth?

If we could be too holy, it would seem that God would have phrased the verse something like this, "Be holy but not too holy for I am holy but not overly holy." NOT!

The Greek term is "hagios" meaning holy or holy saint. The Bible dictionaries relate the word to God's perfection of moral character, or that which makes God the perfection in moral character that He is. We, as humans, on the other hand can achieve a semblance of holiness in our outward lives and to an extent in our moral character, but we tend to fail because of our bent toward

serving self and our own wants.

Our moral character may see heights of moral perfection, but it also sees the depths of the lack of moral perfection. It is between us, as individuals, and the Holy Spirit within as to just how morally pure we are. If we allow Him to have His way then we will be pure, but we seldom allow Him that much control over our lives.

The concept is identical for God and with us - it is just the perfection thing that is a difference. The same term is used of both God and man in this verse so this pictures that identical character.

Let's reinforce this concept a little.

Lev. 11.44 "For I [am] the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I [am] holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Lev. 11.45 "For I [am] the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I [am] holy."

Now, before anyone suggests that we can't be holy, let me stop you before you embarrass yourself. Read Psa. 86.45 "For I [am] the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I [am] holy." This is David's estimation of himself - he felt that he could be and was "holy" - remember this is in the Old Testament and he did not have the Spirit within to assist him in his quest for holiness. This ought to suggest to any reader that we believers in the New Testament day with the Holy Spirit within our beings should be able to find a state of holiness in this life.

Life Application Bible notes suggest a number of things that make us holy today when they comment on I Peter 1.16.

Being devoted to God

Being dedicated to God

Being set aside for His use

Being set apart from sin and the world

Being different from the crowd

Being focused on Him

Being a light house might be another way of putting it. We are to be a bright shining light amidst

the total black of darkness. We are also to be the salt of the earth. We are to add the flavor of life to the death of no savor.

Holy has the definite idea of being set apart for God's use. I might add that this has nothing to do with church attendance. A person can be holy of life without attending church. I will be quick to admit, however that attending church and having the support of Christian fellowship makes holiness a whole lot easier. It also tends to keep you evaluating your holiness from time to time, which might not occur as often if you weren't attending church.

This set apart concept relates well to Romans 12:1-2 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The setting apart is on our backs to do. God does not automatically do it, nor does he require it be done, it is a voluntary item of obedience that he wants of us. Voluntary in the aspect that we are told to do it in I Peter.

If you are beset with sin, then Romans 12.1-2 is for you. If you try and try and try, then I John 1.9 is for you. Keep confessing and seeking forgiveness, while asking for strength to stand against the temptation that draws you into sin.

Week five: Titus 2.4-8 THE YOUNG

That is the young chronologically. I might mention for the sake of the younger generation, that most adults in the older age groups actually feel in their minds as though they are young. When an older person thinks of themselves, they normally think of themselves as in their teen to early twenty era. This is not vanity, that is just kind of the way it is.

One old woman commented once that she was a young lady trapped in an old woman's body. When we look in the mirror in the morning we often wonder who that person is - that can't be me - I'm not that old!

It is a bit of an intellectual battle that goes on. We know we are young but the old body doesn't function the way it should. This is why old folks balk at going to the retirement centers - they aren't old enough for that yet. I recently heard those very words from a woman that was in her 80's.

Just an illustration of this. I am writing most of this study at a Jack in the Box over coffee. There is an elderly woman that frequents the place from time to time, well, daily - kind of like me. She stops at McDonald's across the street to pick up some of her food then comes here to get the rest of her food and then eats it here.

The McDonald's gave her a kid's magazine this morning and she proceeded to read the jokes to me, which we both enjoyed. All adults, no matter the age, are kids at heart - don't forget that as you plan your dealings with the senior segment of your congregation. They enjoy things that you might not think they would. Indeed, they enjoy most things middle-agers enjoy. In fact some seniors enjoy what the young enjoy; they just can't do it all quite as quickly.

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

"Teach" is a different word than the usual one used in the New Testament. This has the thought of return one to their senses, or sober them up if drunk, or to control or curb someone. It can also relate to disciple someone. Thus we see the young women were out of control in some manner and the older women were to put them to a proper place. Since the family and home seem to be the context, you'd assume that the young women were out of control in relation to their family and home.

The term "sober" is the same Greek word translated teach. Sober the young women so that they can be sober. One must wonder what a mess these families must have been in if the older women were to teach such subjects as these.

The understanding of this word translated "teach" gives new light upon the last part of the verse. The women are to be corrected in their love of their husbands and children. They didn't love them properly or at all. This was to be corrected and the young women were to properly love their family.

Oh, what a message for the church today. Have you talked with and/or seen the attitudes of young women in the church lately? They have little concept of proper Christian womanhood. Many are rebellious toward their husbands and lacking in care of their children. They are more interested in their own desires than in fulfilling their wifely/motherly duties. Many are more interested in amassing toys than rewards in heaven. The latest fashion is the most important, the latest in houses, cars are the most important.

They need to be brought back to reality and their families. There is a tremendous need for families in general to get back on track in the church.

"Discreet" is a related word to the one translated teach and sober in the previous verse. It relates to being discreet, sober, and sane, in one's own senses. Again, the thought of proper control of yourself.

"Chaste" is the thought of pure, without sin, or without wrong. In the area of sexuality, she should be taught to be without wrong. In the area of her marital relationship she should be taught to be without wrong.

In this area of sexuality, I don't think most church goers have any idea what is going on in our teen girl's minds. This is the next generation of mothers that is going to be teaching our Sunday schools. Most teen girls today feel that oral sex is not really sex. They also feel it is about as casual a thing as kissing.

If churches don't wake up to the way the world has warped our kids we are in for even bigger trouble than we have now. We have got to start teaching about proper marriage, about improper divorce, about the sin of remarriage, about the proper sexuality.

They are to be brought to proper knowledge of keeping the home. Again, today where are our Christian mothers? Are they at home keeping it in proper order, or are they out at the mall, out wherever it is that they go to do their thing?

Keeping a home in our society is almost a four-letter word. It is one of the most honored of places for a woman to be, yet our society has placed it down with the lowest of low positions. We need to let our young women know where God would have them be. It is not that they can't work, nor work outside the home, but the best place is normally in the home loving and caring for their family. We will delve into this more in a moment.

And we see even further reference to the marital relationship. She is to be in submission or

obedient to her husband. It is curious in my mind why Paul would have added the word "own" before the husband, but maybe the Cretan society was like ours is today. She is to submit to her own husband and not someone else's husband. I don't know how much more clear I need to make this, but maybe I can. Your husband is your only husband, there is no other. There is no one else's husband that you should be submitting to.

We have seen women stray into adultery, and many of them see nothing wrong in what they have done. One husband I spoke to said it was six months after the fact before his wife could realize that what she had done was wrong and that she had sinned. THESE ARE CHRISTIAN WOMEN and they don't know that it is wrong to sleep with another man. PASTORS WAKE UP TO WHAT HAS NOT BEEN TAUGHT IN WAY TOO MANY YEARS IN OUR CHURCHES.

I would take a side trail for a moment. I am way down on the church in generalities, I know there are many churches that are teaching the word as they ought, but too many are not and it is these churches that are producing the sin of the church today. Yes, individual responsibility is in view, but so is the lack of teaching.

If your church is preaching the word, is talking about the sin of our society, then praise God, but realize that many aren't and you don't want your teenagers going off to youth groups that you don't have confidence in.

Subject to their "own" husband. What a telling command. How sad that any Christian gathering should need part of their group to be taught such things at the command of an apostle. You would think that it would be common practice to teach every class of youth these things.

Many today decry curriculum in our Sunday school, but it is needed so that when the day is over we can know that every kid that has gone through our system has been taught the basics of Christian living.

Paul desires these things be set aright so that the Word is not blasphemed. The term blasphemed relates to "speaking ill of" or speaking against. It is the same word that is used of speaking against God.

Our family life is a witness to the Word, it is a witness to our belief in that Word and it is a witness to the world around us.

All of this because Paul did not want God's name blasphemed. Ezekiel has a chapter where God is acting to keep His name in a proper light. He is desirous to keep His name clean from blot, yet believers today could care less about how they reflect upon His name.

I think it important to read this chapter so that you can know how God feels about his GOOD name. Ezek. 36 is somewhat similar if you want to give a read.

Ezek. 20

20:1 And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth [month], the tenth [day] of the month, [that] certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the LORD, and sat before me.

2 Then came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye come to enquire of me? [As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

4 Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge [them]? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers:

5 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I [am] the LORD your God;

6 In the day [that] I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which [is] the glory of all lands:

7 Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I [am] the LORD your God.

8 But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

9 But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they [were], in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

10 Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness.

11 And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which [if] a man do, he shall even live in them.

12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I [am] the LORD that sanctify them.

13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which [if] a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to

consume them.

14 But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out.

15 Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given [them], flowing with milk and honey, which [is] the glory of all lands;

16 Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.

17 Nevertheless mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.

18 But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols:

19 I [am] the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them;

20 And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I [am] the LORD your God.

21 Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which [if] a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.

22 Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth.

23 I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries;

24 Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols.

25 Wherefore I gave them also statutes [that were] not good, and judgments whereby they should not live;

26 And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through [the fire] all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I [am] the LORD.

27 Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me.

28 [For] when I had brought them into the land, [for] the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savour, and poured out there their drink offerings.

29 Then I said unto them, What [is] the high place whereunto ye go? And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day.

30 Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations?

31 For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? [As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

32 And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.

33 [As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you:

34 And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.

35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.

36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD.

37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:

38 And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD.

29 Then I said unto them, What [is] the high place whereunto ye go? And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day.

30 Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations?

31 For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? [As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

32 And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.

33 [As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you:

34 And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.

35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.

36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD.

37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:

38 And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD.

48 And all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it: it shall not be quenched.

49 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?

I have seen people that are Christians get falling down drunk at their work place. Just how does that reflect upon God. A pastor I once knew would go into local businesses and get screaming angry with people. That WAS a bad reflection upon God as well as that local church.

God does not want Christians to reflect badly upon Him. The cure for this is the training and education of believers in the ways of the Lord.

Now, apply that to our present situation. If Christians are reflecting poorly upon their Lord, then the church has failed to train properly. Case in point - divorce/remarriage - God says that it is wrong, many Christians say it is right - even many fundamental pastors!

The educational system within the church has failed miserably. We have not been teaching what proper marriage is and have not warned against divorce, thus our divorce rate is close to that of the world.

Has it dawned on you that this passage, though centered in the home, is actually strong on proper marriage relations? Paul links the topic to defacing God's name!

The older women are to teach the younger women to run a proper home. Now, the women's libbers would hate this passage, but they never look at the total picture of how the Bible portrays women. The Bible elsewhere shows that women can be involved in business outside the home as well - don't knock God's view of women before you understand what His view is.

In a nutshell as I see this view, He would have the woman in the home raising children and caring for her husband. The Old Testament allows for business outside the home if this is desired. Indeed, in our society it is almost a necessity. The woman is free to do outside the home as long as she is caring for the children and husband properly.

The Bible is clear that she is to be in subjection to her husband, but that does not make her a second class citizen - only makes her obedient to God that rewards individuals for their response to Him.

Two further points men:

a. The woman caring for kids and husband does not forbid you husbands from helping around the house if you have time. A helping husband is a true blessing to a busy housewife, or working mom.

While in college we ran into many working wives that had husbands in seminary that were not working. The husbands were not at the books all the time, they were often in the parking lot playing football or some other sport. These wives wanted to be good wives, but felt they were being used by their slacking husbands.

b. The submission is not dictatorship. It is your responsibility to consult with your HELPMEEET because she may have areas of expertise that you need help in. Talk things over with your spouse and then make the decision. Yes, it is the man's decision, but input from the wife never hurts. Once the decision is made, it is then the wife's place to abide by it and help him in following up.

Application of this may even run to the idea of the wife having a career which requires relocation. A mutual talking about the situation would probably come to a proper decision. Is it the husband's decision? Yes. He is the head of the family according to the Scriptures.

If he decides NO, then he had better have clear direction from God on the matter or he may well answer for his decision before God.

If ye says yes, it does not make him a wimp, a nerd, a follower, or anything else. It makes him the head of the house making a decision based upon the facts and God's leading.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

The young men are also to be encouraged to be sober minded, or self controlled or right minded. This would relate to all areas of life, be it at work, at home or at play. I think many Christian men need to relate this aspect to their actions at sports events. They are Christian men, not maniacs and should act like Christian men, not like unsaved lunatics.

I know of more than one Christian "leader" that has no problem blowing up and getting overtly angry at sporting events. My, how Christ like.

Titus is also to address the young men concerning their lifestyle. I am not sure just what to make of the shortness of the list in relation to the men as opposed to the list for the young women, nor do I feel it safe to comment on same.

Again, there might be some culture involved. The nature of the Cretan society may have been different than our own. It may be that the young men had, by nature, a different make up and spiritual need than the young women.

I really don't think that some of the teachings for the young women would be inappropriate in our society for young men. We might make mention that the older men should be teaching the younger men as the older women teach the younger women.

I might make note that the term translated "young men" and the term translated "young women" are the same Greek word - the context being the determinate factor as to the gender indicated. The word relates to youth or youthful or younger. One commentary says that the verse four use is a feminine form of the word (both spelled the same and both the same Strong's word so not sure why he says that.)

The idea of loving the husband requires the first passage to relate to women, while it is broken away from verse six in that it contains "likewise" indicating another group - other than the young women.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine [shewing] uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

NOW, Paul gets to the hard stuff. He wants Titus to live like he should as a minister of the Lord. Live so that the lost can't have bad things to say about you.

In Wyoming, several of the little towns have spent big money to maintain their basketball floors

for their ball games. Many of them do not allow food and drinks in the Gym. This is their right and privilege to do so. I know of two pastors in small Bible churches that have thought the rule was stupid, so have taken food and drink into the gyms. In Wyoming that is stupid. The townspeople did not take kindly to the action and let the believers of the churches know so. What a testimony these men were for their churches and their Lord.

Of course the pastors had the RIGHT to disobey a rule that was in their mind "stupid," but they should have considered their church, their congregation, and their Lord before standing up for their rights.

In many small communities, not only in Wyoming, the people are tight knit and that sort of blatant disrespect is long and hard to overcome. Pastor, consider well your action beforehand, rather than after when you have found that trouble has arisen.

Okay, just what is the purpose of this passage? Paul wants Titus to be a pattern. A pattern is the plan for building something, or the plan of laying out material to sew together for a garment. Titus is to be a pattern, a plan, a layout of steps toward spiritual maturity.

While working at J. C. Penney I was asked to assemble a large computer desk armoire. It was a kit that was shipped in two or three boxes. Being a totally mechanical type guy, this was going to be a snap, this was going to be over shortly and I would be on my way home.

Yep, you know it - it took me over four hours to assemble that thing. When I carefully opened the cartons and inspected and laid out each item I was left with a huge pile of carefully laid out items - none seemed to relate to the other. After all this huge armoire should have some major pieces that would obviously relate to sides, top and back - well you'd think so. As I pondered the prolific pile, I decided the instructions might should be scanned at least. As I scanned the fairly thick instruction book I further pondered the prolific pile of parts and pieces and wondered what I had gotten into.

Did the department manager know what those cartons contained before she so sweetly asked me to assemble them? I rather think that she was wiser than I.

Well, I decided that I should ponder the pamphlet profusely before pontificating the prolific pile of parts and pieces, particularly because I probably wouldn't part from work on time if I didn't.

As I started at page one, I finished the first step, then the next and the next and oh my how easily that pile of parts started to take shape. The whole process went smoothly except for the couple of times I thought myself smarter than the pattern planner and got ahead of the steps a few steps and had to retrace my steps to properly place the parts in place.

I found the directions to be quite clear, concise, and very well planned. It was a very easy pamphlet to follow and it made the job go much quicker than had I started off on my own.

This ought to be the goal of every leader in the church today. They should consciously plan their day, their week, and their years as to how they can set the best pattern possible for the young people of the church.

A good pattern is one that is so very clear that you can just take a look and go to work. A good pattern is one that is clearly thought out and laid out in logical order. A good pattern moves the totally unskilled along in a process to bring a pile of unrelated parts into a grand product that is useful for the one it is built for - we are to be patterns to build workers for God in case you didn't catch it, leaders.

We are to be living our lives so that the children and youthful can look at our lives and EASILY see how to do the Christian life. They need to be able to take all those concepts from the Word and fit them all together within themselves to make a mature adult that can minister to others in the world.

In case you didn't get that, the church body ought to be examples unto youth that know the Christian life, so that they don't have to spend all that money on self help books by all the big name preachers in the country. If we were discipling our youth they would have more money to give to missions so others could be discipled.

Ephesians four speaks to this in that the leaders are to be maturing the church so that the members will be able to do the work of the Lord. (Eph. 4.11 ff)

Take a little time and wonder about what kind of pattern you are - are you a good pattern, are you an easy pattern to follow, and are you a complete pattern.

We see proper doctrine and works related - might we set that duo into action in our churches today.

"Uncorruptness" is the standard. Now, that computer desk armoire turned out to be a very nicely designed piece of furniture. However, had I added a few steps of my own, or corrupted it, it would not have turned out quite so nicely.

There is "corrupt," and there is "not corrupted" and the leader MUST be in the "non-corrupted" category. The life MUST be correct, the belief MUST be correct, and the service MUST be correct, or the pattern produced will be faulty and those watching will be hurt.

"Gravity" relates to one that lives such a life that they are respected and honored. They live a proper life, a life that is always godly.

Is there anyone in your past that you have really looked up to? This is the sort of person that has "gravity" integrated into their life. This sort of gravity is the sort of gravity that holds you down properly spiritually just like physical gravity holds you to the earth.

I had a professor in my first couple of years of Bible College that had this characteristic down. He was a man that was serious about his belief, he was a man that was serious about teaching that belief, and he was a man that was serious about living that belief.

I had a great respect for his efforts in my life and I am sure that part of my living pattern is directly from watching him for those two years. It wasn't a matter of liking him, it wasn't a matter of getting along with him, nor was it a matter of being close to him - it was a matter that I saw in his life something that was from God and that I needed to attempt to set that pattern into my life as well.

Sincerity has a little thought of incorruptness built into it. We are to be sincere about our incorruptibility. We are to be serious about not being corrupted. It must be that God is too.

8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

"Speech" is the word "logos" or "word." Sound has the thought of being whole physically or complete and ready to function. Your word is to be sound and complete - correct might also be a good thought.

Just a little flash back to something we covered earlier - how can the liar be considered to be of sound speech? They can't, thus the leader must not lie in any case or condition or he will be found to be of unsound speech.

The leader's speech is to be correct and honest so that it can't be condemned or found wanting. Imagine, never saying a word that could bring condemnation, having a life so godly that a lost person is ashamed to be around you - NOT UNCOMFORTABLE BECAUSE OF YOUR CAUSTICNESS BUT ASHAMED THAT HIS LIFE IS SUCH A MESS IN COMPARISON TO YOURS.

Imagine a life that is so godly that the lost can't find anything evil to say about you!

That is the life that Titus is to live as a minister.

That is the life that your minister should live.

That is the life that you should expect from your minister.

HOWEVER!

That is also the life that your minister should be teaching you to live and after a reasonable time expect of you! Now, before you judge your minister or missionaries, remember that this is your standard of excellence as well. By the way, how are you doing today? Are you living a life that is

so godly that no one can speak evil of you?

APPLICATION:

1. Probably the most obvious application to the older women teaching the younger to love their husbands is that marital love can be a learned process. In fact it likely is all the time. That fuzzy wuzzy stuff we get married over most likely isn't really love, but may be. Usually real love comes after a while in marriage.

The women of today set aside husbands (and the other way around) because "I don't love him any more." Then the older women should teach that woman to love her husband instead of dumping him and going out to look for greener grass.

How does a woman learn to love? Ask a woman, I don't know. Well, there should be some things we can jot down to give a start.

a. Learning the proper husband wife relationship. When this is done the husband will respond properly to the relationship - not that he shouldn't even if the wife is not doing it correctly, but the point being both need to adhere to the proper relationship.

b. Learning to properly care for a husband. This means in all areas of life, physical, mental and sexual - well she probably has a hand in the spiritual as well.

c. Learning to have a proper relationship to God. Without this the first two will not be as easy. As the woman relates to God properly then the submission to the husband and the taking care of him should become much easier.

d. The above will move the two into a closer relationship where love can grow rather than wither and die.

When all of these are in proper perspective, love automatically will happen, in my mind. Ya, I know there are a million psychologists that disagree, but then many of them don't know God's word and the others probably ignore it.

2. Barnes says it well when he comments on the need for love in the home. "All happiness in the marriage relation is based on mutual love. When that departs, happiness departs. No wealth or splendour in a dwelling--no gorgeousness of equipage or apparel-- no magnificence of entertainment or sweetness of music--and no forms of courtesy and politeness, can be a compensation for the want of affection. Mutual love between a husband and wife will diffuse comfort through the obscurest cottage of poverty; the want of it cannot be supplied by all that can be furnished in the palaces of the great."

Love in the home will move one to work toward the best interest of the other.

Love in the home will move one to treat the other as the most important.

Love in the home will move one to speak in a loving manner to the other.

Love in the home will move one to subdue criticism of the other.

Love in the home will move one to do for the other.

Love in the home will move one to nurture the other.

Love in the home will move one to encourage the other.

Love in the home will move one to be interested in the other.

Love in the home will move one to be accepting of the other.

Love in the home will move one to -- you fill in the blank.

Remove love and you most likely will remove all of the above.

Now, all that said, I don't think Barnes meant, and I know I do not intend to give the impression that if love is missing it is automatic divorce time. Certainly not. It is time to work on your marriage and nothing more.

3. What do you think of the thought that the younger women are to be taught to love their children? What parent doesn't automatically love their child? I must assume from what Paul said, some don't love their children automatically.

If you look at lost society, you will see that love for offspring is not all together natural. We see so much child abuse that we must conclude that many lost people do not automatically love their children. Indeed, I assume there may well be Christians that abuse their children. No one that loves their child could abuse that child - or at least so you would think but that is not all together true either.

We can love, but we can mistreat quite effectively - this happens between husband and wife as well.

How can we teach the younger women to love their children?

Teach them to properly understand that their child is a person.

Teach them to properly understand that this child is loved by God.

Teach them to properly understand that this child does not know all that the mother knows.

Teach them to properly respond to their child.

Teach them to properly care for their child.

Teach them to properly raise their child.

Teach them to properly nurture their child.

Teach them to properly walk with God.

Teach them to properly teach their child to also walk with God.

4. "Keepers at home" Just what is this concept of keepers at home?

Taking care of business:

The business of the husband.

The business of the children.

The business of the cleaning.

The business of the cooking.

The business of the laundry.

The business of the entire home.

The business of the finances may also be included.

Now, let's explore that a little. She is to do so in submission to the husband. He has the oversight, but she is responsible for carrying it all out. Does this mean that the husband is exempt from any of these duties? Does this mean that he should stay out of the kitchen? Does this mean the man can't stay at home with the kids?

It seems to me that the husband is overall responsible to see that it is all done. The wife is responsible to submit to the husband's wishes. Now, how do those two things work themselves out? In my mind - and my mind only, as I am sure some would disagree.

The husband and wife should in some manner work out how the two relationships work, and how the business of the home is going to work out. This might be done before the marriage ceremony

sets the two at odds. (It should be a topic of the pre-marital counseling in my mind :-) Or it can be worked out after the two have come to disagreement, or it can be worked out over time. Indeed, it may have to be re-thought from time to time as the situations of life change.

I once talked to a woman whose husband had always been the bread winner and she the home maker. He had a major heart attack and would never be allowed to work again. Now, they had to sit down and re-think their plan of action for life.

Both sitting down and understanding the others place in life is a good place to start. The man is responsible to God for the household so the wife needs too see this, understand it and work with him on his responsibility. She is to be submissive to his plan, and he must work with her to help her accomplish this responsibility - she can't submit if she doesn't know the plan.

If the man works for the support of the family I feel the wife ought to do most of the "at home" duties, though the husband is not relieved of helping out in any of these duties if there is need of assistance. If there are six little ones taking a lot of time, he might need to step in and assist because the wife is not going to be able to do all that needs to be done.

At the same time, the wife needs to be tuned to the fact that a man in our society in business may only be putting in forty hours, but his mental condition may say eighty.

WORKING TOGETHER MIGHT BE THE KEY. Working toward the mutual goal of a smoothly running, loving household.

I know many men, while in college allowed their wives to work to support the family, but instead of applying their time to studies, would play catch or some other "manly" time waster. This was not proper use of their time, when their wives put in forty hours at work and then had to come home to do the household duties. This is not Biblical nor is it loving!

My wife used to ride the bus home from work and listen to the sobbing of student wives that were in this situation. They were being submissive to their husbands, but their husbands were abusing their family leadership by not doing their part.

5. Just a little more about the wife being obedient to her own husband. This idea of "own" is quite important especially in our day. The wife is to be obedient to only one - her husband - in any and all areas of life.

Her heart should be his.

Her mind should be his.

Her time should be his.

Her body should be his.

Her emotional life should be his.

Now, that puts a lot of weight on the husband - to respond properly to all of that stuff! Today we have few wives doing right, and there are too few husbands that would respond properly if they did - and I would agree the husbands not responding maybe why the wives are not doing their part - not that either is right.

She should not respond to men in the way she responds to her husband - in any area. She is his and he is for her - no other combination is correct, or acceptable.

6. There is a reality in our own age relating to the aged women teaching the younger. The aged must have some concept of what to teach the younger. The elder must have a life appropriate to be an example to the younger. The elder must know what the younger are to be like.

Many today are so far from Biblical in their lifestyle that they have nothing to teach to the younger women. Many of the older women in our churches are divorced/remarried, thus how can they teach a younger woman to properly love their husband?

Pastors and teachers, we HAVE to start teaching people what the Christian life is - it is not feeling good about ourselves, it is not fuzzy wuzzy music to get our emotions in a tizzy, it is not helping them rationalize away their sin, it is not giving them forty excuses as to why they can do a little sin without guilt, it is not getting them into a jazzercise session at the church.

Pastors and teachers are to be training the congregation to do the work of the Lord - look at Ephesians four and see if you can fit it into your church - does your church fit the Biblical pattern? Are you doing the work that God set you in the church to do?

By the way, you can't teach the congregation how to do the work of the Lord if you are filling your church with lost people, using all sorts of gimmicks to draw them in to "gospelize" them. If you were training your congregation to do the work, they would be evangelizing in the work place and filling your church with new Christians - no cost no brain drain to figure out the new gimmicks either.

7. Last Sunday we received a very neat phone call from one of our kids. Our son said his son had something to tell us. His oldest got on the phone and told us that he had been baptized. Then the next oldest girl got on the phone and told us she had been baptized. Then the youngest (daughter) got on the phone and told us she had been baptized.

What a wonderful phone call. Gill mentions "To love their children; not with a fond, foolish, loose, and ungoverned affection; but so as to seek their real good, and not only their temporal, but spiritual and eternal welfare; to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and to

use and keep proper discipline and government over them; for otherwise, amidst all the fondness of natural affection, a parent may be said to hate a child, Pr 13:24."

The love we hear about in the media is not true love. It isn't even a good example of polluted love anymore. Television shows depict a couple having extramarital relations and calling it love - no - that is sin.

Love in the family is a self-giving love - doing for the good of the other person. Loving your children is not giving them everything under the sun, it is not letting them do whatever they want, and it is not letting them slide through school. Love requires a standard and love requires commitment to that standard. Love is bringing the other along to maturity. Love is the nurture that is required in the family - though it is missing in many families today.

8. Prov. 14:1 "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." This verse backs the thought that the younger women need to know how to run and function in a Christian home or they will tear it apart. There is a dearth of this teaching today and we are suffering the consequences in the church because of it.

The building of a home must be on the foundation of Christ and nothing else, or you are building a home on the sand and it will fall. I once preached a message on building a house on the sand and the ludicrousness of the idea makes the passage seem so un-needed. It should be clear that anyone would know the principle, but yet we see people doing it all the time in their family and spiritual lives.

Either we build on a strong foundation and we build with quality products or we reap the result - catastrophe.

Keathley mentions Anthusa, a young woman that married and had two children, but lost her husband early in life. She lived from c. 330 to 374 A.D. After her husband died she devoted herself to raising her children in a Godly home. Her son John Chrysostom is clear indication that this concept works. He became a prominent church leader and preacher known to any Bible student and most Christians.

Anthusa was from a wealthy family and was raised in all those benefits, yet she chose to rear her children rather than to find fulfillment outside the home in her society.

He also raises the question whether Paul is speaking to problems and solutions that were meant only for the culture that Titus was working in. He suggests, and rightly so, that these are universal principles for all time. There is nothing to indicate that these are for his culture only.

It would be easy; indeed, many have turned away from these universal principles and taken on more "culturally appropriate" principles from the women's movement. They may be principles, but they are far from being Biblical principles.

Just a side note, can you imagine Paul getting wound up had he lived during the feminist movement days? Can you imagine the three volume book he would have written on the subject?

9. Paul addresses some remarks to the younger men - it crossed my mind, I wonder if he was aiming some of them toward Titus, as he would have been a younger man himself most likely.

I doubt that Paul was using a round about way of telling Titus how to act, but I have to wonder if Titus didn't take the comments to mind for serious consideration.

10. Imagine living a life where no one has anything evil to say about you. This is the life that Paul wants all of us to live. To live in such purity that there is no suspicion, no wondering, and nothing that would even hint at wrong.

Is this the life that you see when you see the television personalities that speak of their "Christianity?" Is this the life you see in the sports figure that speaks of their belief in Jesus? Is this the life that you see when you examine your pastor that speaks of purity of living? Is this the life that you see when you fellowship with one of the church members over coffee - or what they see in you?

We all ought to live our lives so that none can lay accusation. Imagine the world if they woke up one Monday morning and every Christian they knew started living that sort of life.

11. The thought of leaders living as they ought, so that the younger can have a proper example is a must. It is the only way the church will ever prosper, aside from God's handiwork within the church. We must have leadership that sets a shining example of purity and of godliness. If they do not, then those watching their example will not turn out correctly either.

I think one area that we might use in this thought is the idea of gossip or the tongue. I have seen more than one church leader that allowed their tongue to waggle a lot more than they should.

Twice in my life I have heard from others that I have been related to Educational institutions that were less than doctrinally correct. Once in Wyoming an Independent Baptist tentmaker (a barber) started telling people in town that the school where I taught was charismatic. The school took a strong stand against the charismatic movement so the gossip was literally quite false, yet he spread the information to all that would listen. I suggested that the man that told me this should go back for another haircut and a session of truth.

Just recently someone said "I hear you are teaching at that new seminary." That new seminary is off in the area of eschatology and is far from the conservative philosophy of life that I follow. I told the man that I wouldn't teach there if I were paid and that he should return to the gossip that told him that and straighten him out on the facts.

Leaders ought not listen to all the hot air that circulates these days, they will suck in way too much

false information while missing the truth that they would get if they were reading the Word instead of listening to all that blows in the wind.

Remember, the line between prayer requests and gossip is crossed way too easily.

Week six: Titus 2.9-10 THE SERVANTS

9 [Exhort] servants to be obedient unto their own masters, [and] to please [them] well in all [things]; not answering again; 10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Most expositors relate the thought of servants to the relationship that the believer has with their employer. This is the primary emphasis of the passage, but it has another application that we need to look at also. The believer's relationship of servant to their master - Christ.

Employer/employee relationship: This is one of the most important relationships you will have outside your family relationships. It is where you spend most of your time in interpersonal relationships, and it is where people are watching you like a hawk to see if you are living the life you ought.

You will influence more people in this contact with people than any other except possibly your church if it is a large one. You will affect your employer, your managers and your co-workers and all combinations of the three. What an awesome responsibility we have as workers in the work place.

Believer/Christ relationship: We are bought by the Master and we should have a master servant relationship with Him. If not, you are not on the proper footing with God. He bought us, He paid the price for us, and He owns us, yet He waits on us to voluntarily take on that servant position. He could force us into servitude, but He does not, He awaits our loving submission to his position of Master.

In the New Testament time a person could place themselves into servant hood to their master. This was a voluntary decision and was a relationship of deep commitment.

"Exhort" is supplied by the translator to show the continuing series of exhortations to different classes of people. Exhort the servants. Notice first of all that Paul does not go into a three volume tirade about the ills of slavery, nor does he tell the slave owners to free the slaves. He simply beginnings laying out principles for Christian living for those that find themselves in slavery.

This is usually the case in the Bible. The Word reaches us where we are in life no matter the station and allows us the knowledge we need to live a proper Christian life no matter what or who we are in life's grand scheme of things.

If young, live this way - if a servant, live this way - simply do as the Word directs, no matter your lot in life, be you bond or free, be you male or female, be you rich or poor, or be you sick or in health - live according to the principles from the Word.

"Obedient" is the same Greek word translated obedient in verse five where the young women are

told to be obedient to their own husbands. The servant is to obey their master, they are to be submissive to their master, and they are to be subject to their master.

Now in the area of employer/employee, you need to really consider this thought of submission. Can you be submissive while arguing? Can you be submissive while ducking out of work? Can you be submissive while on strike? Can you be submissive while stealing from work? Can you be submissive when you are goofing off when no one is looking? I think not.

To their own masters - is the identical terminology used of the wives and their "own husbands" thus we need to apply the same applications - giving heed to only your own employer, submitting to your own employer - (that one really speaks to the union issue) - doing a good job only for your own employer. In other words, work and honor the man that writes the check at the end of the day, not someone that comes in from outside the relationship and is wanting your time/effort.

We are to do for them, and not only do for them; we are to do well for them. Do a good job, not just getting along. Do such a good job that they realize you are doing well. Why? I have to work for this guy cuz he owns me - why should I do extra? Well, the Lord did extra for us didn't He? Maybe that should be the reasoning

We need to realize who it is that we are really working for. We may be a slave, or an employee, or a manager, but we are all working for God. It is His glory that we seek and it is Him that should encourage us toward doing an excellent job for those we serve.

I have included a study relating to work and the believer's attitude toward work as an appendix. If you really want to know what God wants of us as employees/employers, you might find the study of interest.

"Not purloining" is simply DON'T STEAL. Not a tool, not a paper clip and not a chunk of time. You are not to divide your employer from anything that is his. The opposite of that is true as well employers. The word means to embezzle or divide from - or steal something that is not yours.

When working in retail, I observed many people taking thirty minute breaks rather than their fifteen minute assigned breaks. This is stealing just as much as reaching into the cash register and taking a hand full of money for yourself.

We are to show good fidelity or as the word means - good faith. All we do in the work place is to be above reproach that we might adorn the doctrine of God.

This purloining might well relate to the use of the mind as well. When employed the person is hired for all their attributes, not just their physical movements. When on the job we should concentrate on the job and on how to accomplish it in the best manner possible.

Not only this but we ought to have our attitude adjusted correctly so that we can concentrate on

what we are doing.

It was mentioned earlier that we aren't to back talk. I mentioned that I was in retail earlier and I worked under a man that had the habit of rubbing me the wrong way. This man deserved all of these benefits even though he was not the best person to work with.

His favorite habit was to tell me just prior to quitting time that I was going to undertake a long project before I went home. This always required an attitude adjustment shortly after on my part. One time in particular he announced a two-man job, only when I asked for the second man he said no. My attitude was not easily adjusted due to the danger involved in doing it alone, however - ALL our mental faculties should be concentrating on the job so attitude needs to be subservient to the job at hand. Keep the mind clear for the employer, not your self pity.

This man would not talk to me about spiritual things but I know that he knew that I was doing a good job for him because I knew HIM that I served! I trust that if he is ever given the gospel he will be reminded of my non-verbal testimony, as some popped into my mind when I heard the gospel. Several people in a little Bible church had done some inconsequential things for me that made me wander about them. When the pastor was sharing the Gospel with me and after I had accepted Christ, these people came quickly to mind - that is why they were the way they were - they serve Christ.

The overall impact of this statement of Paul's in these two verses appears to be this: Because of what God has done for us, we ought to react in a certain way. **LIVE A GODLY LIFE APART FROM THE WORLDLY SYSTEM THAT WE ARE SURROUNDED BY!**

Years ago while I was being interviewed for a position of assistant pastor/school principle/teacher, I was asked how I viewed the rewards that the believer was to be given. Off the top of my head I told the board member that I really did not understand why God included information about rewards in the Bible. I said that rewards would be ice cream on the cherry pie, but that I lived my life as I did to please God not for reward. I told him that God had done so much for my life, that I felt my obligation to Him was to live my life for Him and to do anything that God asked me to do.

Reward has always been irrelevant to my life. I gain rewards, that is fine, but my life, my direction, my work is for God not reward. I lived my life this way for a number of years before I knew that there was such a thing as rewards - getting something out of living for God just wasn't on my radar screen.

I believe this passage teaches just what I told the board member, even though I had no Biblical basis when I told him what I believed.

APPLICATION:

1. The thought of serving your own master could well relate to the fact that we are supposed to be

working. Appendix one has some thoughts on welfare as well.

2. Not only are we to serve but we are to serve well. We are to do the very best job that we can. We aren't to sluff off and goof off when they aren't looking; we are to apply every fiber of our being to the job at hand. This includes physical and mental. Do an exceptional job, not just a good job.

I have found that this has its immediate rewards in this life. Most employers will bless those that do a good job and those that are trying to please the employer. I was hired for a ninety day, part time job over Christmas and was ultimately made supervisor and full time - only because the manager saw that I was a good worker.

Reward here is not the point of course, but the reward of God in heaven is the key - He will bless us even if the earthly master does not.

3. The Greek word translated "adorn" is a form of the word used in I Peter 3.3 when the women are adorning themselves. It has the idea of put in order. In the I Peter passage it is the same word that is translated world. The world order - the decorating. We are told that we adorn the word of God.

This could and does mean we are to decorate the word of God by our actions, or it could be that Paul had this thought of "order" in mind. Titus was to set things in order. He was to set the young women's thinking on marriage right, and here I think he is asking the servants to do well that the doctrine of God, or the masters thinking about the doctrine of God be set in order.

Undoubtedly, if the Christians were mixed up on what was Christian, then lost people would have no real concept of what was Christian. If the servants are doing well, and not talking back, then the masters will see a little bit of what Christianity is all about.

Even today unregenerate employers see the value in Christian workers. I worked for two Jewish men years ago in a large television repair facility. The work force was about seventy 5 percent Christian all the time. They knew what the Christians were like in the work force and appreciated their work ethic as well as their ethics and morals. I'd guess that they would have had 100 percent believers had they been able to determine the facts before hiring.

I might add that the believers enjoyed working for these men because they knew the employers appreciated their ethics/morals and that they were blessed as employees as much as the company could afford to bless.

The very fact that we are doing right in our actions is going to improve the masters/employers view of Christianity, as would the wrong actions detracting from their view. Imagine, we, even if a lowly servant, can make or break another person's view of God. An awesome responsibility when you consider it. In a sense, you're stealing, or your back talk could keep someone from

giving heed to the Gospel when they hear it.

4. Ephesians 6.5-8 mentions "5 Servants, be obedient to them that are [your] masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether [he be] bond or free."

Paul gives more emphasis to the subject here. "as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" - get your minds wrapped around that phrase - this is what everyone of us that works for a living is to do - not optional - it is to be our service to God!

The next phrase clearly points out that we aren't working for the master/employer; we are working for THE MASTER! "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" This is the key to the suffering, the boredom, the lackluster of the work-a-day world. We are serving God in the work place just as much as a pastor is serving God in the ministry. The product at the end of the day may be different, but God looks to you to serve him in the same manner as the pastor or missionary serves in the ministry. We ALL are in the service of the King, just in different places and surroundings.

Pastors/missionaries, you might make special note of that in your thinking over the years. And pastors/teachers don't you ever demean anyone, of any class, in any job, for their position in life. That janitor that sweeps up after you is serving the same Lord as you and he is doing it with all the fervor that he has to offer, just as you ought to be. It isn't us and them, it is one another.

We have tended to raise these people up on pedestals for their service to God, when we all ought to be serving in the same manner. Maybe that pedestal is because the workers haven't been serving the way they ought.

See I Timothy 6.1ff for more on servant/master relationships.

5. When reading these passages I have always pictured those slaves that make it over to the church fellowship times at someone's home. Those that are in the work-a-day world, but Keathley points out quite properly that there may well have been slaves in the homes of Christians. These slaves may have been sitting in on the services in their masters' homes. This is the picture in the book of Philemon.

Imagine a back talking Christian slave hearing these words in the presence of his master. Wow, that would be embarrassing. These people were singled out by Paul right along with the young men and women that were also probably hearing these things in the congregation. That is application of the Word of God!

And we, today, tend to not want to get that up and in your face with our teaching - Paul did, and I

think we ought to as well. A little more "in your face" teaching in the church would assist with the holiness issue that is lacking.

6. We won't settle the issue, but this passage may call to mind the idea of "what is our social responsibility" - Paul did not condemn slavery, Christ did not condemn slavery, Paul gave principles to live by - under - the system of slavery.

Is it our moral, social responsibility to remedy the social ills of our nations? Are we to be active in working against these ills? Are we to protest, fight against these ills?

I think the principle set forth here is to work within the social ills as best we can and allow the principles of Christ to show through and probably bring about change in the ill.

Is the abortion issue in our country not a social ill? I think all would agree. Should we be fighting against this ill? I think the Word would indicate that we work to show Christian principles. I would not be against writing letters, or against protests if peaceful, though these are tied by the media to the fringe radicals and thus it often detracts from the stand of Christians in my mind.

Adorning the Word is our cause, not detracting from it. If we can adorn the Word within the law of our land, then I think we are free to do so. The only limitation would be the relationship between our work to cure the social ills and the ability to evangelize. The later is our command; the former is allowable as long as it doesn't interfere with the evangelization.

7. Paul tells the servant to be subject to their master. Now, they were already subject to their master legally. The master had rule over the slaves life, but Paul goes a step further - be subject to the master personally - as though you really desire to submit.

This might have application to the work force. Yes, you are under a verbal contract to work so many hours for so much money, but Paul would have you, personally, go a step further and submit yourself to that employer completely on your own.

Again, imagine the business world tomorrow if every Christian in the world went in the next day living as the Lord would have them live. Would not the lost employers of the world take new meaning to the Christianity that they now know? I believe that the world would be drastically changed, as would the church.

8. The business world loses billions of dollars every year to theft and losses due to improper employee activity. They lose even further by the inactivity of employees, when they take extended breaks, call in sick when they aren't, and when they goof off while no one is looking. Further, retailers lose millions to shop lifting. I hate to say it, but I know parts of these losses are due to believers.

Again, I would challenge you to imagine a world in which all believers started working and living

as they ought to - imagine the extra money corporations would have, imagine the witnessing opportunities we would have - and I don't mean on company time!

I don't mean to say that all Christians are thieves but I have witnessed many goofing off and taking long breaks and small things such as this. I hate to say it, but I would be a bit limited in intelligence to assume that no Christian ever steals. Maybe not in the big bucks area, but in the use of company paper for personal things, for making copies on company machines without paying, for sneaking a look at your personal email on company time and equipment etc.

9. There is one further item that should be covered. The servant is not to talk back. Let us consider the action needed when the master tells them to do something that the servant knows to be wrong. It could mean the servants life to say no to the master. Yet, would not the master realize this man telling him no might be a most trusted servant - one that will not do wrong.

In business it is quite hard not to do wrong when asked to, because our job is on the line, yet that is what the Lord would have us do - take a stand when needed. It is not an easy thing to do to say no to what I am told to do. Be sure you are on Biblical ground and take your stand.

There is nothing wrong in being nice when you say no, giving reason why you are saying no, and apologizing for having to say no. It may well anger the employer (since his lack of moral character has been exposed :-)) so the consequences may be unpleasant.

10. "Of God our Savior" is a little different phrase than usually used. I suspect that Paul was drawing attention to the saviorhood of God to make the point that this action is for the possibility of evangelism. If the servant lives properly, then an opportunity for a witness would be the more possible.

All they do is to look forward to adorning the saviorhood of God. In essence it is an example for all believers - do all you do, in every way you can, at any time you can to further the gospel of Christ. It is Him that we serve ultimately, and it is Him that we are to share with others as we have opportunity.

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THEOLOGY OF WORK
by Stanley L. Derickson

OUTLINE:
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INTRODUCTION:

In recent days our community was shocked by two teenagers, one of which was on a local high school football team, tortured and beat a stray cat to death and then hid the evidence from their parents. The two boys were jailed on a ten thousand-dollar bail.

One of our churchmen, the following Sunday, related this incident to another more common occurrence that goes, basically, unnoticed by the media and the public at large. He related that it was strange that these two young men would be jailed on \$10,000 bond, while a doctor can plunge a pair of scissors into the brain of a full term baby and suck its brains out and call it a needed medical procedure.

We in America care more for the rights of animals than we do for the rights of other human beings.

I will preempt this study by saying that I am sure that I will offend some. I will also say that I probably should offend more than I will offend. I will also say that it is not I that offends, but Almighty God. He sets the standards that we are to live by, not me.

Premise: We as believers have adopted the secular mind set that tells us that we MUST have our rights.

The Bible is supposed to be our very guide for living as believers. Baptists have as one of their Baptist Distinctives the Bible as their only authority for faith and practice. However, I think that we will see that today Christians oft reject its teachings by our life style.

We live as if "no" was a dirty word. "No" is a word of control. It was designed to limit the activity. We feel that it is a word that will warp our child's mind so we avoid it like the plague.

Might I remind you that God uses negatives? "Thou shalt not" is a negative much like the word no. God has many negatives, God has many restrictions, yet we in the church over the last few years have given ourselves permission to do all things rather than to follow the restrictions and avoid those things the Scriptures tell us to avoid.

We Christians, seldom say no to ourselves or for that matter to our children. If you spend time in retail stores, you will find that "no" is the word children use when they talk to their parents, rather than the other way around. No, I won't wear that dress to school. No, I won't pay for that with my own money - you buy it for me. No, I won't be quiet. No, I don't want to go yet. No, I won't -----

Let's consider our rights for a moment or two.

MY CHRISTIAN RIGHTS

We have been living in a generation that has wanted its rights for all to long. We have groups wanting to be viewed with equal rights. We have groups wanting to be viewed with special rights. We have groups wanting to have the same rights as others. We have groups wanting to limit the rights of some so that they can have special rights. We have groups wanting to limit the rights of some so that they can have more rights than anyone else. Everyone is worried about their rights.

In America we have many rights, and we also have lost many of our rights in recent days. Indeed, if we don't watch our government, we will be losing many more of our rights.

Some groups deserve to have rights enforced, while other groups want rights that they have no right to.

We have "CHALLENGED" people that want to be able to do everything that everyone else can do, yet they say don't treat me as if I'm special. I'm sorry but you can't have it both ways! If the society spends billions of dollars for ramps and accesses for only those few, then they are special! The ramps and accesses are not necessary for the majority nor are most of them used for the majority. It is not wrong for society to supply equal access to those that need it, but they are special no matter how much they don't want to be.

Our public schools have been teaching young people that whatever they decide to do is okay. They have the right to make any decision that they want. Now those same young people are older and demanding the rights that no one can give them.

Some of those young people are committing crime and wondering why everyone is upset with them. The young people declare their actions all right and themselves not guilty of anything and wonder why others are upset.

THE RIGHTS WE HAVE GIVEN OURSELVES

I recently talked with a man that was very frustrated for his children. One of his kids and spouse came to him complaining of all their problems. They were both working, they were not making a lot of money, they had no savings, they had a home but it was only a very modest one - not what they wanted, they had a three-year-old car, their kids couldn't have all the clothes they wanted,

they weren't getting ahead, and in general they were frustrated because they hadn't achieved the American dream - whatever that is.

As the man talked, I was taken with the total self-centeredness of the family. Everything centered upon them and what they wanted and what they didn't have.

SOUND FAMILIAR? I find that this is about where most Christians live their lives. Their concentration is acquiring material things, and acquiring more material things.

If you have been watching television news over the last few years, you know that many people in our nation have been denied the American dream. They resent this exclusion from what EVERYONE ELSE HAS. Indeed, many people in recent riots mentioned this exclusion from what was rightfully theirs as Americans. They haven't achieved what they feel in their minds they should have achieved in the material realm.

Their thinking is very similar to the farmers I used to work within in the Midwest. When I would ask them how they had done in a certain year they would tell me that they lost 25,000 dollars or some such figure. I was talking to them in their \$150,000 home working on their \$800 television set. I had walked by their three new cars and pickups and had admired the four new snowmobiles parked in the garage.

Now, I would try to figure all this out. Just how does the expression of always loosing money relate to the facts of all I had viewed?

It was explained to me by a farmer one day. The farmer in that area would decide how much he wanted to make the coming year. Say he decided he wanted to make \$60,000 and at the end of the year he had only made \$40,000, then he has lost \$20,000.

Using this method of accounting, I must admit that my wife and I have been loosing about \$35,000 per year for the last 30 years. Do you suppose IRS would accept this as real business losses?

Now, let us consider the rights that God has given us in this area of life.

THE RIGHTS GOD GAVE US

I would like to read God's estimation of our rights to the American dream. (By the way isn't a dream something that you look forward to and work toward? The American dream has been something that millions have worked their lives for, not something that is given to them by the federal government because it was due them.)

Gen 3:17b-19 "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is

the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

God says that we will live - eat and survive - by the sweat of our brow. He does not give 25 declarations, such as: THOU SHALT HAVE A GORGEOUS HOME. THOU SHALT HAVE A BMW. THOU SHALT HAVE A HUGE SAVINGS ACCOUNT. THOU SHALT HAVE A BULGING BILLFOLD. THOU SHALT HAVE A COLLEGE EDUCATION. THOU SHALT HAVE A FIVE BEDROOM HOUSE. THOU SHALT HAVE A BY THE SWEAT OF YOUR BROW, YOU WILL SURVIVE THIS LIFE, NOT BY THE SIZE OF THINE BANK ACCOUNT.

Our society has given us the self-centered/materialistic mind set that many of us function under today. It is an incorrect mind set!

Before you take what I say wrong, let me be quick to say that God has supremely blessed some of his people through the years. He has chosen to give many of his people great wealth and prosperity, but this is a blessing over and above what he has promised. He has only promised us the need to work for our NEEDS.

When struggling through the first years of Bible College we had very little income. We needed a car to replace the old one that was without a transmission for the second time. We looked at all the cars we could afford and they were in worse shape than our present car. We had bid the salesman goodbye and were leaving the lot. As we neared the edge of the lot we spotted a beautiful white Plymouth Sport Fury convertible. We stopped and commented on how great it would be to have such a car. The salesman walked up and said, "You wouldn't be interested in that would you?" I told him we certainly would. He left for a moment and returned to tell us that his manager wanted to move the car as winter was near and they could seldom sell convertibles in the winter. They gave us the car for what we had to spend!

STRUGGLING, POOR BIBLE COLLEGE STUDENTS driving a Sports Fury convertible with bucket seats and leather interior! God truly blesses sometimes.

Scripture bears out this line of thinking. Abraham, David, Solomon for a few from the Old Testament. These men had great wealth. While these men had great wealth, there were MANY that were barely getting by financially.

We often quote Matt. 6:33 to show that we will be given all we need. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Most interpret "all these things" as everything we want.

NO! The context shows clearly that God is promising, not to provide all our wants, but to supply

our NEEDS!

God promises to give to us the needs of life. Those things required to keep us alive.

DON'T TAKE ME WRONG! We as believers DO HAVE A LOT OF RIGHTS! I would like to remind you of some of these GOD GIVEN RIGHTS.

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE A WITNESS for our Lord: Matt 28:18-20

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HOLY: I Pet 1:15-16 "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PERSECUTED: John 15:20a "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;"

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO USE OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS: Eph. 4:8 "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The following context of this verse shows that the gifts are to be used, not laid aside in disuse!

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRAYERFUL: I Tim 2:8A "I will therefore that men pray every where," (James 5:16 also)

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO SUPPORT THOSE IN NEED: Gal. 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO ETERNAL REST: Rev. 14:12 "Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed [are] the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM SIN: Rom. 6:22 "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."

Now that we know what our true Christian rights are, compare them to the rights that you tend to be worried about and see if your mind is running with God or the world.

Having said all this I trust that you understand that God has created us with the ability to work. Since the fall He has deemed it fitting that we make our living by the sweat of our brow, thus knowing what work is might well be very appropriate to anyone wanting his/her rights!

I. THEOLOGY OF WORK

Technically theology is a study of God or something closely relating to God. Work is an integrated part of God's plan for man, even before the fall.

A theology of work is a loose usage of the term theology, though I think in our present society with its emphasis on government help, welfare, etc. a theology of work is needed. A study of the thought of work as God sees it. If you object to the use of the term theology substitute the word philosophy.

This will not be a long work, as the Scripture is quite clear that all mankind is to exist by the sweat of the brow. We in our technological society have a distinct advantage to poor Adam. We can sit in the air-conditioned office and put in our eight hours - if we are so blessed. Adam had to pick up his regrets the day after being kicked out of the garden and start scratching for food and shelter.

In Gen. 1:4 we see that God evaluated His own work and saw that it was good. God worked! This should require us to acknowledge that work can't be bad!

I would like to take a slight side track and comment on evaluation of work for a moment. There is no tool of life that is more effective to help you in your work for the Lord. EVALUATION! Without evaluation, you cannot know how you are doing! That is almost as much a fact of life as is the law of gravity.

If you do not evaluate your work you will never know if you are doing a good job or a bad job. When teaching I told my students that I automatically evaluated their work - grades and tests!

As you go into life you should learn to evaluate everything that you do including your secular work. This will help you see your good points and your poor points. As you see the good you can continue to improve to do even better. As you see the bad you can find out why it is bad and make moves to correct the problems.

In Gen. 2:1-3 we find some information that may help you in your study of work. The Sabbath was GOD'S DAY OF REST FROM HIS WORK! There are four principles set forth concerning the Sabbath.

1. COMPLETION: God had finished His work and now was resting. Think of that scene! Picture God resting. Quite a unique concept, the God of the universe resting.
2. CEASING: God rested after a hard work out. Q. Does God need rest? NO! The term has the idea of repose.
3. BLESSED: Two points. a. Some say it was to be a blessing to those that observed it. Point - the

text does not say this. b. He blessed it. The text doesn't require blessing for more than one day.

4. HOLINESS: He set it apart or sanctified it.

It is of interest that these points also fit Christ and the Lord's Day, Sunday.

1. COMPLETION: The work of Christ was complete on the first day.

2. CEASING: Christ sat down at the right hand of God after finishing His work for an extended time. Heb. 4:10 "He also hath ceased from His own works, as God did from His."

3. BLESSEDNESS: Our joy is in Christ since He finished His work. 4. HOLINESS: We are set aside because of His work. As well as the first day.

In Gen. 2:15 we see that God had work in mind for Adam from the very beginning. We need not feel that we are worthless for God can find something for us to do! I don't think that there was a riding lawn mower with eleven attachments; however I don't think that this work would have been dissatisfying to Adam.

EVEN IN PARADISE THERE WAS WORK TO BE DONE! Now apply that. God created work just as He did the heaven and earth. Shouldn't we enjoy work as much as the mountains or oceans?

II. THEOLOGY OF ETHICAL WORK

A few years ago the president of the school where I was teaching theology called me into his office and showed me a news headline. "Major Business Colleges Now Offering Courses in Ethics." My exclamation was, "IT'S ABOUT TIME!"

There is work and then there is ethical work. The crook that breaks into your home and helps himself to your belongings is working. He may even break a sweat, yet this is not ethical work. It is not work that is accepted by our society. I trust you will understand the need to take a moment to consider this topic.

Ethical work is work that is an acceptable mode of making a living according to the dictates of society. Herein is the rub.

Our society is, in part, dictated by our legislators. They have defined ethical work by the programs that they have developed to "help" the poor.

Ethical work in 1997 America is working at some job that allows you to make the level of financial status that you desire.

Now, within this thought is the fact that some won't take a minimum wage job because it won't bring them to their level of financial status. So, the government has developed all of the welfare programs to help these people that are disadvantaged to raise themselves up to their standards - not by working but by filling out government forms and staying at home and not engaging in work.

This study will attempt to look at ethical work, not what we have in America. This study will look at the real world, the work a day world, the world that sees a days work as the prerequisite for a days pay.

To this end I would like to introduce a passage from the New Testament. II Thessalonians 3:6-15 "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. 13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. 14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet count [him] not as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother."

I am not even going to give comment on this passage. It is quite clear that the writer of the epistle was moved by God to state that if you don't work, you don't eat. Now, before I be labeled sadistic etc. let me state that there is another teaching in the Word of God that is clear that if someone is unable to work, there should be help available.

The key is the thought of work. In our society the definition of the ability to work is stretched to the limit. We lived in an apartment complex years ago where many welfare recipients lived. The men of the house would go out into the parking lot and play football etc. with their bad backs almost daily.

Unable to work - even in a sit down office job, but they could do all those pleasurable items like fishing, hunting, sports, working on cars, etc.

It should be obvious to the Christian that those in the church that do not work are to be shunned - that is church discipline! Few are the churches today that take steps of discipline in any case much less the thought of someone on perpetual welfare.

Welfare is not wrong! Welfare is for those that need assistance until they can get back onto their feet. I doubt that there is a person in the United States that wouldn't agree that we should help

those in need, but there is growing opposition to the present system that seems to reward everything except work.

In keeping with this thought I have included as an appendix to this study a deacons fund policy that might give you ideas for your church in how to help those in need. This policy grew out of a young couple coming to our church in need of help. They said they were believers, were new to town, were unable to find work and needed gas money. The deacons gave the couple \$50 and we never saw them again - even though they thought they would like to attend our church.

III. THEOLOGY OF ACCEPTABLE WORK

Romans 14:7-8 "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

The believer that is sold out to live his/her life for God assumes that God is the sole center of the person's life. Romans 12 is clear that we are all to offer ourselves a living sacrifice to him. Based on these thoughts then we can understand the following philosophy of life that I would like to present.

Since we are God's, and since we have offered ourselves to Him, then NO MATTER WHAT JOB or work we do, we do because of HIM and not ourselves. Based on this then, when we go to work, what kind of job are we to do? Christ gave his life on the cross for us - He has bought us - the only quality of work we should EVER offer is our very best.

Since we work for God our very very best abilities should be used, our very very best efforts should be given, and our very very best attitude should be present! Now, when you get mad at that coworker - you are in need of speaking to your employer - God.

Even if you are working for a very poor employer - you are serving God and actually your real employer is God. He allows you good health to work, He allows you the abilities to hold the job, and He allows the employer to give you work.

Ephesians 6:5-7 is a good basis for this thought. It speaks to slaves - isn't that what you always complain about being at work! No, we are not slaves, but if a slave is to have the attitude of Eph. 6 then surely all free employees should have at least the same attitude.

(Eph 6:5-9 5 "Servants, be obedient to them that are [your] masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether [he be] bond or free. 9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven;

neither is there respect of persons with him.")

You may have noticed I included a couple of verses for masters/employers as well - just in case the reader is not in the slave category.

The very best that you can is the type of job you should do. When living in Wyoming the only job I could find was janitor work at a printing company. It paid well and I only worked two-three hours a day and it was adequate for the time. I must admit, however, there is absolutely no way that I could have gone into that job on a daily basis without knowing it was God that I was working for. Had I been required to go into that job with nothing more to look forward to than a pay check, I don't think I would have gone. My key thought in that job was that it was a means of living, it was a means of having time to do the work of the ministry, and that it was a means for me to honor God by doing the very best that I could.

Each and every day that I had the job, on the way to work my prayer was that I might honor God by what I did, that I might do a good job for the Lord (not the employer - though I'm sure he enjoyed my work), and that I might present Christ in my actions.

It was during this time that I developed a systematic theology. Initially when I had so much extra time I decided to set down a systematic theology for my children's benefit. Little did I know that this effort would blossom into something as big as it has. It is on the internet being accessed by people all over the world. I have always felt that my being faithful in the janitor job allowed God to do something much bigger than sweeping floors.

IV. THEOLOGY OF UNACCEPTABLE WORK

Somewhere when teaching I ran across a quote that has stuck with me. "Christian mediocrity is still mediocrity." Doing a sloppy job as a Christian is still a sloppy job. Doing the job haphazardly as a Christian is still a haphazard job. Just because we are believers, it does not mean that we can do a poor job and expect God to make up the difference.

Little needs to be said in this section. We are to do the best that we can, thus anything less is unacceptable. If we decide to view our occupation as something less than our best, then we are thumbing our nose at the Lord. He asks for the best, and that is what we should give to Him.

V. THEOLOGY OF PEACEABLE WORK

The Scripture calls us to get along peaceably with others, be they believers or nonbelievers. Thus an application of our principle of work should be that we work peaceably with our co workers and our employers. You may say, "You're asking an awwwfffullll lot Lord!" There have been times when I have felt the same way.

Co workers and employers can be a pain in the neck. I had been having a very bad day when my

employer came to me - five minutes before I was to go home - and told me he wanted a certain job done. I knew that the job would take a couple hours at best. I worked peaceably with him, but I must admit I didn't get any spiritual blessing from it because I had an attitude problem for quite awhile.

AGAIN, if we are working for God - then the extra work that is laid on won't be a problem to us.

(SEE I AIN'T PERFECT YET!) I have often thought that Paul placed the phrase "...that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." with the prayer and intercessions of the previous verse for my benefit. If I am praying for all men then I can have that peaceable life. (I Tim 2:1-2)

God is the one we should work for, but the man that writes that paycheck deserves all we can give him as well.

Everything we do honors God and I have seen more than one of my past employers notice the job I have done and know that it was God that brought that good job about.

VI. THEOLOGY OF GODLY WORK

I would like to look at two aspects as we close. The thought of Godly work breaks well into two divisions. First of all the thought of the ministry and secondly the thought of work, jobs and occupations that ought not to be held by Christians.

MINISTRY: For many years I have viewed the call to ministry as a special blessing to the person that receives it. They are called into a work or ministry that they truly enjoy. They can get up in the morning and know that they are going to enjoy what they do - not like some that get up in the morning knowing that they will have to clean bathrooms, or sew 3,000 seams, or weld 4,000 pieces, or what have you.

The minister of God that is paid for his work is the nearest thing to skirting the curse that I can think of. Actually any one that enjoys their work is flirting with overcoming the curse to me. Not that the person is trying to get around God, but they are involved in doing what they want to do in life and get paid for it.

I'm sure many there are that are in this situation that are not in a full time ministry - indeed, if we are REALLY working with that attitude of "I'm doing it for God." we will enjoy what we do.

UNGODLY WORK: In this area I trust that I will not step on toes for there is wide latitude as to what is right and wrong in our day and age even among believers.

I would naturally class any illegal work in this area. I also would class many other works here as well. There are occupations that are morally improper for the believer to be involved in as well.

Then there are the areas where it may be legal, and it may be morally all right, but is it all right for a believer.

Among the illegal, we are speaking of crime, embezzlement, cheating, etc. The morally wrong would be those things that God condemns even though our society or government may not condemn. Prostitution for example is legal in some areas, yet not Biblically right.

The last area is less easy to decide. For example should a Christian sell lottery tickets? Some are probably trying to figure out what I am talking about. Many believers play the lottery, so why would selling the tickets be wrong. Many Christians view gambling of any kind wrong. It is placing something God has entrusted to them to be a good steward with. Putting it out to chance is not good stewardship.

Should a Christian sell alcoholic beverages? Should a Christian be a janitor in a pornographic printing company (NO I WASN'T)? Should a Christian work in a store or business where the employees are expected to cheat the customer.

These are some areas where believers must go to their Bibles, Godly counselors, and God for guidance and advice.

Then the person must make up their own mind.

I would encourage anyone in these areas to consider very carefully their decision in light of the thought that their testimony before the world may be hindered. If you are working in one of these areas, you may cause people to stumble, or you may cause people to not want to listen to you when you witness to them.

For example if you have friends that have high moral standards even though they are not Christians - and there are many people in this classification - and you take a job in an area where they feel you ought not, they will most likely not listen as closely when you talk of their sin and their need of Christ's work on the cross.

Even within the okay jobs, with the okay employers, with the best of intentions, we will find ourselves faced with moral decisions. Some examples might help you watch your steps. These are found in appendix two.

I have also included an appendix relating to Christian women working outside the home. This is found in Appendix three.

There seems to be more and more controversy about Christian women working outside the home.

I trust that this has been helpful to some. It is not meant to be a complete study of work in the Bible; it is just a beginning for the person that wants to go deeper.

APPENDIX ONE

(This policy was formed with the Congregational form of government in mind. It would be quite easy to adapt it to other forms of church government.)

In that the Scripture is very clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting other believers in need, and in that the Scripture is very clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting widows and orphans, and in that the Scripture is clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting strangers, we hereby institute this policy to assist us in this ministry to those in need. (See footnote at end of policy for references.)

Each person seeking assistance will be interviewed by two of our deacons/elders and their concurrence will result in help. There is no need to INVESTIGATE a request for help other than to talk with the person involved to gain a sense that the need is valid. (We will trust God to guide us in our decisions and allow Him to deal with those that misuse our ministry.)

1. The fund shall be financed by an offering taken in the missions bowl after the Lord's Table service each month.
2. The fund shall be dispersed under the guidance of the deacons.
3. The funds will be distributed by gift certificate as much as possible or by cash/check if the need is not available via certificates.
4. A grocery closet will be maintained at the church via the donations of the membership. It will contain sealed goods that can be stored for extended periods of time.
5. If the fund is depleted, and a seemingly valid case exists, the deacon and pastor may go before the church for special offering/general fund expenditure for the assistance.
6. A list of social service agencies will be maintained and a copy of that list shall be given to each person requesting assistance. (It is assumed by this policy that much of our tax money goes to support social services, so we should make use of those services for the assistance of those in need.)
7. A total value for each assistance shall not exceed \$50. (Groceries need only be approximated.)
8. The above is not to say that every person that requests assistance is to be helped. It shall be at the discretion of those talking with the person that may or may not determine to extend help from the church family.
9. If there is a choice between church family members and those outside the church, then the church families' needs should be met first.

FOOTNOTE:

Heb 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Acts 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. I Tim 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world. Matt 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed [thee]? or thirsty, and gave [thee] drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took [thee] in? or naked, and clothed [thee]? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me.

Nave's topical Bible references for further study: De 15:7-18; Le 25:35-43; Ps 41:1, 112:9; Pr 3:27,28, 11:25, 22:9, 25:21,22, 28:27; Isa 58:6,7,10,11; Eze 18:5,7-9; Mt 5:42, 19:21, 25:35-45; Mr 9:41, 10:21; Lu 3:11, 11:41; Ac 6:1-4, 11:29,30; Ro 15:25-27; 1Co 13:3, 16:1-3; 2Co 8:1-15,24, 9:1-15; Ga 2:10; Php 4:10-18; 1Ti 5:8,16, 6:18; Heb 6:10, 13:16; Jas 2:15,16; 1Jo 3:17.

APPENDIX TWO:

1. While working as a television technician a customer asked me to alter a circuit in their little color television. I looked the set over and found that I could do the requested work and proceeded. I plugged the set in and saw a bright flash in the neck of the picture tube which indicated that I had damaged the tube. Correct I was. I had blown the picture tube. It would cost over \$100. to replace the part.

I took my job in hand and told my employer what I had done. He thought for awhile and told me to call the customer and tell them that we had to order some parts and that we would call when they got in. This required two things: A lie to the customer, and a listing of parts on the work order, neither of which are morally acceptable to me.

I knew that I could not do as my employer - a man of usually high moral character - had requested. I asked him if it wouldn't be better to just be up front with the customer and apologize and tell them what was going on. My employer thought for a moment and agreed with my estimation of the situation. I called the customer and told him of the problem and he was quite understanding and even felt bad that he had requested we do the work.

2. You are being given free health insurance by your employer. The agent comes in and requests your signature on a health form. You sign the form and as you finish you notice that the form is already dated - three weeks prior to your signature.

What do you do? Do you chance not being covered with the FREE insurance? Do you upset your employer's agent? Do you upset your employer? I trust you will do what is right.

3. Your employer tells you to tell a customer that a refund will be mailed out in two weeks. You know, however that the company policy is that you don't mail out the refund. Only when the customer calls and asks why they haven't received the refund do they send it out. Do you lie to the customer? Even though you know the company does this because they know that crooks don't usually call back? Even though you feel that this customer is really a crook?

4. You take a job at a Christian book store and on the first day you find out that they sell books that disagree with your beliefs. Do you quit? Do you sell books that you really don't agree with?

5. You take a job at a television repair shop. On the third day, over lunch you hear the other two employees talking of the employer as if he is the dumbest person on earth. You hear them indicate that they have cheated him. You find out that one of the men is not legally licensed in the state to work on television sets. Do you continue your job - it's their problem not yours - right? Do you quite? Do you tell your former employer why you have just quit?

6. As an older person with a lot of education you find that you cannot find employment. Many tell you it is due to your age or that you have too much education. Someone tells you to just fill out applications and don't mention the education. Do you do such a thing knowing that the applications state that you are swearing the information is true when you sign the application?

These are just a few examples of ruff spots I've run into over the years. There are all sorts of ways that the Devil will twist truth and squeeze right living to see if you will do wrong. I trust you will be on your toes in the work place as well as at home.

The moral of this section is watch where you are headed and ask questions before you move forward. Think about the ramifications of your actions. I have found myself in situations where I knew what was right, but wanted to go the easy route. Being Godly EVERY day is the only way to live your life.

The work world has some slippery corners to turn, and I trust that it is the Holy Spirit that is holding you up, not the Devil that is helping you fall down!

APPENDIX THREE:

There have been preachers that have taught and preached that the woman is to be in the home. Because of this many women in our churches have had feelings of guilt because they either

wanted to, or had to work outside the home.

I stayed in the home of a couple overnight in Kansas and had a real good time of fellowship. When I went up for breakfast, the husband was not out to the kitchen yet. The wife turned to me and ask, "Stan, do you think that it is all right for women to work outside the home?" I told her that I did and shared some thoughts with her.

She was almost in tears when I was finished. She had been under great pressure from her Christian community concerning her going to work. She said that she felt that the mothers place was in the home. I agreed with her, but within the Scripture I had shared.

She told me that she had been raised that it was wrong for the wife to work. Her husband had been in the hospital for heart problems and had been told not to work anymore. She had no choice but to go to work.

She was quite relieved that there was someone that saw that she had no choice. I ask her if she had talked with her pastor. She said yes, and that he had told her about what I had told her. She was not even confident in what her pastor had said due to her strong upbringing in the church and the pressure from others in the church.

A working mother being a possibility is based on a couple of Scriptural observations.

1. Prov. 31:10-31. This passage makes mention of the wife purchasing property, caring for a household, planting a vineyard, selling fine linen that she has made and in all this finds time to be a good wife.

Notice should be made of verse 28, "Her children rise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

Verse 30 also gives the key to this type of woman, "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

2. The book of Acts mentions two ladies that were involved in working. Acts 16:14 mentions Lydia, "... a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira..." Acts 18:2ff mentions Priscilla and her husband. "...for by their occupation they were tentmakers."

It is always best if the mother can remain at home at least while the children are at home, but this is not possible in all situations (The children benefit greatly by having their mother present all the time.). We as believers should understand the Biblical record and not just our own personal preference.

I would prefer that all women remain in the home if they desired to, yet that is not realistic in some cases.

APPENDIX FOUR:

We won't take time to consider the following, but you might do some study in the area of the workmen of the tabernacle and the temple. These workmen were involved in God's work and they did a good work.

Week seven: Titus 2.11-14 THE BASIS

11. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

He wanted a peculiar people, not weird but a people sold out to Him! Not sure this sounds like the church today. With all the preachers decrying legalism, and all rationalizing all sorts of sin into the okay column, it is hard to find someone that thinks sin is sin any longer.

Hard to believe that the plain teaching of the Word about sin can be glossed over as it is. There is plenty of negative teaching against sin in the Scripture, but we can't be negative these days - we must be positive to draw people to church. Not in my Bible, not sure which Bible some of these people are using these days.

Let's take another read on that first section. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously,"

With this passage firmly in place, a Christian can do most anything they want these days. Not sure where they hide the passage, but they certainly do. Just read on a board where Christian elderly are opting to live together rather than get married and lose a social security check. Ten years ago, this was the way of the lost world, but today Christians are adopting the world's ways because they do not have a good sense of holiness and purity. They even are "getting married" but not registering the marriage with the state and calling it okay. That is illegal folks, it is against the laws of the land, it is against the principles of the Word of God, yet "Christians" are involved in this.

How do you relate breaking the law to "live soberly, righteously?" How do you relate this to denying ungodliness? How do you figure that is denying worldly lusts?

And this is just one small area where Christians are throwing out all Biblical norms in the sake of "Christian living."

Now, let us look at the detail of this passage.

11. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

"Grace" is the normal word for grace, as "God" is the normal word for God. It is the unmerited gift of God to man. The thought of appeared seems to picture Christ living and walking on the earth and giving Himself for man. This had not appeared to every man woman and child at the time of the cross, but to normal people it certainly has appeared. The known world was most

likely touched by the Gospel in the apostles' time. This is a general statement that salvation has been provided for - that all the person needs to do is accept.

Does every man woman and child know of this salvation? No. However, the work of Christ has appeared to all men - when they are confronted with the Gospel it is theirs for the asking.

The term "all" is of interest. All means all, or every, or the whole, however the lexicon makes it quite clear that it doesn't mean all. The lexicon suggests some illustrations, one of which was that all Judea went out to be baptized by John the Baptist, but not all, really went.

I think that the context here is somewhat different. It does not say that all accepted, it only says that it hath appeared to all men. Romans makes it clear that there is revelation to all mankind, does it now mean that it was only manifest to a few - not so. The work of the cross has not appeared to "all" as in everyone, but it has appeared to all that have responded to the natural revelation of Romans one.

This passage is one of the many which show that salvation is for every man, woman, and child in the world of all time since creation. God's grace has been shown to everyone by the free gift of salvation. It is there for the acceptance by anyone that desires it.

Then comes the question about the pagan's that have never heard. I have hinted at this above, but for clarity, Romans one verse eighteen and following show clearly that no man is without excuse. It states that there is revelation given to all mankind within them and I would suggest that a response to that revelation would bring the Gospel to them in some way. I don't think that the Bible anywhere indicates that someone that responds to God in an honest way will ever be left without the Gospel.

II Tim. 1.10 gives us a little more information about the appearing if you want to think more along that line. "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:"

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Oh, what a terrible text to have included in the Bible. Wouldn't many today love to take a black marker and black out that entire passage? What an affront to many Christians in our day that live as if they are a part of the world.

Teaching is not the normal word for teaching. This word has the thought of chastise, or train, as in training children. It is teaching with physical illustrations if you will. It is teaching that incurs chastisement for the lack of learning. This is a related word to the word used of chastening in Hebrews 12.5 where it speaks to the chastening of the believer by the Lord.

What a contrast of action! DENY ungodliness and worldly lusts - LIVE soberly righteously and godly - IN THIS PRESENT WORLD.

Oft times these days, believers feel that the "deny" and "live" relate to the next life - in eternity. Paul says - now - today - deny all that is evil and live godly lives.

That means give up all the movies that display worldly lusts so graphically. Fill your mind with godly or at least neutral movies and interests.

That means give up all the materialistic dreams you have and live within what God has given you. That means give up that off color language that you like to use at work and fill your mouth with godly or at least neutral vocabulary. That means slang as well. I heard a man take great lengths to encourage students to rid themselves of the slang that is only shortened or nicer forms of swearing. I noticed in later days that he must have meant only the older slang, because he had picked up on some of the new - teen slang that was just short for swearing. We need to be careful what terms we use.

Be careful the slang and puns that you use, for you may not understand what they really mean to others that might hear you using them. A pastor once used a very nasty slang twice from the pulpit. I explained to him after the service what it was slang for. His reply was, I've never heard that, it means thus and so, and he walked off. Several times later he continued to use the word even though he knew it to mean something nasty - he just refused to be instructed and thought himself more wise than others.

That means giving up those stories and jokes that you like to tell, and tell only of true - sociably acceptable stories and only clean jokes.

DENY UNGODLINESS AND LIVE GODLY! Some relate this to the great conflict going on within believers that leaves their good side pitted against their bad side. The battle rages and all too often the bad side fails. Some call this a war between our old and our new natures.

That is the glory of the teaching that we are a new creation, not just an old nature invaded by a new one - a whole new creation. If we are truly a new creation - all things old are passed away - then the term deny has its usual plain meaning of a conscious decision and act of the will to turn away from the evil. "Live" then has its plain and usual meaning of going about your daily life in a godly manner.

Those that view saved man as having two natures would have to view this as the near life and death struggle between the old and new natures, and "live" would then become some struggle conquered after intense activity. If that is your view of the spiritual life then you are a most miserable person spiritually, you are never on top of things, and you are always in a struggle to do right.

NO! When we are faced with life in the morning, we only have to act godly in everything we do. No struggle - just decide to follow God and not Satan. Sin is not a struggle; it is a choice of the mind. We have the control to follow the Spirit of God or we have the choice to follow our own private desires.

“Worldly lusts” seems to relate to those lusts that the world generates. It can relate to the lust of the flesh, but also of any lust that comes into your life.

I John 2.16 mentions "For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The verse mentions three things, the lust of the flesh, those fleshly desires of the body, the lust of the eyes, or anything that the eye can see that is wrong to dwell on, and the pride of life, or the pride of who we are.

These three items encompass all of life's situations. There is no sin that can't be fit into one of these three areas. ALL OF THESE ARE TO be avoided. Now when I use the word "all" I use it in the meaning of "all" or "the whole" or "every single one of them" rather than only those that you want to consider sin and follow all the others.

Sin is sin and we need to understand this in our spiritual lives. All sin is to be avoided, not just those select ones that we don't want to get involved with. You know - oh I would never get involved in adultery, but I might want to dwell long at the newspaper ads of the retailers that expose the overabundance of skin of models. Oh, now I would never get involved in uncontrollable use of alcohol, but I might want to be a little uncontrollable at the dinner table.

All sin is to be avoided!

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

"Looking" is a good translation of the word; it also can mean "waiting for" which has the thought of looking forward to or looking, waiting. We are to continually be looking or waiting according to the tense of the word. Not just on Sunday when we get all fired up for the Lord, but all the time. When a girl waits for her boyfriend to get home from the army, she isn't looking for him one day, then kind of forgetting about his coming the next, then somewhat looking forward to his return the following day - no - she is constantly, every day looking for his return.

"Hope" can mean hope, faith, and expectation. Within these there is a touch of anticipation in my mind. Waiting for that blessed anticipation. Waiting for that glorious thing in the future, to which every believer should be looking forward to.

We are looking for the "glorious" appearing - glorious is the term doxa from which we gain "Doxology" and simply means something glorious - something to be honored - something magnificent, and exceptional in nature.

"Epiphaneia" is the Greek word translated appearing. It is used of magnificent appearances of other gods to their worshipers. A glorious and bright appearance. It is translated "brightness" in II Thes. 2.8 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" (I Tim. 6.14 translates it appearing in relation to Christ's coming; II Tim. 1.10 uses it of Christ's first appearance; II Tim. 4.1 uses it as His appearance in the end to judge; II Tim. 4.8 mentions it in relation to the rewards to be given that love His appearing.) Note that the only usages are in Paul's epistles and all but one in the pastorals.

One must wonder if Paul might have come to a greater appreciation of the coming of Christ in his later years. Personally, and I repeat personally, I think Paul was looking for a quick return in his own lifetime, but possibly later in his ministry realized that it might not come that quickly. Many of his comments on the coming relate to this return in his lifetime line of thought even though they carry with them a definite prophetic component.

Might we consider how someone that is looking for His glorious appearing would be living their life?

Trying to climb the corporate ladder.

Saving every cent they can get their hands on.

Buying every toy that comes down the retail pike.

Buying a house, a summer home and a beach cottage.

OR

None of the above.

It seems to me if one is looking and anticipating that return of the Lord, that they would be living as if it could happen any time rather than in thirty years after the mortgage is paid and the 401K is filled to the brim. Working for God to further the kingdom would seem a little more appropriate. Giving to missions would be a better investment. Living a GODLY life in order to please the soon coming King would seem the wiser lifestyle.

It must be made clear that the reference to "God" and "Savior Jesus Christ" is reference to the same person. There seems to some to be the appearance of both God the Father and the Son both, but the Greek does not allow for this. The Granville Sharp rule applies here which requires that both be the same person.

This is a strong proof of the deity of Christ as well. He is very God, and very man. The term translated "God" is "theos" which is normally translated God. The clear understanding is that

Jesus was God in a most total and glorious way.

I really question the American Church's looking for that blessed hope - the appearing of Christ.

Most live their lives as though He were never coming. Most collect material things as though they were always going to be here on earth. Few are entering into the missionary effort today. Even fewer are supporting that effort of the few that respond to His call.

DO WE REALLY BELIEVE THAT CHRIST COULD RETURN TODAY, TOMORROW, OR EVEN THIS CENTURY, MUCH LESS LOOK FOR THAT RETURN?

If we really believed that He could come today, would we be living the way we do? Would we not clean up our spiritual lives, would we not clean up our physical lives, would we not clean up our emotional lives? I truly believe that American believers need a heavy dose of 2nd comingism.

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The clear concise Gospel. Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us. "Redeem" means to buy back or pay the ransom for release. (See also Mk. 10.45 "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.") Christ did all that was necessary for all to come to him. He bought all on the cross. I don't hold to the thought that He gave Himself only for the elect. What an accounting nightmare that would have been at the cross. He died for all that all might live. The fact that some thumb their ungodly noses at His kind work is their fault, not His. He did all that needed to be done to return mankind to God.

"Gave" has the thought of "put" "place" or "grant" all having the thought of the one giving, initiating the gift. His life was not taken; it was given for the redemption of mankind. Yes, the Jews took Him, yes, the Romans placed Him on the cross, but anytime during the arrest, trial and crucifixion He could have stopped the process. He gave Himself up to the authorities and freely, willingly laid down His life for us.

Now, who or what were we redeemed from? We were redeemed from iniquity. Iniquity had us hostage, but now we are bought back from its clutches by Christ's work on the cross. Consider. If this be true and that is the clear teaching of the passage, then why do we go to iniquity and say, take me back I love you, I want you, and I want to be in bondage to you. WHAT? NOT SO, we should flee the iniquity that held us hostage. It is ludicrous for the believer, bought back from sins hold, to place ourselves back under that same terrible condition.

Not only is this ludicrous but it is just as, if not more ludicrous to believe that this redemption of Christ is only good as long as we can fight and scratch and claw our way up and over our old nature to get to Godliness. This is such a sick and debilitating doctrine. Christ redeemed us, Christ bought us, and Christ freed us from iniquity - so says the passage. To hold to this thought of our

fighting an old nature would require the verse to say, Christ redeemed us from iniquity, but He wasn't able to do a good enough job to keep iniquity from grabbing us from His loving clutches. Not a plausible interpretation, nor translation of the passage.

It is of note, that “purify” as well as “redeem” are aorist tenses - meaning they were one time occurrences. He redeemed us - once, he isn't going to do it again, there is no need for Him to do it again AND He purified us at a point in time. Does that sound like the battle between the old nature and the new nature that many teach today - not in my mind. It seems that he bought and purified us once and for all at a point in time.

Purify has the thought of cleaning out and making clean - washing dishes, cleaning a wound, or removing dead flesh might be the thought.

Now, I would like to get theological for a moment or two. In the fall, several things happened and in salvation those things had to be corrected. Adam died spiritually. Adam would die physically. Adam turned away from God and God turned away from Adam.

In salvation we are given spiritual life; we are made a new creation. In salvation we are made to live eternally with Him. In salvation all was done that would turn God back to man, man has only to turn back to God.

This passage is one of the clearest that pictures this regeneration, this recreation, this purifying process that makes us right with God spiritually. It also is one of the best pictures of Christ's buying us or purchasing us, and as such is one of the best pictures of His ownership of us, and our need to voluntarily submit to Him as master of our lives, proclaiming our servanthood and commitment to Him.

He was interested in a "peculiar people," not a weird people but a special, select people. I have read that this Greek word translated peculiar was used of a niche in the wall where a person could hide expensive or prized possessions. A safe place to protect one's things. God wanted a special people, one that He could prize and protect from all that would try to steal.

This people were to be zealous of good works.

I once undertook a study on the idea of zealots. My premise was that the zealots of the New Testament were not the dread plague of that day, but rather men that were properly motivated to do as they should, but misdirected. Paul himself was a zealot in his pursuit of the early Christians, but he was misdirected. After his conversion, he was a zealot for the Lord in the proper direction.

Many through the ages were zealots. Zealot is not a derogatory term; it is a term to describe the zeal with which they do their job. I feel that through the years that I have been a zealot. I have pushed to do what God has directed all my born again life. I believe that many pastors and missionaries are true zealots today.

This verse tells me that I have a Biblical basis for that thinking. Zealous of good works! Many believers today never do any good works much less be zealous to do good works.

Zealous of good works demands a few things:

- a. Determination to do good. (Decision of the will.)
- b. Motivation to do good. (Proper view of Christ's sacrifice for us.)
- c. Basis to do good. (The dictates of Scripture.)
- d. Act to do good. (The act of the will to do.)

ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. No, zealous is not a curse word as many would have us think today, it is a word that pictures clearly one that is properly viewing his relationship to Christ. To not be zealous is a negative in the Christian life, to not be zealous is the unspiritual thing to do, to not be zealous is a slap in the face of the one that died on the cross for your worthless hide!

APPLICATION:

1. We are told to "deny" ungodliness. This is a one time act according to the tense of the verb. We are to decide in our spiritual life to DENY ungodliness. This is a total and final denial, not a denial that will hold only until the next time we are confronted with a temptation.

It is a conscious choice of lifestyle, your life will not allow ungodliness into its sphere of influence. God desires holy and pure vessels to work through. He cannot work through vessels that are tainted with sin and lust.

This relates to listening to those off shade jokes that you sit through at times without asking someone to stop telling them. Once is all it takes for most people. Most of the time you will have their respect and they will not tell off color jokes in front of you again. However, allow it once and what are you going to do the next time - tell them you don't like to listen to them -- they already know you do.

This relates to every part of your life, every nook and cranny, you will have no place in your life where you allow ungodliness to creep in. I fear that this relates to every part of your life, even when no one is watching. You will not watch those off color television shows when you are home alone, you will not dwell on those scantily clad models in the newspaper when no one is watching. I think the point is clear - as your conscience should be.

2. Picture for me, if you will, the average church today - meet for Sunday School, maybe, many do not anymore, meet for "worship" where they sing some feel good songs and greet one another and hear the gospel (because the preacher hopes there are lost in the congregation to give the service

value, because there is little feeding going on for the saints), and maybe meet on Sunday evening, though that is also going by the wayside, and maybe if there are some that are really committed they meet for prayer during the week. Now, we are to the group that might be zealous of good works, but most are probably too old to do all that many good works, bless their old aged hearts.

Do the above describe what you could honestly call a peculiar people zealous of good works? I really doubt it. They may well be doing some good works during the week, but that is not the church I see pictured in the New Testament.

I envision from the New Testament a group of people that can't wait to get together for fellowship, for prayer, and for some serious Bible study. The only "serious" Bible study I get while attending church services today is that study that I do on my own while listening to the milk that the pastor is usually spewing forth to a hungry, meat desiring people.

When I go to church I carry a pocket computer with a good Bible program on it and take the text that is being covered and listen, and select what I can from the speaker and add to it all that I can from a brief study of my own. Normally I can cover the text fairly carefully while the speaker is glossing over the top.

Sure, all believers like to hear the gospel, but not every Sunday and every Sunday night. Most believers want to be taught the Word, not just the gospel - they know it - they have accepted it - they have listened to it hundreds of times. They don't need to hear the gospel twisted into the final verse of a passage that has nothing to do with the Gospel either. Some speakers tack the Gospel onto most anything, just so they can say they did it.

Preaching isn't a jumping off verse, a long list of illustrations and a gospel invitation.

Others think that they have to explain the Gospel fifteen different ways so that everyone will understand - no the Holy Spirit must convict the heart before the person can respond so let the Spirit do His work and you do yours - preach the meat of the Word.

As to the specific "good works" this peculiar people is to be doing. I would think that we would be hearing of some of these good works if they were being done. If half the United States is evangelical Christian as the polls say it is, then why aren't we seeing more good works in the newspapers? When someone does good works, it is held high as something special, not as something normal for the everyday life of a town/city.

How are we taking care of our own congregations? When a couple is in need are they assisted or criticized for not doing life the proper way? We are a body, a family - don't know about you but when my head hurts my hands and feet see to it that the head gets some aspirin. When my feet hurt the rest of my body finds a nice soft place to sit down and rest the feet. We ought to be caring for one another much more than we do.

I was in a church and spoke to a young woman that had been attending for a short time. She told me that they were without work, were losing their home (rented) because they couldn't pay the rent. Now, in my polluted thinking I felt very bad for them, I could almost feel how down they must have been. This moved me to go to the pastor and inform him of their situation thinking that the church might want to get involved. His reply when asked if he knew they were losing their house was something along the line, Ya, I heard that, he needs a job. That was the total of concern, compassion and callousness offered by the church.

Yes, the couple survived, he moved in with his mother and the wife and children went home to her mother and they were separated for a few weeks while things turned for the better. Yes, they lived through the experience, but how much more the church could have gotten involved in those folks lives - what an example it would have set for not only the young couple, but for their children, and for the congregation as well.

No, don't help the dead beat by pouring money on them; help them by giving them training and assistance of life. No, don't pour money on problems like the welfare system, but try to help the people correct the deficiencies in their lives.

I trust you have a better picture of a peculiar people zealous of good works than most churches do, and not only that, I trust that you go to your churches and give the congregations that better picture.

3. It is of no small fact that "grace" and "teaching" are directly tied together in verses eleven and twelve, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that...." The grace, or as one commentary puts it "God's gratuitous favor" (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) has appeared to teach us - teaching involving chastisement as we saw earlier. We tend to see God's "GRACE" as something wonderful and glorious, which it is, but we also see it as something totally pleasant, which it is not - it can contain chastisement if we walk against what is best for us.

The prisons are full of people that have felt God's grace touch them through the Gospel, but most of them fully realize that the chastisement that resulted from their sin is only their just recompense. The child that is disciplined for wrong, knows that the parent loves them and that all they have is due to the parent - so we know all we have is from the Father, He is loving, He is generous, and He is a chastiser when needed. Grace may be all fun and games, or it can be a serious pain if we aren't careful.

4. The thought of the grace appearing to all men has two lines of thought. One, that the grace appeared to all mankind so that all could receive, while secondly, it can read that grace appeared to all classes of human beings. This later is most specific to the context which speaks of young, old and servants. I believe that this is the specific interpretation, though the first application seems valid also.

The fact that Christianity is available to all mankind, wither rich or poor, whether male or female, or whether bond or free is so very clear from the Word. The problem is that we, the believers tend to division off some that it may not apply to. We do this in the way that we witness, the way that we do church and the way we live our lives.

Look around your church Sunday if you are an Anglo pastor. How many black people do you have in your membership? If you are Anglo, how many Spanish do you have in your congregation? If you are black, how many whites do you have in your church? Ah, segregation is well and alive in the American church - I will be quick to say there are many reasons for the above, and racism and bigotry are not the reasons most likely, but the differences do exist.

I can count on one hand and I could cut off my fingers and still do it, the number of churches where I felt there was a real, racial mix. It was an inner city (small city) church where many had to walk to church, and it was not a church that was of mixed races but a church. The people didn't operate as a group of whites, or as a group of blacks or a group of Spanish - they were all believers and they functioned as a group of believers. They were of mixed race, but that made no difference whatsoever to them - all were equal, all were accepted. Now, I never was able to attend a pot luck at that church but I'd guess the nationality issue might have cropped up in a most wonderful way there.

I don't condemn the church for these differences - they are due to economic, neighborhood areas, travel difficulties and many other reasons, but do we not, in the back of our minds tend not to feel comfortable witnessing to people different than we?

Grace appears to all classes, and all classes need the gospel. The doctor's and lawyers need the gospel just as much as the dock workers and waiters. I trust we will be open to sharing the Gospel to anyone that God might bring our way.

Some actually seek ways to witness to some of the "groups" that exist in our society. There are churches that start Spanish ministries, there are churches that start deaf ministries, there are churches that do exceptionally well at kids work, and yet others do well with senior citizens.

I read of a man in Southern California that was a television repairman - he was burdened for rich people. He put his ability and burden together, bought a large limo and used it for a service vehicle. He would go into a rich persons home and lay out velvet pads around and on the equipment to be serviced, he wore a business suit and he acted like a professional (Not that other repairmen don't act professionally, but some don't :-). This man did all he could to make his rich clients feel comfortable around him while he was in their home. He never left a house without attempting to share the Grace of God with the occupants.

We don't need to target any group or people, but we need to speak to all that God brings our way.

5. Barnes goes into a lot of detail relating to God being Christ. He agrees with the Greek

construction but goes even further in proving the fact. I include it in case anyone needs further information to quiet a detractor of the Deity of our lord. Barnes weighs heavy on the fact that God might be appearing. I suspect he may have been fighting an error of his own day that taught this.

"(1.) that no plain reader of the New Testament, accustomed to the common language there, would have any doubt that the apostle referred here to the coming of the Lord Jesus.

"(2.) That the "coming" of God, as such, is not spoken of in this manner in the New Testament.

"(3.) That the expectation of Christians was directed to the advent of the ascended Saviour, not to the appearing of God as such.

"(4.) That this is just such language as one would use who believed that the Lord Jesus is Divine, or that the name God might properly be applied to him.

"(5.) That it would naturally and obviously convey the idea that he was Divine, to one who had no theory to defend.

"(6.) That if the apostle did not mean this, he used such language as was fitted to lead men into error. And

"(7.) that the fair construction of the Greek here, according to the application of the most rigid rules, abundantly sustains the interpretation which the plain reader of the New Testament would affix to it. The names above referred to are abundant proof that no violation is done to the rules of the Greek language by this interpretation, but rather that the fair construction of the original demands it. If this be so, then this furnishes an important proof of the divinity of Christ."

6. We have mentioned the peculiar people previously, but I would like to take a look at I Peter 2:9 before we move on, it adds more to the thought of what God wants to do with the believers that He is drawing to Himself through the ages. "But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:"

This is the same term used in both places. Note some of the words used in this passage, chosen, royal, priesthood, praises, called, and light. This is quite a contrast that God is drawing for us, from the ungodliness and iniquity that we were born in, to the wonderful light of God and being in His priesthood. We are in a very special place before God and we ought to be acting like it. We are to show his praises to the world, and we are to be showing the world the difference between God's people and the lost world.

The question - is the church today that much different than the world. We are only a step behind the world for the most part. We have Christian action figures, we have Christian romance novels, we have Christian dating services, we have Christian debt counselors, we have Christian every

kind of music the world has, we have more divorce, we have Christian everything the world has so how are we showing the world we are different than they?

Our passage says that we are a "holy nation" and we have the dubious claim of having a higher divorce rate than the world, we have alcoholism, we have immorality, we have drug addicts, we have the whole world in our church and that is what we are presenting the world as a "HOLY NATION." Personally, I would think God would be embarrassed at his people today.

7. Gill's take on the grace that appears is of interest to the five point Calvinist. He sees this grace as different from salvation, and different from the provision for salvation. He takes it to be a separate entity that would be that which draws and enables the elect to respond to the Gospel and God. It has certainly not appeared to all men, because all men have not accepted the Gospel. This seems to be backward thinking. A result didn't occur so this must mean something else rather than the simple reading.

It would seem to me that grace is an attribute of God which causes Him to extend to man that which he does not deserve, meaning salvation, rather than something out there that is independent of God, but sent by Him, that is only sent to the elect and when it hits them in the face they will automatically, unintentionally and involuntarily respond to the Gospel given independently of the grace. In fact I think most Calvinists would say that grace is that renewing, that rebirth, that regeneration, which allows one to respond to the gospel when it is given. In short, John the Baptist, when he jumped in his mother's womb was responding to grace that regenerated him. Only thing that comes to my mind is, where does the passage say that - well one more thought comes to mind - why don't all elect jump when they are regenerated? Never heard of anyone jumping and all of a sudden being interested in spiritual things. (A little tongue in cheekness there :-)

8. Gill goes on to make an interesting comment, that since grace is now appearing, that previously it was hidden. Now if it was hidden, how did the Old Testament saints come to God? How could The Baptist be regenerated in the womb if grace was hidden? How can anyone in the Old Testament economy be regenerated?

It seems to me that either God was operating covertly in the Old Testament, and if hidden, they must not have known it; else someone else would have noticed this grace that is hidden. (Yes, a little more tongue in cheekness but these are the implications of what they are teaching :-) If grace was hidden before, then how could Old Testament saints know of salvation? That is a real problem.

I know that the crux of their doctrine hinges on regeneration being separate from salvation itself, it is only a precursor to salvation - it quickens the lost, depraved soul enough to allow him to respond to God, though that response being involuntary, and arbitrary to the lost person's wishes.

The joy of their system is that the elect end up on God's side the same as other systems; the

sadness of their system is that they are the elect and we are the false teachers on our way to hell. We are not regenerated; we only think we have salvation because only the elect that are regenerated before they are given salvation are the true elect.

Me thinks one of us is going to have quite a shock when we show up for judgment :-)

9. I might mention that Gill makes a serious point that not all that profess to be believers are actually children of God. He would have included me in that group but aside from that slight disagreement, he is right to suggest that many that claim Christianity for their life are not really saved. He points out, much as I have, in this section, that the believer is to be holy and full of piety rather than living in iniquity. In short, if a person is living in sin, then they may not really know God even though they profess Him. The true believer WILL live a holy life.

This may well be the problem we perceive in the church today - the easy believism propagated over recent years is permeating the church today and is populating the pews with polluted practitioners showing the perpetuated fraud to be poppycock.

I would like to end this thought with an extended quote from Gill - mind you I broke into the middle of the sentence to get this quote. He would never have gotten his writing through my grammar checker without turning off the long sentence warning option! "...we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; not, only "temperately", but wisely and prudently, as children of the light, on whom, and into whom the Gospel has shined; and "righteously" among men, giving to every man his due, and dealing with all according to the rules of equity and justice; as being made new men, created unto righteousness and true holiness; and as being dead to sin, through the death of Christ, and so living unto righteousness, or in a righteous manner; and as being justified by the righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel: and "godly"; in a godly manner, according to the Word of God, and agreeably to the will of God; and in all godly exercises, both public and private, and to the glory of God: and that as long as in this present world: which lies in wickedness, and in which there are so many strong temptations to a contrary way of living. The Gospel then is no licentious doctrine; it is according to godliness, and teaches and promotes it; it is an holy faith, yea, a most holy faith; wherefore it is a vile slander to charge it with leading to looseness of life and conversation."

To close this section, I think Gill put it well when speaking of the desired end of this passage: "Now these people, for whom Christ has given himself, and whom he has redeemed and purifies, are a "peculiar people"; for whom Christ has a peculiar love, in whom he takes a peculiar delight, and to whom he grants peculiar nearness to himself, and bestows peculiar blessings on them, and makes peculiar provisions for them, both for time and eternity; these are Christ's own, his possession, his substance, what he has a special right to by his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the conquest of his grace; and they are a distinct and separate people from all others, in election, redemption, effectual calling, and in Christ's intercession, and will be in the resurrection morn, at the day of judgment, and to all eternity; and they are, as the word also signifies, an excellent and valuable people; they are Christ's portion and inheritance; they are his peculiar treasure, his

jewels, whom, as such, he values and takes care of. The Syriac version renders it, "a new people". And they who are redeemed and purified by Christ, through the power of his grace upon them, become a people "zealous of good works"; not in order to their justification and salvation, but in obedience to the will of God, and to testify their subjection and gratitude to him, and for his honour and glory, and for the credit of religion, and the good of men, These not only perform them, but perform them from principles of truth and love, and with a zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his Gospel; and with an holy emulation of one another, striving to go before, and excel each other in the performance of them."

Week eight: Titus 2.15-3.3 THE PAST

15. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

What a trilogy! SPEAK IT - EXHORT IT - REBUKE and do it with authority - not like a namby pamby wimp, but with the authority of the Word and your God.

"Speak it" would seem to be the thought of, teaching what we have just gone through. Teaching in a practical way the things of the Lord so that the student understands. Exhort, I assume is the thought that after you have taught it, then exhort the people to do what they now know to be true.

It is of interest that the lexicon adds the thought of "articulate speech" or putting words together to communicate to others. The thought of "articulate speech" amuses me, as some of the preaching I've been subjected to over the years could not be fit into that category. As we communicate, we need to do it in a manner which allows others to understand what we are saying. It also requires that there be something to be communicated. Many today have nothing to say, so they are unable to communicate.

I might say that all three of these are in the present tense, not a one time act, but a continuing manner of communication. They are also all three imperative, or commands. Something that IS to be done.

Exhort is a word that is related to a word used of the Holy Spirit - someone that is called along side for assistance. Normally we understand exhorting as really blasting someone when they do wrong, but it has more the thought of coming alongside someone that is doing wrong to assist them back to right.

There may be a possibility of exhortation of those that know the truth and don't act upon it.

"Rebuke" relates to communicating with one that knows the truth and is acting against the truth. It is more the thought of what we think of for exhorting. It is giving them a rebuke or attempting to bring them up short to realize their position and need of changing that position. It relates to conviction. Bringing one to conviction with words.

The word translated "all" is that word we looked at earlier. It means generally all or every, but not necessarily each and every of all possibilities. Use the authority, that you have been given, use all of the authority you have been given, but don't necessarily use ALL authority, because some of it might not be yours.

Paul had almost all authority that was to be had in the church at the time, but he extended some of that authority to Titus and Titus was to use every whit of that authority, however I'm sure Paul did not mean for him to take authority not given for use. Paul had given a mandate, a command and Titus was to follow it.

"With all authority" relates to two things:

a. Having the authority in the first place. Titus had authority, given him by an apostle, to do the work that he had before him. Paul was simply reminding him that he had the authority and that he should act like he had the authority. Not that he was to walk around telling people off, but that He was dealing with the Word of God - TRUTH and that Paul had told him what to do. He was the man to do the work and he was to go about doing the work as if he were the man to do it.

b. Having the attitude that you have the authority and right to speak, exhort, and rebuke. A person with authority cannot do what he needs to do, unless he projects the authority. A police officer that says meekly, please get down on the ground with your hands on the back of your head will not live long. One that speaks with authority will have much better chances.

Paul tells Titus not to allow anyone to despise him. I don't think that he was telling Titus to go around making sure no one despised him, but rather to teach and speak as one with authority so that no one would despise him.

There is nothing worse than a person that has no authority, acting like he does, unless it is a person that has authority and does not use it properly.

There are multitudes of pastors in our country that feel that they have all authority in their local church. This is not true Biblically nor is it sensible logically.

God set up a proper system of church authorities, and we have seen what grows out of improper systems of authority. We have the denominational structures that tell local churches what to do, and we have the Roman Catholic hierarchy which has evolved over the years to the point that the priest is the only true representative of the people to God. If the priest says you are going to hell then that is what will happen. People have no opportunity to salvation except through their local priest.

I fear that the fundamental movement is going the same slow road to the same improper activity as the Roman church centuries ago. I see it in fundamental groups even today. A church group I know of began quite fundamental, but in thirty years, the group has a strong hand in picking a local church's pastor. The area pastors get together to interview prospects, and if the prospect fails the interview, they cannot even candidate. WRONG!

There are other groups where pastors move in and seize all authority, eliminating any church government that is there and sets himself up as dictator, only he calls himself pastor - the Bible nowhere allows for a dictatorship, no matter what these men say. They run their churches as if there is no one else in the congregation that can do anything. I saw a post on an internet board that a woman could not send get well cards, or "missed you Sunday" cards without the pastor's permission and okay as to what was going to be sent - including any message.

Getting back to Titus and being despised. Paul tells Titus to allow no man to despise him. Evidently Paul figured someone was present that would give Titus trouble when he started doing his duty. Paul seems to have been quite insightful when it came to people he was working with - not a bad quality to have in the ministry.

One translation suggests the thought that Titus wasn't to allow others to look down upon him. This seems to be a good line of thought relating to the word despise. This is the only place in the New Testament that this word is used. It is a little different from our normal thought of despise, to think terribly of another. This word has the thought of examining closely and coming to the conclusion that you are above the other person. This if allowed to continue could lead on into the bad feelings toward the other person.

The Life Application Bible relates this to the possibility of fear, fear of wealth, age, influence etc. on the part of church people. Don't allow people to stand in your way of proper ministry.

I was asked to fill the pulpit at a church one time. After saying yes, I remembered that the church was full of rich people as well as quite a number of professors from a Bible college - in fact the president of the college attended that church.

As I rose to speak, I was very nervous, but it came to mind that God had brought this situation into being and that He was the power behind the Word that I was preaching - what is there to be concerned with? Nothing!

Just a little freebie, when I aged considerably and had done a lot of speaking, a ton of study and finally teaching in a Bible college, I realized that I was just like everyone else - I needed to be fed as well as the new believer. All college professors, presidents, missionaries, evangelists - all need to be fed so if God puts you in that position, imagine them the same as anyone else - they are nothing special. Indeed, there have been many times that the simple preaching of the Word has blessed me beyond measure.

Usually if you are using your authority properly, you will not be despised, but if you are not using the authority properly or if you are abusing the authority, you will bring about improper feelings with people.

1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, [but] gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

Wow! Paul hadn't laid enough on them. He had to give them another dose! **PUT THEM IN MIND TO BE SUBJECT TO PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS.**

In their own context this meant they were to be subject to leaders that were probably corrupt if not evil. Not a pleasant thought! Somewhat akin to being subject to a Democratic president backed by

a democratic congress! BE SUBJECT is the admonition.

Even when the taxes go up and the services go down.

Even when the government takes more from you. You know, when you can't trim your own trees in your own yard, because the city controls them.

Even when they make the speed limit 55.

Even when they pass a DUMB law like 24/7 20 mph school zone speed limits - one of the latest accomplishments of the Oregon Legislature.

Even when they aren't what they are supposed to be - as in liars, cheats and crooks.

Even when you see your hard earned taxes turned over to those that are unwilling to work.

Even when you see the burglar that hit your house going free because there is no tax money left to keep them in jail.

Be subject. Yes, there are limits to this. Be subject as long as they don't overstep the bounds of Scriptural right and wrong. If the government does decide to do wrong, then you have the right and allegation to do what is right. You must at the same time take the consequences that the government hands out.

Cases in point:

The 55-mph speed limit. It is clearly against the Bible so I can break that law - right? WRONG. I don't know how many Christians I know, that break the speed limit and then brag about it to other believers. If you don't believe me, go into a church parking lot and count the radar detectors in the cars.

How about abortion? Abortion is clearly wrong Biblically, yet the government says that it is okay. It is not commanded or ordered by the government so we don't have to say no to it. We do have the problem of our taxes paying for abortions. That is a problem that seems to be growing today.

Obey magistrates or judges. You aren't to go against what they say, unless, as we have mentioned they go against the clear teaching of Scripture. Again, be ready to take the consequences.

If we are placed in a position of disobeying a government, we will suffer the consequences, but the Lord will keep tabs on what the government has been doing and those responsible will be held accountable one day.

To be ready to every good work. Here we go again on those good works. This by the way is in the

context of being subject to principalities and powers.

Let's consider what good works might be accomplished within the realm of the government.

a. How about volunteering to help in some areas. We have volunteer trash pick up, we have volunteer help with foster homes, with problem teens, and many others, I suspect.

b. How about running for office? Local, state, federal. It is not wrong to hold public office. It won't be easy - but not wrong.

There are many that see being in office un-Biblical, but I see nothing against it as long as you are not going against your call from the Lord to do something else. If we had more Christians in office, we would be making more headway toward good.

I have read recently that Europeans are finally becoming concerned about the Islamic take over of Europe. How dumb is that statement you say, however fact bears it out. The Muslims have been spending billions on evangelization for many years. They are moving into Europe at an increasing number. They are having large families and the Europeans are having small families. Now, it doesn't take a math wizz to figure it out that sometime in the future the Muslims will out number the Europeans and the nations will begin to move toward Muslim thought.

It is not unlike our own Midwest. My hometown has one less Spanish church than it does Anglo churches - this is in mid-Nebraska. In some parts of California and, I would guess, Texas the Spanish are the majority.

Is this bad? Well if you consider we are paying the way for the illegal Spanish to come and live, we are in essence inviting them and paying them to take over our country. In the past the nations battled and the stronger moved their people in to take over the other country. Today we are seeing natural take overs by the lack of imposition of common sense laws in our own country and most likely the same in Europe if things don't change.

Are these people horrible radicals looking to overthrow our country? Not in the least, they are just people that want a better life. It is our own blind inactive lawmakers that are allowing it to happen.

Why not give Mexico and the other countries supplying this influx the assistance they need to set up free economic systems that will foster better lives for them at home. I doubt many Mexican folks would leave their homeland if they could make the life for themselves there that they can make here.

Back to the government, there have been Catholic priests in congress for many years. Roman Catholics have been elected to school boards, and in years past actually controlled boards to the point where qualified nuns were hired to teach in the public classroom. Wrong? No, they are

exercising their Biblical and public right. It would be considered, by the liberals, a separation of church and state if it were Christians that were controlling the board and hiring Christian teachers, but that is another discussion.

More and more believers are exercising this right and I am glad to see it. It is too bad that the fanatics are running for office. They detract from what they might be able to do by their radical statements and radical views.

We really need conservative Christian people getting involved in the system to guide it. Our system of government is great if the majority is moral and upright, but when the majority becomes immoral and unethical, the country cannot be on the right track for God.

The following are also in the context of being subject to the government:

Speak evil of no man

be no brawlers

gentle

showing all meekness

Within our being subject and if the case should come, not being subject Biblically this should be our course of action. Speaking no evil, not being brawlers, being gentle and meek.

That does limit what we do as we disobey the government if we deem the government incorrect Biblically.

Since you asked, let's consider our modern abortion problem. Are the anti-abortionist protesters acting in a Biblical manner?

For the most part they are, but when it comes to confrontation, they are not gentle and meek, but rather quite toward the brawler end of the spectrum.

We are seeing a radical element entering into the protests with burning, fighting and now killing which are not right in any stretch of the imagination.

Speak evil of no man is of note in that it is the word usually translated blaspheme. It normally relates to speaking ill of God Himself, yet Paul puts it here in this context. We are not to speak ill of those over us. Since, as in Romans 13 we know that the government is placed over us by God then if we blaspheme the government we in essence blaspheme the one that instituted the

government - God.

Now, if you have a police officer that is yelling at you (and it seems today they only have one mode of speech - full yell), remember it is God that put him over you - if he is doing wrong it will be up to God to deal with him, not you. That is a harsh wake up call for the officer that mistreats those he has jurisdiction over. If he mistreats or abuses those God has placed over him, then he will be held accountable.

Just how do we watch the governmental goings on and still obey this phrase of Paul's? When they are making city codes dealing with your private properties that restrict your use of your property, just how do you not speak evil of them, for at times the government is getting evil in its intrusion into our lives. Keep a good attitude and watch your tongue - hold it if you need to, but don't speak evil of them.

This may well be hard. Years ago a friend had a man, a huge auto dealership owner that bought property next to their rural secluded home. As time went on the dealer began building a huge horse barn. Not only did the zoning and roads people not know that the barn was part of his plan, no one knew it until the construction was under way. All legal avenues were spent and the law sided with a man that was devious in many of his dealings with them.

Not only did he build this huge barn, but he built it as close to the property line as he could legally, so our friends looked out their windows at this huge barn. They planted a tall hedge row to block the view, but there was no way they could block out all the smells and traffic generated by the facility.

I must admit I am not sure I could have followed Paul's encouragement not to speak evil. I wonder at the patience and calm resoluteness of our friends as they waded through these hard times. I probably would have become a brawler as Paul tells us not to be.

Next, Paul tells us to "be no brawlers" or not to be fighters. In relation to the above illustration, the friends did go through all the legal processes available to them and I think that this is right and correct. The Lord asks us to be in submission to our government, but says nothing of using the rights that the government gives to us. To use the legal system is quite appropriate if needed. However, due note should be given to the whole of Scripture where we are told not to go to law with a brother - that should be dealt within the church itself. (The word used here of "no brawlers" is only found elsewhere in I Timothy 3.3)

I personally feel that going to law in any case where you would be perceived as being vindictive or being evil should be avoided. In fact many believers can't afford a lawyer so this is a mute point for many of us. This principle is based on the next few thoughts of Paul.

We are to be gentle - quiet, patient, equitable or fair according to the lexicon. To go to court out of retaliation does not seem right and correct for the believer. To go to stop injustice would seem to

be a good use of the judicial system. To correct wrong would also be a good use, but to go for maliciousness sake, I don't think we are on Biblical ground.

We are to show gentleness or mildness to all men. The two words "all" in this verse are that concept of all but not necessarily every. In general we are to be gentle to all men - does that allow you to blast some now and then and be okay - NO. The idea might be something along the line of be gentle to all you have dealings with. You don't necessarily have to be gentle to the man in China that you will never in this lifetime meet - but if you do meet him show him all meekness and gentleness.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, [and] hating one another.

Paul seems to be putting himself in with Titus, and for that matter, in the plight of all lost men before they meet Christ. None have anything to brag about.

True, there are some believers that are raised in Christian homes that lead good moral lives until they accept Christ, but the testimonies of these people which I have heard indicate that under the surface, even they suffer from this same plight - disobedient to God/deceived by the Devil/serving lust and pleasure secretly/hating people/etc.

Paul seems to be stating that since we were that way, we should not be surprised if others are that way. We should not be surprised if they treat us that way. We should not be surprised if they act like lost people - WE SHOULD BE TOLERANT OF THEM UNTIL they are saved -- then teach them differently.

There seems to be another side to this in that these authorities may be this way, but they too need the saving knowledge of Christ. They too can become as we - thus changing their very character which will change the way they govern or show their authority over us.

I am sure that if we think back over our unsaved life that we can find real examples of how foolish we were in times before Christ made a difference in our lives. When a teenager running with a bunch of church kids, they being saved and me being the foolish lost one, I rode around with them one night getting into all sorts of mischief. At one point I had the idea of breaking a window. I told them to stop the car, I ran up to a small business building and put my fist through the window. How utterly stupid and foolish! On two counts, the danger of great loss of blood as well as the utter uselessness of the act.

Yes, the unsaved person is a foolish creature. They are off hating and serving lusts and pleasures - sounds about right from what I've seen in the lost people I know. The sad part is that many Christians are still living in their former life. They have never moved beyond spiritual childhood, and how could they with no meat coming from the pulpits of today.

The term translated "serving" is the word usually used for servant - one that has placed himself under the bondage of another. This term is used of serving God in I Thess 1.9 "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;"

APPLICATION:

1. This may be a little heavy but I think it needs to be said. Verse fifteen speaks of exhorting - the thought in this passage is to be sure these people know what is right and how to do right.

In the Old Testament prophets (Ezek. 33.1ff) there is a strong warning to the watchman - be sure you warn of danger. If the people don't listen that is their problem and not the watchman's, however if the watchman knows there is danger and does not warn the people then their blood will be on his hands.

Pastor, teacher, church leader, just how vivid and clear are your warnings to those you see stepping off into wickedness. Isn't it a clear application that if a man knows the Word and fails to share it with people that need it and does not, that he will bear some responsibility for the outcome?

If someone hears what is brought forth and disregards it then the responsibility will be his own.

I have said many many times that the divorce rate in the church is so high because we have not been teaching proper doctrine relating to the family and marriage. If these doctrines were implanted properly in our people's lives, the problems that appear would not be dealt with by a divorce. Divorce is not an option yet church people opt for it all the time. Oh, the responsibility of some pastor or teacher along the line that failed to teach them properly.

This relates to all our teaching, we must be doing better in our churches so that people know what they are choosing to do is right or wrong. That is why the New Testament speaks to the greater responsibility of the teacher.

The thought of caring for the people is very clear in the following passage as well as others in the New Testament. I Pet. 5.1 "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"

Also, check out the following: Heb. 13.17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you."

2. Let's dwell on this thought of being subject to the principalities and powers. We normally relate

this to the governments that have sway over our heads, be it federal, state or local, or even in some cases housing authorities and organizations you have placed your self under - well, yes, even unions.

We are to submit as volunteers to these entities, but the words are not really locked into the thought of government, they relate to any authority or power that is placed over us. That would include a husband, a parent, a pastor or any other authority that is automatically over you.

A far out example of this might be for you Christian teen, when you are cutting up in a store or café, and you are asked to leave, there is an authority over you and God would have you submit in a gentle and meek way, not blow them off as so much hot air.

Adult, when you are being obnoxious and are asked to move on, please do so, for you are commanded to in this passage.

Parishioners, when the pastor reprimands you Biblically, open your mind to his thoughts and act accordingly. If he has a Biblical point, you should submit to his wise counsel.

I am not sure I appreciate this passage about being gentle and meek when I have to go home in a few minutes and call a tree removal service that has been totally obnoxious in their dealings with us and try to figure out a solution. But, Paul put it in here so I figure God knows right even though. He never had to live through this situation :-) I think rationalization should be in order here. NOT! Funny how these little life lessons show up when we most don't want them, but most do need them!

“Magistrates” also is a general word for any authority or superior. These comments relate well to the work place as well as to the governmental area of life.

3. If we take that definition of the lost in verse three and compare it to the normal person that we know - average American, many live above this description. They are totally lost, but for some reason have chosen a higher life for themselves.

America is "Christian" in that many of its people still live by a decent moral code - a moral code that was the result of many believers living proper lives throughout our history. This then, in my mind, brought others to follow what seemed to be a right lifestyle even though they were not believers. Most societies follow a pattern. Some usually set that pattern for the rest. In America the morally correct were setting the stage for what our society would be.

However, today we have moral corruption as the standard and our society is degenerating into that which they follow. Our politicians are morally corrupt, our business leaders are morally corrupt and many of the leaders in all areas of life are morally corrupt. Thus society is sliding into their example rather than taking the Word of God as their guide.

Most believers are doing the same thing; they want to be accepted so rather than take the moral high ground that God requires, they settle for going along with the crowd. When you see a school or the city government or the state government giving a Christian a hard time, it isn't a bunch of Christians in trouble it is one Christian standing alone for what is right. Thankfully there are legal groups that are standing with these individuals and God's ways are being shown correct, but take away these few legal groups and Christianity would be squashed under the heavy foot of immorality.

If Christians don't get their lives straight and if they don't start standing for God, this country will continue to decay.

You can demean the strict fundamentalists of the fifties and sixties all you want, but when they started to die off and quiet their rhetoric, the decline of Christianity and its holiness in this country also began. There are few that call for holiness of life in the church today. There are few that call for taking a stand against wrong. There are few that are preaching the Word, thus the prior two are the case.

It has been my observation that when a believer does take a stand it is the "Christian" community that tends to be the detractors rather than the lost. The lost understand when they hear that your belief and your stand are based on the Word of God, but the "believer" gets upset because they disagree with your interpretation of what the Word says and will detract greatly from anything you try to do before the lost.

Is it not the lost that we are to be confronting with the Word, rather than demeaning those that we are supposed to be like? It is hard to tell who the real Christians are these days, the lost live like Christians and Christians live like the lost - the Devil, the deceiver is alive and well. The verse states that these are deceived, but today I fear the believers are the ones deceived.

4. So, how about all this talk about good works? Specifically this seems to be the context of doing good works in relation to the principalities and powers. Some take this to mean doing well under their authority - obeying the laws, giving of your taxes freely etc. however I would suggest that it is more far reaching than that. Under their authority do good works - all sorts of good works, be they for the government, or within the government. Doing what is right in any situation. If we are doing well, the government is going to benefit.

If we do good for the poor the welfare system is less strained, if we teach moral conduct the police agencies will be less burdened, and if we teach proper marriage principles the courts will be released from some of their work. All of these are beneficial to the government, but are primarily commands of God, thus good works seems to relate specifically to the government, but generally to any good works we can find to become involved in.

We Christians are supposed to be involved with them. We believers are supposed to be full of them. Consider "Average Joe/Josephine" Christian for a moment. What good works do you see

Christians doing these days - the average Christian? Not the person that is totally involved in the church, teaching, visiting, etc. but the average pew sittin, chorus singin Joe and Josephine - what good works are they doing these days?

Personal opinion, they have taken this verse quite literally and no further. They are "ready" to every good work, not that they actually get involved in good works, but they are ready to do them if the opportunity knocks. The problem is that they have been taught how to rationalize to the point that they may be good and ready, but this isn't quite the right time to jump in and do one. They are waiting for that perfect opportunity to do a good work - why wait - well who knows what rationalizations lurk in the minds of men/women.

Good works should be a part of your character - a portion of who and what you are - an integrated portion of your being is constantly involved in good works. You are doing them as a result of who and what you are. You are doing them as if they were your calling and duty. You are doing them as a result of your love for the Savior - the one that did the ultimate good work for you.

When the neighbor wants to borrow something, you have opportunity to do a good work. When your coworker asks you for the umpteenth time to do something for them you have opportunity to do a good work. When you see someone spill things on the floor, you have opportunity to do a good work. When you are talking to someone and see an opening for the Gospel and you go forward, you have opportunity for a good work. When you see someone new moving into the neighborhood, you have opportunity for a good work - either help them carry things or at least greet them and invite them to church or better yet to your home for a meal to help them in their moving. When you see someone struggling to change a tire, you have opportunity for a good work. When you see someone struggle with a situation, you have opportunity for a good work.

Even when you have someone being nasty to you, you have opportunity for a good work. When you I think you get the picture - any and every time we have the chance to serve another human being we have opportunity for a good work. Good works ought not to stop at the church door when we leave, or when we enter - good works are for all people, not just believers, or just for the lost.

Good works may even be ignoring the nastiness of someone in the store, or someone on the sidewalk that takes up the whole walk. I know, I need to listen to this :-) even those nasty drivers that think they own the road - as opposed to our rights and "our owning the road" - we all, as believers, need to adjust our lives and minds to the fact that we are what we are only because of Christ's work on the cross. We are special because of Him and to Him, but we aren't so special as humans - just part of the mix that can make the mix better by doing good works instead of adding to the poor ingredients of life by being like a lost person.

Not to dismiss "service" in the church. Teaching, visiting, assisting and all those neat things should also be a part of our good works. We all have a gift from the Spirit that needs to be active in the church. We all should be helping in the ministry of the church in some manner.

5. In relation to the "speak" and "exhort" of verse fifteen Barnes comments: "The sense here is, he was to do it decidedly, without ambiguity, without compromise, and without keeping any thing back. He was to state these things not as being advice or counsel, but as the requirement of God."

Gill relates: "And rebuke with all authority; such as imbibe errors and heresies, or indulge to vice and wickedness, with the authority both of Christ and his church, in the name of the one, and by the order and vote of the other, that the reproof may come with the greater weight; and in a grave and solemn manner, suitable to the dignity of the ministerial office and character, and with that sharpness and severity the offence requires."

Dare I say anyone following these two great preachers thoughts would be run out of most churches today? Can you envision someone preaching on the evils of women pastors in a Methodist church with such force and courage? Can you envision someone preaching on the evils of homosexuality in many churches today with such force and courage? Can you envision someone preaching on holiness of life with such force and courage? Not something that would be accepted in many "evangelical" churches of our day.

Preaching like that is - not popular - indeed most that I know of that have done so are not in the ministry as such, they have been run off by those that don't like waves in the church.

When I was a missionary on deputation, I used to stick a little comment on what I was seeing in the church into our newsletter. A friend in California told me that he had talked with a pastor, one that I had never met, and the pastor had told him that he thought "that Derickson guy really knew what he was talking about and that he was right on when he spoke out about the church - BUT that he shouldn't be talking about those things - he was a missionary and it isn't his business, that it was pastor's business to talk that way."

I was tempted to write the pastor and tell him I had heard about his feelings and that if I was ever walking by his church and saw fire I would not tell anyone because I'm only a missionary and the pastor should watch for fire :-). If the WORD says it, any Christian should be taking a stand and being verbal about it, not just the preachers, teachers, and missionaries!

Be firm when you have the weight of Christ, God, and the Word behind you - let the people know there IS an authority, let them know that there IS responsibility, and let them know that there IS consequence.

One further aspect of this - causing hindrance to a person's name. Today I saw a letter to the editor that described the theft from the lady's front yard of a Kerry/Edwards sign. She went off into a tirade about the tactics that the Bush administration had taken on. She openly in public slandered a sitting president for what most likely was some teenager pulling a prank - even if it was some misguided Bush advocate it is ludicrous to lay the theft at President Bush's feet as his own deed.

Think before you verbalize your thoughts. Many people spout before thought and this is very dangerous.

6. When commenting on speaking evil of no man Barnes quotes another: "Doddrige renders it, "Calumniate no one." The idea is that we are not to slander, revile, or defame any one. We are not to say anything to any one, or of any one, which will do him injury. We are never to utter anything which we know to be false about him, or to give such a colouring to his words or conduct as to do him wrong in any way. We should always so speak to him and of him in such a way that he will have no reason to complain that he is an injured man."

Okay, that is a slam against almost every politician I've ever heard and I fear it is rather a slam against many prayer meetings I've been in. Basically imagine the person you are going to talk about is standing beside you - how would you frame your conversation? If you can't say it to him, why do you think you can say it about him?

7. In verse three the lost are treating one another as trash. The word "one another" here is very closely related to Ephesians 4.2 where the word is used of believers. The thought I get from the verse is that what we once were is the exact opposite of what we should be as believers. All those things in verse three are not to be a part of who we are today in Christ. There should be no place in our lives for such things and especially not toward other believers.

We are also to remember what we once were so that we can understand those we witness to. They may not be pleasant people to deal with, but they are in need of the grace that we have received.

Barnes puts it well when speaking to their deception. "Deceived. By the great enemy, by false teachers, by our own hearts, and by the flattery of others. It is a characteristic of man by nature that he sees nothing in its true light, but walks along amidst constant, though changing and very beautiful illusions."

8. In relation to "let no man despise you" the thought is to think around someone. To think about the person and disregard them might be one thought, while to think about the person and work around them might also be the thought. Don't allow ANYONE to do this to you.

While in a ministry I was under the authority of a board that was quite opposed to what the men I worked with were doing, and against the direction we were going. God had called each and every one of the men I worked with to the ministry at hand, while the board was appointed by the self perpetuating board - the good old boy network if you will.

As time wore on the board seemed to be thinking around the men. They were trying to find ways to make the men inconsequential to what the board wanted to do. In one meeting of all involved it was quite obvious to me what was going on and I made clearly the point that the board needed to declare clearly their intentions and directions and see what those under them would do - follow or leave, though I did not verbalize the last part. I made it clear that the board needed to see if the

men were on board with the board. The board was working around, while they should have been working toward some common goal. They wanted to make the men irrelevant to the board's desire.

Ultimately due to policy changes I was forced to resign, and within months the board made the other men irrelevant to the direction of the institution. That board despised, or thought around those that opposed their changes and went forward with their own desires leaving the men to follow or leave. All of the men bowed, correctly, to the board's authority and left their ministries.

It should be a scary thing to disregard a man that God has placed in a position of leadership. Titus was to combat this by forceful speech - he was not to allow people to think around him and make him irrelevant.

Much of what is wrong with the church today is because many men have not stood and used their vocal abilities to combat the wrong that has been introduced into the church.

9. The contrast here is clear. There is what man wants and there is what God wants. There are man's values and there are God's values. There is man's city and there is God's city as Augustine puts it - everything related to man is related to his desires, thoughts and dreams, while everything Godly is related to God's values, desires, and direction.

We can't serve two Gods - we either serve God or we serve the Devil. It is our clear choice and Paul in this text is quite clear where we should be on the subject. We once were, lost and corrupt, but NOW we are different - or should be.

At the same time, we are to be part of that city of man helping build and guide that progress that it makes by being subject to the leadership and doing good works. After all when the lost see the effect of our good works, they will realize that our God, or faith, and our dedication have brought about great good in their domain - God will gain the glory in the midst of man's efforts, via our good works.

10. Keathley correctly points out that the problems of our nation are not political, they are not differences of opinion between the liberal and the conservative, the problems are spiritual, they are based on the lack of moral direction of the countries people and leaders.

The United States lacks in the preaching of the clear Gospel of Christ and it lacks in the plain good works of God's people. The citizens of this country do not see believers as light and salt, but usually as they themselves - there is little difference between believers and lost in how they live and sadly, little difference in what they believe either. Some of the recent polls of Christians show a gross lack of knowledge of the Word and doctrine. Most believe much as the lost - they certainly can't live moral upright lives if they don't know what morals are, nor if they don't know what God desires of them.

Think about this for a moment. Why have the homosexuals "come out of the closet?" Mostly because there was no moral outcry against them. A few protests, a few pastors preaching against them, but overall there was no moral outcry. We still have sodomy laws on the books, but the legal system has closed their eyes to the homosexual problem because we have allowed it to become a "different lifestyle."

Consider tobacco. We know it kills people, it has been proven in court and medical facility that it kills people, yet the same government that sued for millions of dollars allows the tobacco industry to continue to kill people. Indeed, we are allowing the industry to export death all over the world. Where is the moral outcry of Christians - we are irrelevant to the Devil's desires and directions for this country.

Consider most any moral issue and you will find that we have allowed the world to "THINK AROUND" us to the point that we and our belief system, and our God is totally irrelevant. Why? Because the believing community has allowed them to do so by not opening their vocal cords to allow a little air to pass in refutation of the world system.

It is obvious from what I have stated that speaking evil of something or someone is not to be done.

To speak in an untrue manner - to malign or degrade someone is so very wrong. However to speak against the evil of these is quite proper and needed - this is where sound doctrine enters in.

11. Remember 1.16 "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny [him], being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." - this stands in stark contrast to the false teachers - their teaching is worthless, and their good works are worthless, but the believer, teaching sound doctrine is worthwhile as are their good works.

Good doctrine produces good works. Unsound doctrine produces questionable to worthless works. Does that ring any bells in relation to the church? If the church is not involved in good works, can there be proper teaching from the pulpit - something to consider, and on the back side if we desire to see good works from our people shouldn't we be teaching sound doctrine?

12. The term "meekness" in verse two is not the namby pamby weakling that is usually thought of but has the idea of great strength being perfectly controlled. Barclay illustrates the word by relating a wild horse that has been trained to the bit. That wild and strong horse that was once free is now totally and perfectly controlled. The horse is full of strength, but is controlled in the use of that strength only to the good that it can produce.

Likewise the believer, must be strong, but also must be controlled to use that strength of character to do the work of the Lord in a controlled manner.

13. "Disobedient" in verse three relates to rebellion toward a set law. Of God, of parent, or in this context possibly of government. One might wonder why a person would become disobedient.

Let's consider the possible reasons.

a. Disagreement with the authority. If someone really dislikes and/or disagrees with a president, they might go against laws and protest, either peaceably or violently. This might arise from personal dislike but more likely philosophical disagreement. Basically the lost are saying that God, if He exists is not going to be telling them what to do and how to live their lives. They disagree with God rather than His way of life or commands.

b. Disagreement with the rule/law. If someone really thinks a law is stupid they might just disobey it. This is not necessarily a Christian thing to do but some do. Many Christians, for example, speed while driving. I heard one get quite aggravated when talking about seat belt laws. He always drove old cars that did not have seat belts and he said he would never put a seat belt on. The freedom is his - as well as the freedom to pay the big fine when he gets caught.

c. Disagreement with the norm that tells one to submit. Many young people reject convention and say they will not obey just to be obedient. They will reject authority just on the basis of authority - why obey - obedience being the problem rather than the authority - they just don't want to obey no matter what they are to obey.

d. Rejection of all authority. The youth rejecting the norm often move on into the habit of rejecting all authority, no matter what that authority is. Not to mention, that they are actually submitting to the authority of their philosophy as well as to those that agree with them in that they are obeying their own conventions, just not following any others.

14. Verse three could well be translated as the following according to Keathley, "For we also at one time were without understanding ourselves, disobedient, with the result that we were deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." This shows a progression to the "downward spiral" according to Keathley; however is there a progression in the lost person's life? Isn't the fact that we are born sinners relevant? It seems to me we are at the bottom when born and there is no possibility of a downward spiral.

Indeed, his translation indicates we start somewhere above depraved and go downward. We can be deceived into giving up something we have is his indication. The term translated "sometimes" is rather misleading in this context. It can also, and more correctly, be translated "formerly" or "at some time" which indicates at a point of time in the past rather than the idea of sometimes which indicates at various times.

15. The term "pleasures" is the Greek word from which we gain our word hedonism. That philosophy which tells us that anything that is pleasurable or that leads to pleasure is good and all else is bad. Thus a spanking cannot be good, but lusting after your wife's sister leads to pleasure so that is good.

Not unlike many of our churches today - anything that brings pleasure in the worship service is good and acceptable. Not that worship should be painful, but it should be neutral and bringing honor and glory to God. We are to worship in the spirit, not in the flesh, a truth many congregations have done a total flip-flop on.

16. Speaking of flip-flops, when Paul tells Titus to not let anyone despise him, we have seen the thought that evidently his manner and presentation of the word will keep them from despising him. This was the case for decades in the modern church, but don't try it today or you will find that you are despised - they will talk around you and you will be irrelevant.

Outspokenness is not tolerated in most of the church today. You are rocking the boat, you are making waves, you are being divisive, you are judgmental and all the other little phrases that make the naysayer feel more comfortable as they sit with their mouths closed on the subjects of the day.

17. It seems from the commentaries that there is adequate indication from history that the Cretans were a rebellious lot. They were quite active in their rebellion against Rome and indeed, quite involved in letting Rome know of their disgust over their rule.

Now, if people that were under Roman rule and a people that were outwardly rebellious against that rule were told to be subject to that rule, certainly we ought to be able to handle these exhortations from Paul in our country. We have it quite easy when compared to Rome - I am not saying that the government isn't becoming more and more like Rome, but right now we have it quite good. We ought to do what we can within the system to steer our leaders away from the oppressive rule that they seem bent on, but at any rate - we are to submit to it because it is there due to the good pleasure of the God we have chosen to serve.

Week nine: Titus 3.4-7 THE SALVATION

I have used a number of theological terms in this study. I will include a glossary at the end in case you find any of them unfamiliar.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Major Doctrines listed in this text:

God

kindness of God

love of God

God the Saviour of all will come

salvation is not by works

salvation is by mercy of God

mercy of God

regeneration

renewing

Holy Ghost

abundance of God

Jesus Christ

Christ the Saviour

justification

grace of God

co-heirs with Christ

eternal life

We see the Trinity, the promise of eternal life, the great doctrines of justification, regeneration, - we see some of the attributes of God, and we see the basis upon which we have eternal life - the grace and mercy of God, not works.

Some theology course!

Now to those that condemn the teaching of theology in the church as being too heavy for the believers, we might suggest this text. Paul taught theology in his everyday letters to believers. He felt that theology was to be an integrated part of our daily life.

If we know the theology, we will know how to live the Christian life. That is one of the problems of this day's church. We have not been teaching theology, so the believer does not know why he is to live as he should, thus he doesn't.

Theology is the basis for the Christian life. I trust that when people begin to talk of theology, you will listen rather than turn up your nose.

We must take some time to BRIEFLY look at these great doctrines so that we understand Paul's comments.

I would like to take these in a logical order for our brief look.

I. God (includes the trinity)

His attributes:

1. kindness
2. love
3. mercy
4. abundance
5. grace

These are only a portion of His great attributes. Consider these as you wonder about God. How do

you relate to each of these? These are theological points, not just words, but truths to build your life on.

II. Holy Ghost

The third person in the trinity. He is our comforter, guide and intercessor when we don't know how to pray.

III. Jesus Christ -- Christ the Saviour

Christ came to earth to do everything that was needed to bring man back to God, and that work was accomplished most perfectly.

III. Salvation

A. Basis of salvation

1. Salvation is open to all that will come - this is not a false invitation, but a genuine call for ALL to come. All that was needed for all to come to God for salvation has been made available to everyone.
2. Salvation is not by works - nothing you can do will bring any benefit to you toward salvation. It is all of God and nothing from you. Some suggest that man cannot even accept Christ without God doing it, but this is false piety. Christ calls us to make a mental decision about Him, either for or against. He will not make it for us, nor will He force you either way.
3. Salvation is brought to us by the mercy of God - it was God's idea to bring salvation to man, not man's. He planned it; He executed the plan, and now awaits man to respond.

B. Method of salvation

1. Regeneration - is that process by which we are transformed into a new creation. It is not that infusing of something that allows us to make a decision; it is the result of our decision for Christ. It is the new birth, the salvation experience given by God to the responsive man.
2. Renewing - is that process by which we are transformed from a sinful creature to a new creation ready and able to please God.
3. Justification - is that process by which we are made ready for fellowship with God. He makes all the changes required to allow us to approach him in prayer and supplication. We are made just as we need to be for Him.

C. Result of salvation

1. Co-heirs with Christ - we are brothers/sisters with Christ, thus heir to all that He is heir to.
2. Eternal life - the ultimate benefit of salvation is that we will spend eternity with Him rather than with the Devil in the torment of eternity.

Theology isn't a dirty word, it is the stuff of life, it is that which gives us insight into the

God that we serve. Indeed, as we understand better who He is, then our attitude of service might be corrected to that attitude that we ought to have toward Him.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

The kindness is just a goodness or kindness, but can have the aspect of moral goodness and integrity. Thus we may have a little more than just the kindness of God, but the total moral goodness of God, which is perfect goodness in reality.

Romans 2.4 "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

The word "goodness" is used three times in Romans 11.22 "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in [his] goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

One should note that His goodness is closely related to the severity of God. We will look at this later.

On the other hand "goodness" can mean just the opposite, it can mean the lack of moral goodness as seen in Romans 3.12 "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

It seems the context determines at which end of the spectrum the definition lies.

At any rate, the passage says that after that God's goodness was forthcoming. After what, might come to mind. The previous verse talks of our unsaved condition - that which we were before the goodness appeared. We were once depraved, but now that the goodness has come, we are the opposite - or at least we should be.

It is of note that the term "love" is not the strong word for love, but the lesser term that is used of brotherly love. It can mean as little as "kindness" and it is the love one has for mankind. I think a good study of the terms translated love in relation to God and man and salvation would be of interest. Does he love all mankind with a brotherly love, but believers with the true and deep love? Someone study that for me and send me a copy.

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared," After our lostness, the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared. Of note, is the fact that the term for God is the normal term, but He is listed as our Savior - this designation is usually referring to Christ, but here we see it of God in general - it was the overall plan of God to save mankind, it was Christ that carried out that mission.

The appearing should not be taken too far in the area of interpretation. It simply indicates that salvation appeared to us - it was something that came along in our lives. It isn't that salvation suddenly appeared on the world scene, as in the cross. The cross solidified the salvation of all the ages past.

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

This passage is important, in that the reform camp feel that it allows them their belief that regeneration is separate from salvation itself. They see regeneration as separate from the renewing of the Spirit. The regeneration is what they call born again and that this is the quickening that allows totally depraved man, which is unable to respond to God, to after regeneration respond positively to God's election and calling.

The word "and" is translated "and" over eight thousand times and "also" only about five hundred times. We will see what some commentators say later.

The American Standard Version puts it this way, "but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit," To me, the "saved" is the result of the regeneration and renewing. I'd guess they would admit to this, still thinking that the two occur at different times.

We need to look at the terms "regeneration" and "renewing" as they are used in Scripture. Regeneration simply means "again born." It is made up of two terms "paling" or again, and "genesia" or genesis - birth. It has the thought of being made over or born again. It relates to reformation not a simple "changed a little" to get a person going in a proper spiritual direction. It seems better to see it as that complete reformation of the corrupt soul into a completely new life.

Renew has the same thought of complete reformation. It is a complete renovation, a "complete change for the better." This seems to be consistent with regeneration - two words describing the same whole process of rebirth in salvation.

Matthew 19.28 is the only other usage of the term translated regeneration. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." No matter what you see regeneration as meaning, it clearly indicates a complete work of salvation in this passage - to me at least.

Renewing appears only here and in Romans 12.2 "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Again this seems to me that this is a complete change from what the mind once was to something completely different.

To me, it seems both words relate to the same event - salvation, not two different processes which both are needed to move one to salvation.

Matthew Henry seems to relate the renewing to the daily renewing of the person in holiness. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown seem to relate the whole thing to be signifying baptism. This is quite a stretch to me, yes there might be some application there but they seem to gloss over the real meaning of the text.

Barnes agrees with me, or vice versa, that the two terms mean basically the same thing, and that they both refer to being born again. Gill, a reformed man of yester year also seems to agree that the terms relate to the whole of salvation, "Now it is in this way God saves his people, namely, by regenerating and renewing them;" He also relates the renewing to the progression of holiness. I'd guess he would agree if I said that regeneration is that which brings new birth, and the renewing is that cleansing of the old and the replacement of the new - again seems like one act of changing one from lost to alive in Christ.

Keathley presents the same line of thought that I have presented. "Since both phrases are introduced by one preposition, are both connected by "and," and since the Holy Spirit is the agent of renewal, the great probability is that we have here two parallel subjective genitives with the second as a further explanation of the first. Thus, the passage very likely means, "the washing (spiritual cleansing) produced by regeneration, even the making new accomplished by the Holy Spirit."

He also presents the same line of thought that most others in relation to the thought of "washing" being baptism. All reject this as a figment of the Baptismal Regenerationists imagination. Water is not mentioned nor to be seen in the context, thus it must be added to the thought of the text to relate this to baptism.

Thus we have two false teachings from this one verse, that you need to beware of - that rebirth can occur prior to salvation, and that rebirth comes from water baptism. Wow, again, all this doctrine and theology!

Just to emphasize it one more time, Keathley rightly states, "While some see this as a reference to the ongoing sanctifying work of the Spirit, it seems best, as explained previously, to see regeneration and renewing as one concept."

Even if the two are slightly different, they are part and parcel of one action at one point in time - that of salvation. Indeed, one might be the act while the following the action.

Now, let us consider the rest of the verse. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us," Salvation is not of works that we might do, even though they are righteous works; it is His mercy that allows the work of salvation.

"Righteousness" has to do with one that is right before God, or one that does all that God requires. Good works - not even the most righteous of good works can assist with our movement toward salvation. Not even a mountain sized pile of good works will assist us in salvation, only the FREE mercy of God allows us to have access to such a grand gift.

Mercy is listed in the lexicon as kindness, or "good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them." Kind of describes us as Paul pictures us in verse three "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, [and] hating one another."

God desired to assist us out of the mire and he acted on that desire extending his mercy to us through Christ. This is one reason I would question the thought of limited atonement, that teaching that says Christ died for only the elect. This word almost pictures, in my mind the desire of God to help all of mankind out of their predicament - there is nothing to show differently. To desire to help all He would have to provide for all or He would be showing partiality.

At any rate it is His mercy that makes the difference in our lives, not what we can do in this life. I don't know how much more plainly it could be said that works are not part of salvation, yet many still teach a works Christianity. The Roman church requires certain works for grace to be extended to the person. Other religions require works for their salvation, yet Paul says, NOT BY WORKS.

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

Again, we see that God is the overall provider of salvation, but the action came via Christ and His work on the cross.

The term "shed" means "to pour" or "gush forth." When at home our daughter was quite effective at pouring juice and milk. It always panicked her parents as she would almost attack the glass and the liquid would gush forth into the glass. Never a drop would spill, but we often wondered at the methodology. It also amused us recently to see her teenage daughter pour some milk the same way.

God gushed forth our salvation abundantly through Christ.

We have here that completion of the idea of God the trinity being our savior, while accomplishing this through Christ and his work on the cross.

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Another one of those terrible theological terms. Justified, is that act of justification. Because of His mercy we are justified by His grace - indeed we are made heirs in eternal life.

It is of interest, that the mercy or desiring to assist and doing so, is similar to grace in that grace means, "lovingkindness" or "good will" among other things. This desire to help and this help are rather abundantly clear in this passage. He REALLY wants to help the poor lost sinner out of his mess.

Justification is simply God making us what we ought to be, making us right or just. He restores us to what we would have been if we hadn't been born in sin. We are as Adam was before he sinned. We are made like we were created to be - good.

Justification is not so much the work of changing, because this is done by regeneration, but it is more the declaration by God that all is well between the person and God.

APPLICATION:

1. We saw that God's goodness was closely related to his severity. Let us think along that line for a little bit. Romans 11.22 "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in [his] goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

God can function with goodness and severity without getting them mixed up. The text mentions that to some He is severe while with others He is good. Not an uncommon theme in the Word - that he is good to the believer, and severe with the lost. At the Great White Throne we will see this goodness/severity in action. He will already have been quite good to the righteous, but will be dealing out judgment upon the lost at the throne. What a contrast, He is blessing some beyond measure in the heavenlies, while sending others to a terrible eternity apart from Him.

We see in His judgment that most drastic of contrasts between total good and total lack of good - not that God is not good, but that he can shed no good upon the lost due to their total and unequivocal rejection of His Son's work on the cross.

We see that judgment is not due to God nor his plan, but due to the lost's rejection of Him and His. He made His grace, His mercy, and His Son's work available to them, yet they rejected all His overtures. How much more could He do to draw them unto Himself, yet they thumb their nose at Him and all that he desires to do for them. Again, can we see this as a false offer to the lost - I don't think so. It is as honest and as genuine as God Himself - to all of mankind, not just to the elect that accept it.

2. Being a little ungifted in the area of grammar, there are phrases that give me some trouble at times. Like the last phrase of verse seven which states "we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The Net Bible translates it this way "we become heirs with the confident

expectation of eternal life." while giving the King James translation as the Greek meaning in their note.

Just what is the thought of "according to the hope of eternal life? We all have that hope, that assuredness of eternal life. We all know we are heirs with Christ, but how does the heir-ship, which is ours now, have to do with a future existence? What does "according" mean in the context?

"According" can also be translated "after" so let's substitute that. We should be made heirs after the hope of eternal life. That could relate - we are to be heirs hoping for the eternal life - hope in the idea of that it is coming and we are looking forward to it - our expectation.

"Should be made" can be translated "come to pass" or "become," thus indicating something future. So, if this is true, are we really heirs now as many of us have been taught? Are we heirs with Him now at this instant? In God's mind, yes we are, we will be just as surely heirs just as we will have eternal life, and in declaration we are both, but in reality we are neither.

Now, if we see the verse going along this line - being justified by his grace, we should become heirs as we hope in eternal life. Both are future, both are hoped for, but both are also secured by the work of Christ on our behalf. It is a sure hope that we look for - that of eternal life as heirs with Christ.

This really is a continuation of another doctrine that we can see in Revelation 1.5 "And from Jesus Christ, [who is] the faithful witness, [and] the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," as well as Acts 26.23 "And from Jesus Christ, [who is] the faithful witness, [and] the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," See also Rom. 8.11 "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

As Christ was raised from the grave, so also shall we - we are part and parcel with Christ's own resurrection - a sure thing. I Cor. 6.14 as well. "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." Also II Cor. 4.14 "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." And Eph. 2.5-6 "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus:"

It is planned and will occur as God has planned it in His own good time. We have only to wait upon Him and His pleasure. (Rom. 6.5, 9; Heb.2.9-11, 9.15-17 relate as well if you want further study.) Just for your own study, take a quick look at James 5.7-8 as you consider what we have been looking at. See also I Cor. 15.55.

3. Contemplate this picture for a moment. An all powerful, all knowing, all loving God creates for His own good pleasure. The creation thumbs their nose at this loving God and turns their backs on Him and refuse to acknowledge that He exists. In fact some say that the created popped out of the creation, that God is not in the mix what so ever - If, indeed, He exists, He went on vacation and left the creation to do its own thing. Now imagine that same God that has been maligned and mistreated loving His creation so much that He is willing to allow His Son to die a terrible death to bring the created back to Him. That is one grand and moving love for those that have rejected Him, yet this is what God has done for mankind.

We thumbed our nose at Him and He sent His Son to redeem us from our own polluted mess. He has a great interest in each and every one of us and He acts on that interest for our benefit. And what have you done for Him lately?

4. Barnes makes an interesting point. "It is a great and fundamental principle of the gospel that the good works of men come in for no share in the justification of the soul. They are in no sense a consideration on account of which God pardons a man, and receives him to favour. The only basis of justification is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in the matter of justification before God, all the race is on a level."

All mankind is on a level playing field. No racial profiling, no economic factor, no basis of good looks or build - nothing at all can ever affect our standing with God except Jesus Christ - He is the great leveling of all that have, do and will exist - none is preferred, none is discriminated against and none will come up short due to God's provision - only his/her own personal decision about God.

This does not relieve us from the duty to pronounce God's great love and provision to everyone we meet, so missions and evangelism are God's method of spreading the Word - He has committed that work to those that He has saved.

While we are at it, the salvation is by His mercy, not our status, our importance, or our own worth, it is by His mercy. Let Barnes put it a little more eloquently. "It is not because our deeds deserve it; it is not because we have by repentance and faith wrought ourselves into such a state of mind that we can claim it; but, after all our tears, and sighs, and prayers, and good deeds, it is a mere favour. Even then God might justly withhold it if he chose, and no blame would be attached to him if he should suffer us to sink down to ruin."

5. Keathley rightly states that our present moral change mentality in America is incorrect. We are trying to reach the people with the ways of the world, rather than with the gospel of Christ. We seek to change the moral direction of our country by trying to change its morals - not possible, they are lost, they are depraved and they are morally corrupt. You can't change something that is morally corrupt into someone that is moral, only Jesus Christ can rebirth that immoral person.

Only salvation and a changed moral core can change our country - one person at a time, one day at

a time, not by some sweeping moral outrage that will convince them that they are going the wrong direction.

Just today my son sent me the link to an article in the Denver Post. It was about a church that was basically Anglo located in a 60 percent Hispanic neighborhood. The church leaders have decided to change the church to make the lost folks feel comfortable, and to bring about growth. They have hired a \$150,000 "church-planter" consultant to head up their advertising campaign and to set up billboards in the neighborhood to let the Hispanics know they were now Hispanic friendly.

Is there something wrong with that concept? I trust you see a lot wrong. God wins the lost by the believers being in the community witnessing to them. It is not the lost's responsibility to make it into the church Sunday morning to feel comfortable and to hear the gospel; it is the comfortable Christian's place to get out and win those people to the Lord.

\$150,000 to change the church when a couple good sermons on witnessing would probably bring about much better results.

May God forgive the pastor that makes a change from Biblical worship to seeker friendly programs and other ploys to draw the lost into his sanctuary. May God forgive the pastor and leaders that spend money on outsiders to come into their church to advertise, to use the works of the world to draw people to the services. May God forgive those pastors and teachers that may have taught these people to rely on the world system to do God's work.

Only a man and his church that is founded squarely on the Bible with their worship and method can be truly blessed by God. Yes, there may be some number improvements in churches that use such programs and procedures, but are they really Biblical improvements or "works of righteousness" that are really wood, hay and stubble? Yes, some great things may come in the area of evangelism, but what damage might be done to the believers that have no place to properly worship their Maker? What damage are we causing to the next generation of believers that are sitting through all these seeker friendly services as children? Are we properly training our youth for their future as the leaders of our churches?

Can the church survive such actions? Oh, yes it can survive, but at what cost to the Believers of America, and of the world when they seek to imitate our actions as they often do? The question is more to the point, will Christ's church survive? Yes, even in spite of the attempts and mal-conceived groaning of His brothers, He will be careful not to let the gates of Hell prevail against His church, it is just too bad that there may be believers pounding on the church door in an attempt to tear it down.

Strong you say, well I trust that it is for I personally believe that the church is in a very sickly condition due to its leadership and their acceptance of worldly methods to do God's work.

6. Keathley also continues to conclude that even though some may be out there witnessing, that

the lost person does not really give a good hearing to the Gospel because they see the believing world as unloving, judgmental and aloof. He continues to suggest that this impression leads to the lost person not regarding God as much different.

I agree with his estimation of many believers, and many lost peoples view of those believers, but this philosophy seems to leave out the ministry of the Holy Spirit in moving the lost person toward Christ. If the Spirit is not moving in the persons life there is nothing we can do to bring them to Christ, nor is there anything that we can do about their impression of us or our God. On the other hand if the Spirit is there working the lost person's impressions of Christians and/or our God is rather moot - salvation will come to pass if the person is being drawn by the Spirit to their appointed salvation.

Yes, live out lives so that we might be able to speak with them, but we need not groan and strain within our own efforts to get them to understand the Gospel. If they listen to what we have to say, the Spirit will fill in the gaps in one way or another.

7. Keathley observes correctly that if man could work his way to heaven there would have been no need for Christ to come to earth, or die on the cross - we could have done it on our own. Now, that is a logical argument that might be of use when talking to someone that is working their way there.

What a tremendous observation. We can't do it folks. We need to communicate that to others!

I'm told by the Greek experts that "but" is a conjunction that gives the idea of the strongest contrast. Not by works "but" by the mercy of God. The strongest emphasis Paul could give to this contrast must be the standard of our Gospel. It is not Christ plus a little works, it is God's mercy and nothing else - Christ or nothing. Read Galatians if you want to see where adding a little works will get you.

8. It is of no small importance that when Paul speaks of our salvation here it is in the aorist tense - a one time act of Christ which by the way is in the past. It is a done deal, it is finished and it is on its way to full completion in our death or rapture from this life.

9. There is a beautiful picture in this passage. We see God the Father as our Savior, the planner of that salvation, we see God the Son as the medium through which we are provided that salvation and we see God the Holy Spirit as the operating force behind the salvation coming to pass in our lives. Nothing left to chance with the Trinity on our side!

There is a further aspect in which the Father is involved. He is the forgiver when we come to Him through Christ seeking our personal relationship to Him.

A SIMPLE GLOSSARY

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ACCEPTANCE	RECEIVING
ADOPTION	BEING MADE SONS
ATONEMENT	MAKE RIGHT
BEGOTTEN	BORN OF
BELIEF	KNOWLEDGE ACCEPTED
BODY	MATERIAL MAN
CALLING	INVITATION
CHOSEN	SELECTED
CONFESSION	AGREEING WITH GOD
CONSCIENCE	MAN JUDGING
DECREES	GOD'S PLAN
ELECTION	CHOICE
FAITH	TRUST IN THE UNSEEN
FALL	FROM INNOCENCE TO SIN
FOREKNOWLEDGE	KNOWING BEFORE
FORGIVENESS	PUTTING AWAY
GLORIFICATION	FINAL STEP TO ETERNAL JOY
GOD'S WILL	HIS DESIRE
GRACE	GIVING WHAT ISN'T DESERVED
HEIRS	RIGHT OF BEING A SON

HOLINESS	SET APART
IMPUTED SIN	OURS IN ADAM
INTELLECT	MAN KNOWING
JUSTIFICATION	DECLARED RIGHTEOUS
LORDSHIP	BELIEVERS RELATION TO CHRIST
MEDIATION	GOING BETWEEN
NEW NATURE	BENT TOWARD GODLINESS
OBEDIENCE	MINDING THE FATHER
OLD NATURE	BENT TOWARD SIN
PERFECTION	FUTURE HOLINESS
PERSONAL SIN	DISOBEYING GOD
PREDESTINATION	SETTING THE END RESULT
PROPITIATION	SATISFACTION
PUNISHMENT	JUST DESSERTS
OUICKENED	RENEWED
RECONCILIATION	BRINGING TOGETHER (CHANGE)
REDEMPTION	PURCHASE
REGENERATION	MAKE ALIVE
REPENTANCE	CHANGE OF MIND
RENEWING OF THE SPIRIT	REBIRTH
RESURRECTION	NEW ETERNAL LIFE
RIGHTEOUSNESS	HOLY LIFE

SACRIFICE OF CHRIST/HEAVEN	ATONEMENT
SACRIFICE OF CHRIST/THE CROSS	SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE
SALVATION	SAVED FROM
SANCTIFICATION	SET APART
SECURITY	IMMORTALITY
SENSIBILITY	MAN FEELING
SEPARATION	WALKING GODLY
SIN	MISSING THE MARK
SIN NATURE	BENT TOWARD SIN
SOUL	MIND AND INTELLECT OF MAN
SPIRIT	ETERNAL PART OF MAN
STANDING	HOW GOD VIEWS US
STATE	OUR WALK
SUBSTITUTION	IN PLACE OF
TEMPTATION	DESIRE TO SIN
UNDERSTANDING	GRASPING KNOWLEDGE
WILL	MAN DECIDING

Week ten: Titus 3.8-9 THE LIFE

8a [This is] a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.

Paul uses similar calls to heed important things in his pastoral epistles as well. I Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11.

This passage is a good text to show that good works will not bring salvation, but that good works are important in the believers' life. At the same time, we must not overemphasize works to the point that we make people believe that salvation, if by grace, must be worked for to maintain it. This is the falsehood of the Seventh Day Adventist.

Years ago I worked with a very nice Seventh dayer. We talked of things spiritual with much agreement. One day we were talking about Eph 2:8-9 ("For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.") and we agreed completely. I was shocked at his agreement. I finally went through it again to be sure he understood that I believed that salvation was truly all of grace and nothing of works, and he again agreed with me.

Finally, I went through it a third time and as he was agreeing with me, it dawned on me what he believed so I said, "Then you believe that salvation is all of grace and none of works?" He said, "Yes." And I said, "But you have to work to keep it." He looked at me and sheepishly said, "Yes." as if he understood that he had been misleading me.

Now, having said all of this, let me tell you JOKINGLY that I wish that the Bible taught that we had to work to keep our salvation. That way the believer would feel a compulsion to keep his spiritual house in order. HOWEVER, God wants our service to him to come from our love for Him and not our fear of his condemnation. The reason I like the concept is that it would take preachers a lot less work getting his members to do good works if they had a little fear in them of loosing their salvation. That would not lead to the peace and joy of salvation that God wants us to have however.

"Affirm constantly" is also a little stronger than that. It can be "affirm strongly" or "affirm confidently" - in short this is a strong confident affirmation that Paul wants.

"Have believed" is a perfect tense, they believed sometime in the past, they now believe and they always will believe till a completion of that belief sometime in the future - a sure thing. This relates to the salvation, heirship and eternity that we spoke of in the last session. I won't rub it in, but it rather smells of eternal security in my mind.

Actually Paul adds "in God" as if to ward off the belief in works salvation that the Judaizers were touting.

"Might be careful" has the thought of giving thought to being careful, within its meaning. You take thought before hand to be sure you do, or careful thought to continuing in your good works. This might give emphasis so that we don't use that tried and true excuse, I didn't think of it, or I was just too busy to realize -- if you think "carefully" before hand, you will be more open and ready to do good works.

The verb is in a present tense and active mood, which requires that it be a continuing action and the active mood suggests that the person involved is the acting participant in the action. In short you would be in error to blame it on the Spirit for not moving you, for it is you that should be moving you. That seems to require a time for thinking about the good works that we might do, it requires time to do the good works as well. The question - how do we accomplish this in our lives?

1. When we rise in the morning, have a time with the Lord to prepare yourself for the day and ask Him to guide and direct your works for the day. You might take some time to think through whom you might meet during the day and how you might be able to minister to them. You might consider your bank account and understand whether you have some financial assistance that someone might need.

Just allow God the moment or two it would take to lay things on your heart that He might have in mind for your day.

2. As you walk through your day, attempt to concentrate on what others are going through, rather than your own situation. When someone is down and wanting to talk, that may be just the opportunity for you to flourish in the good work's department.

3. Try to evaluate people that you meet; are their ways to minister to them? If you meet someone that is down, maybe a question or two would get them talking and you might find words of comfort.

4. When you see need, evaluate whether you can fill it. I was told by a pastor once that a missionary came to his office with a load of troubles. The man was due in another city for a meeting and his car had broken down. It had serious problems and he had no money to pay for the repairs. He had come to the pastor to ask for prayer. The pastor immediately said let's pray. As the pastor began to pray, he realized that he had an extra car that he had planned to get rid of - he stopped praying and said, "This is not right. I have a car you can have; there is no need for us to pray for this." God has already answered your need.

5. When at church you can normally tell when someone is troubled, maybe that would be a good time for a cup of coffee after church or an invitation to your home might be appropriate.

Just take time now and then to see what God might have you do.

8b. These things are good and profitable unto men.

"These things" refers to what? The good works - those grand and glorious things that you do for God.

One of the problems with this is the lack of positive or negative feedback that you get in certain ministries. I am positive that most pastors get all the negative feedback they could ever want, but little positive. This is sad. Encourage those gentlemen any chance you get.

Others, like teachers, missionaries and evangelists often don't see this positive/negative; they just see the blank looks on faces. While on deputation I saw many many people, but there was little feedback except on the immediate scene. Words of "good message" etc. were forth coming, but due to being there for only a short time there was little opportunity to see if there were any real spiritual blessings in peoples lives from the ministry of the Word.

This has been one of the frustrations of my life - have I really impacted anyone else's life for the positive - what results have there been? I have many times reminded myself that it is not up to me to see the results, only to minister. God will see to the results He desires.

As a teacher, students came and went with little indication of positive results. One wonders, but God knows and that is the key. Also, this passage makes it clear that good works result in profit - fact - your ministry profits, no matter if you know of the profit or not - God gains as do those that you minister to.

What a promise - what you do in this life for good will profit others. That is quite an encouragement to do as much good as you can so that as many as possible are blessed.

This is a backside of a philosophy that I was challenged with years ago in college. A professor read a quote from a "Success" course he had taken. The quote related to spreading your influence. It was called your sphere of influence. The wider you spread it the more successful you would become. Though this is a business concept, I recognized it as a good philosophy of life for the believer. That day in class I committed myself to widening my "sphere of influence" at every possible turn.

I did not do this to gain success in ministry, but to gain the widest influence I could for God. I accomplished this through the years by never turning down an opportunity to minister God's word to people. There were many times when I was tired and way busier than I should have been that I took an opportunity to minister in spite of the rigor of life. God has never allowed me to come up short due to my ministering for Him.

The more good works you do the wider your "sphere of influence" will be. Your outworking of God's will can only bless and profit those that you minister to.

"Good and profitable unto men." Whether lost or saved, the teachings of this book and this passage are profitable. If a lost person were to set himself to live in the shadow of the Word, he would find much peace of mind and happiness of life. True, the lost person cannot really understand all that the Bible teaches, nor can they know the true joy and peace of the Christian life, however, they can have a relatively peaceful and joyful life.

My Father was crippled when he was 21 years old and lived a relatively good life. He shuffled his way through this life supporting his body on two canes, shuffling his paralyzed legs along. This was before the handicapped laws; he made his way wherever he needed to go on his own. It was often embarrassing when he would fall in public and he would not let my brother and I assist in getting him up. (You can picture that one, two burly over six feet tall guys watching their old father struggling to get up off the floor.)

He had many struggles, but let little stand in his way of doing what he wanted. His life was that of a believer as far as works and lifestyle were concerned, yet when he was on his death bed his thought was - "I hope that I have lived a good enough life to get into heaven." He was a calm and peaceful man, and seemed to really enjoy all that he did. He did not seem to dwell on what he couldn't do, but on what he liked to do. I don't know if he ever accepted the Lord or not, but he did hear the Gospel several times, and knew what the Bible said about entrance into heaven.

Good works and good living profit everyone, but to the believer there is a double profit – they will also be rewarded for their good works one day future.

We, in our society have a little harder time with how and whom we help. We have many in our society that are too lazy to work and they live off of society. Just where do we draw the line between helping someone that is in need and enabling them to use the system? I have seen this topic on internet message boards a number of times and I have seen few really good answers. Not that the participants on the boards were lacking, they were just lacking in good answers - there are no really good answers.

The main answer is allowing the Spirit to guide and direct you. If you find that you have a bad sense of people, maybe you should call someone alongside that has a way of picking out the stinkers from the needers.

In relation to churches helping people that come by seeking assistance I have a "deacon's fund" policy that might give you some pointers. I will include this at the end of the study, but here I would like to settle in on how we as individuals can pick and choose those we help and those we pass by.

1. Know that it is God's will that we do good works. That is the key to all decision making. Do not allow this fact to escape what you are doing or thinking of doing.
2. Review the passages at the end of the deacon's fund policy included below. There are other

passages that deal with our fellow man and how we should treat them.

3. Look at each situation and evaluate the best you can, then act. God will take care of the culprit if he is conning you, but he will also care for you either way. We do need to be good stewards of our works and possessions, but if we do as best we can then He will care for the rest.

Be assured if you are taken, He does not allow that to go unnoticed and the person will answer for their action in the future.

Don't second guess what you have decided. I was approached by a man that needed a buck or two to get home - he was honest looking, he looked a little concerned and I honestly thought he was on the level, but said no and continued walking. I turned a moment or two later and saw him walking off very dejectedly as if he had lost his last chance. I was in the midst of second guessing my decision when I saw him turn from his dejected path toward McDonald's for - breakfast most likely :-)

4. Realize that God may have directed this person across your path so that you could encourage or assist them. We need to remember God's sovereignty over all situations. Allow Him to lead your actions as best you can.

5. Don't be afraid to take time to witness to these people, they need the Lord just like we did at some point in our lives.

6. Understand also that circumstances could put you in the same place as they, in the blink of an eye. Many of us are only a few pay checks away from being on the street. With health care costs so high and wages often low, it isn't hard to understand how people can end up on the street. Yes, many are there by choice, but many are there because they have no choice.

7. Consider food certificates instead of cash. Consider taking them into a cafe and paying for their order. Many will refuse and then you will know their real need. Some carry groceries in their car to offer those that ask for help. Again, many will refuse, wanting cash only.

8. When you assist someone and they abuse you, do not take it personally, and do not hold a grudge, for God will deal with them in His own time.

In short, start your morning out with God on your side, and keep in tune with the Spirit rather than yourself throughout the day and He will guide you into those good works in which He would like you involved.

Verse 9. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

Some have relegated some of the great doctrines of the Word to this verse. Paul is attempting to

warn the people of things that take away from the good works that were previously mentioned.

True, some do get side tracked in life by things that they love to argue about. Years ago we met a seminarian that was returning for his senior year at Dallas Seminary. He read a book that drew him into false doctrine to the point that he could not function. His professors tried to help him through his confusion, but all of the foolish questions of the false doctrine consumed him. He never went into the Lord's work.

Some suggest that predestination is one of these foolish questions. NOT SO! Predestination is a doctrine of the Word. Paul was speaking of questions that come from man and his uncanny knack for perverting things for an argument. Examples of foolish questions: Can God create a rock that is too big for Him to lift? This could be discussed for ages. How many angels can stand on the head of a pin? Again, the discussion could go on for quite awhile.

These types of questions only spend valuable time and detract from the Lord's work. They are good to consider for a time, but don't make them a major part of your quiet time.

Others have suggested that the thought of separation comes under this category of foolish questions etc. They suggest that separation is a doctrine of man and that we ought to be "ONE IN THE LORD" with everyone that knows the Lord.

Separation again is a doctrine of the Scriptures and not subject to rejection because someone thinks that it is foolish.

Avoid these things - they are unprofitable and vain, or worthless.

"Avoid" is a concept that we believers tend to avoid - "avoid" is making conscious thought to steer clear of something. This actually requires some watching, some consideration, some evaluation and then a conscious decision to go around that item you have considered.

Make a conscious effort to not get involved in these things. It is a waste of your time and will only cause problems. One commentator suggested it be translated "stand aloof" or, as I would suggest, stand away from with a cautious eye.

"Foolish" is the Greek word "moros" from which the word moron descends. Something that is really foolish and it can even relate to "godless" though it is never translated that way. In Matthew 5.22 we see the word translated fool, but it specifically relates to a godless fool. "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

The word is also used as "the foolish things of the world" that God uses to confound men.

The term is even used of God, if you can believe it. I Cor. 1.25 "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Of course it isn't a trait of His, but if He could be foolish, then this is true.

Don't get caught up in foolish, or maybe worldly, might give you the idea - avoid these questions and genealogies and contentions.

"Questions" is a good translation of the word - it is the "seeking of" - seeking of knowledge, seeking of answers etc. It is taking time to question, seek information and to ultimately make a decision.

"Strivings" is probably a little weak for this word which actually relates to combat and fighting, this is really getting into some serious dispute about things.

"The law" is a general term for law or lawyer, and it can relate to a New Testament time person that teaches the Mosaic Law.

Evidently there were some that were getting to the point of combat over their lineage and over their interpretation of the law. Paul labels this as unprofitable and vain. Those two terms will be of interest for application.

"Unprofitable and vain" - you know, when I read this passage I had a picture come to mind – a picture of one of the hundreds of sports altercations that have been televised over recent years. Such contention, such combativeness and such unprofitable and vain actions. True this context does not relate to sports, but I think that you get the point. Anything that comes to worthless battle is to be avoided - don't just get a little bit involved - don't get really involved - AVOID it. That is the only Biblical solution.

I am hearing more and more of near combativeness within church meetings - people disagreeing so violently that they nearly come to blows. Paul is telling Titus to train the believers not to be that way, while in America we are starting to see it happen.

Why does it happen - in my opinion it comes to that last word - "vain" it comes from the vanity of man trying to see himself as more than he is - something that can make him feel important. Indeed, isn't most church strife based on self uplifting and a desire to be right? After all if I am right, I am more important.

I trust you don't miss the contrast in these two verses. Good works are profitable and good, while disputing is unprofitable and vain. I think Paul's point is clear. Stick to the good works, they are what is important in this life as well as the next, while that worldly stuff may profit you some here, it certainly won't advance your standing in the next.

Another clear picture comes to my mind when I read this passage. Many pastors have come to

churches that are functioning quite well and immediately institute contemporary services. Now, I won't belabor this point, but how does that fit into this passage. Contemporary services are about vanity and often times uplifting of the performers, they are contentious because they pit believer against believer, they are about what "I" have been taught and about what "I" think is best for the rest of the church, and for the most part they are unprofitable to the church as a whole.

True, there may be a numbers gain, but there is almost always also number loss. The number gain may be an overall gain, but what of all those believers that are leaving the church – normally they are the mature believers that have built the church, supported the church, and committed themselves to the church and for the loss of these we seek the gain of people that may not even be saved, people that will seldom come to church other than the feel good services, people that will take years to disciple and people that will flock to another church when their services feel better than yours.

Yes, these are generalities, but for the most part this has been the observation of this author in many churches across the country. From my perspective contemporary services have cost the church greatly in the loss of mature believers, the cost of church holiness, and the cost of losing the Biblical concept of "worship in the Spirit." It is our spirit that should worship God, not our physical. If you take time to study the term "worship" in the Bible, you will find that it is private, and often, on the face time, with God.

Even in the traditional worship churches, when you can find one, they bring the congregation to thoughts of God via a call to worship, maybe singing the Doxology, then a hymn or two and then they really add to the worshipful atmosphere with a - "Hey, lets greet our neighbor time," and the congregation begins milling around like cattle greeting the people that they have ignored prior to this appointed time for friendliness, and the pastor has to cut it short or he will lose some of his preaching time.

I thought the church was about God and uplifting Him, I thought church was about the people and ministering to one another with good works, and I thought church was about reaching out to the lost to draw newborn believers into the church for feeding and care, instead I see the church as a place to uplift some musically talented people, a place where we don't talk to one another except during the greeting time, and a place that is totally self centered and geared to gaining numbers.

May we concentrate on the profitable and the good in our lives, in our homes, and in our churches?

APPLICATION:

1. Verse nine mentions genealogies. I am sure someone might suggest that searching your family tree is wrong. The context is foolish questions that detract from ministry. Searching your family tree is not this sort of thing. The genealogies that are mentioned relate to trying to prove that you

descend from someone important in the Jewish lineage.

If you are searching for family information so that you can benefit them or yourself spiritually, then yes this is wrong. The Mormon Church baptizes the dead so that the person can have a larger family in eternity. They search and search for more and more people to be baptized for. What a false teaching, requiring a lot of time, searching your family for all the wrong reasons.

Doing your family history might be of interest to you, but don't let it detract from what you are doing for the Lord. I have done considerable work on my family tree and it has been very interesting, and I'm sure some of my descendants will enjoy knowing a little about their ancestors, but it is a side light - something I do for enjoyment, not spiritual gain.

2. The last part of verse eight states "These things are good and profitable unto men." These things relating to the DOCTRINES just stated. Good and profitable. Barnes turns this to state that these doctrines can produce happiness in a person that knows them. Consider the import of that concept. If doctrine can cause happiness in man, why are so many preachers avoiding teaching doctrine. Many today turn up their nose at doctrine and theology - they nearly disdain it. If these things can produce good and profit for man and they will, according to Paul, and if there is a possibility of it causing happiness, why wouldn't preachers flock to the preaching of doctrine? It is beyond me. The Bible IS DOCTRINE thus if you are preaching the Word you are teaching doctrine.

On the other side of things, if good doctrine causes good, profit and possibly even happiness, then the things in verse nine that are unprofitable and vain most likely would cause unhappiness. It is true if you find someone that is embroiled in disputing, they are seldom happy. They are usually up tight and frustrated.

Keathley is clear that the word used here for "good" has the thought of something that brings beautiful feelings to the person. It is used of Citizens speaking of their beautiful city and the feeling they have for that city, thus the thought of happiness would certainly apply here.

Stick to the DOCTRINE and leave the arguing to others.

3. Gill suggests that the good and profitable relates to the doctrine rather than the works but certainly sees works as good and profitable. "These things are good and profitable unto men: which is to be understood not of good works, though these are good in themselves, and profitable to men in their effects;"

Keathley on the other hand suggests that the good and profitable are definitely relating to the good works, however it reflects back on the doctrine.

It would seem both are very important.

4. Let's consider the problems of verse nine a little further.

Paul had confronted this problem with Timothy and his people as well as here with Titus. II Tim. 2.23 "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes."

Gill relates the following about the passage: "But avoid foolish questions,....and genealogies; of their elders, Rabbins, and doctors, by whom their traditions are handed down from one to another, in fixing which they greatly laboured; see 1Ti 1:4 [" Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: [so do]."] and contentions and strivings about the law; the rites and ceremonies of it, and about the sense of it, and its various precepts, as litigated in the schools of Hillell and Shammai, the one giving it one way, and the other another; and what one declared to be free according to the law, the other declared forbidden; which occasioned great contentions and quarrels between the followers of the one, and of the other, as both the Misna and Talmud show: and agreeably to this sense, the Syriac version renders it, "the contentions and strifes of the scribes"; the Jewish doctors, who were some on the side of Hillell, and others on the side of Shammai; as well as went into parties and strifes among themselves, and oftentimes about mere trifles; things of no manner of importance; wherefore it follows, for they are unprofitable and vain; empty things, of no manner of use, to inform the judgment, improve the mind, or influence the life and conversation."

Humm, not unlike a couple of major disputes of our own day that consume tremendous amounts of time and money for the church. The Calvinism/Arminianism debate as well as the Covenant Theology/Dispensational theology dispute. Well you could add the Pre-trib/Post-trib/Amillennial dispute as well.

I don't want to minimize the importance of these discussions but book upon book have been written on the topics. Multiplied days of time are spent on these subjects on internet boards discussing them. In fact, there are a couple of reformed boards where I have read that discuss these things among themselves - if you don't agree with their view you cannot post on the boards so they are discussing their system and the systems of those they ban for hour upon hour. Nothing is going to come forth from this except perpetuation of their system and the distorted, misinformed views of the other positions. They twist and distort the other man's view and teach it as the way the other guy believes when this is not the case. They basically set up false straw men, and then shoot them down to make themselves look important to the cause.

I am not sure just what you might want to call this practice, but it seems disingenuous and unethical at the least if not just plain perpetuation of falsehood.

I think we see this laying of importance on genealogy in Iraq. We see the different factions and different groups, and all go back to some great teaching/teacher. Even within their subdivisions they have groups that follow a certain, important leader and usually view other leaders and groups as somewhat of from true Islam.

5. This whole passage reeks with the importance of how we live our lives, how we appear to others that might be watching us. If we are to be witnesses in this world, we must live like

Biblical Christians.

Sadly, many are the Christians that I have heard about from unsaved folks. The impression that many Christians leave is one of worldliness, inappropriateness and tactlessness. I have been told by lost people how they will never listen to a particular person due to the ungodly life they live, or the two-faced life they live or the nastiness of the life they live. Agreed, these comments may have been based on a time when the believer was at a low spot spiritually or at an unguarded moment, but it calls to mind the importance of being a proper example of Christ at all times.

You can be assured when you are at your worst, someone is watching and filing in their memory banks with just how you are acting, how you are responding to a situation, or how you are not practicing what you preach.

If you realize someone has caught you at your worst, it might be well to apologize and suggest that your behavior was inappropriate. This might bring them to realize you are only human and that you do make mistakes, rather than writing you off as a two-faced Christian.

6. The obvious is that verse eight speaks of what Christians are and the ninth verse speaks of what we ought not be, but in today's Christian society it is more like the ninth verse is who we are and the eight verse is who we ought to be.

We as believers have kind of lost our identity. We are to be like Christ, but for the most part we are more like the lost. We often get wrapped up in the same things that the world wraps themselves in. We often watch the same filth on television that the world enjoys; some even go to the theater to watch the latest filth that is offered up from Hollywood.

By the way, wouldn't you like to know what percentage of those millions of dollar box offices each week are paid by believers? Some Christians are helping finance the filth that comes out of Hollywood. Indeed, watching it a year later on television isn't much different either in the moral or the financial grounds.

7. Another stark contrast between these two verses is that in the former the person is being careful, even planning to do good, while in the other the person is to be careful, even planning to not do something bad. Is this not the crux of the Christian life?

I suspect that those that are so down on "legalists" - those that want people to live by a certain code - is that they may see that the so-called legalists, try to avoid the don'ts and forget to do the dos.

We are to do both, we are to plan for doing good and we are to plan for avoiding bad. Some might suggest that if you concentrate on doing the good, you won't have time to do the bad. Others would suggest that actively avoiding the bad will automatically cause you to be doing good. The point Paul makes is that we ought to give concerted effort to doing both as we walk through life.

As we draw to a balance on this duo, we should find happiness with our life no matter what is going on in our life. We should be able to know that what we are doing and what we are not doing are good and pleasing to God. These are the things that make us worthy before our God and beside our Brother Jesus Christ. These are the things that cause us to be worthy of a listening ear when we begin to speak to a lost person about their possible inclusion in the family of God.

DEACON'S FUND POLICY

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In that the Scripture is very clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting other believers in need, and in that the Scripture is very clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting widows and orphans, and in that the Scripture is clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting strangers, we hereby institute this policy to assist us in this ministry to those in need. (See footnote at end of policy for references.)

Each person seeking assistance will be interviewed by two of our deacons/elders and their concurrence will result in help. There is no need to INVESTIGATE a request for help other than to talk with the person involved to gain a sense that the need is valid. (We will trust God to guide us in our decisions and allow Him to deal with those that misuse our ministry.)

1. The fund shall be financed by an offering taken in the mission's bowl after the Lord's Table service each month.
2. The fund shall be dispersed under the guidance of the deacons.
3. The funds will be distributed by gift certificate as much as possible or by cash/check if the need is not available via certificates.
4. A grocery closet will be maintained at the church via the donations of the membership. It will contain sealed goods that can be stored for extended periods of time.
5. If the fund is depleted, and a seemingly valid case exists the deacon and pastor may go before the church for a special offering/general fund expenditure for the assistance.
6. A list of social service agencies will be maintained and a copy of that list shall be given to each person requesting assistance. (It is assumed by this policy that much of our tax money goes to support social services, so we should make use of those services for the assistance of those in need.)
7. A total value for each assistance shall not exceed \$50. (Groceries need only be approximated.)
8. The above is not to say that every person that requests assistance is to be helped. It shall be at

the discretion of those talking with the person that may or may not determine to extend help from the church family.

9. If there is a choice between church family members and those outside the church, then the church families' need should be met first.

FOOTNOTE:

Heb 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Acts 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

I Tim 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Matt 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed [thee]? or thirsty, and gave [thee] drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took [thee] in? or naked, and clothed [thee]? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me.

RESOURCE LIST FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE:

(Go to your yellow pages and look for service agencies in your area. Look to your city/county for resources that you can list. Often there is one agency that can look at a person's problems and recommend the correct place to go.)

Week eleven: Titus 3.10-12 THE HERETIC

10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

The thought of church discipline is lacking in most churches today, but here is a plain statement of its principle. If someone is a heretic, then after two admonitions, he is to be rejected. There is no room for less than this action!

False doctrine is like cancer. No one with an operable cancer would allow it to continue to grow and sap their strength and life, nor should a church tolerate false teaching.

When pastoring in Nebraska, a very dear man began to attend our church. His wife was a radical charismatic. She came to church now and then, but never was very friendly to us. I knew that she would be trouble, just because of the type of person she was. She was causing trouble in her own family spiritually and I was sure that she would cause trouble in the church. I found out one day that she had been to see every woman of the church in the same week, and there was indication that it was to stir trouble. I did not have to deal with her, because the Lord brought her to a service when I was preaching on the Devil's counterfeits and one of those counterfeits was tongues. She left and never returned.

Many churches are troubled by false doctrine. Many churches have split because they have tolerated false doctrine. Many organizations have become liberal due to toleration of false doctrine.

DON'T TOLERATE IT!

It should be noted that the term "subverted" is a perfect tense indicating this is a constant state that will not change. The person is and always will be in error.

Verse 11 has an interesting concept in it. I don't think that I have ever heard this concept verbalized before in any class or book that I have taken or read.

False doctrine is sin. Is the sin from the belief in the false system or doctrine, or is the sin from improper action taken due to belief in a false teaching?

Both could be and are correct. The false teaching is probably not sin if the belief is in innocence or lack of knowledge, however if you know something is false and you hold to it anyway, you are thumbing your nose at God and are living in sin.

False teaching that you teach, even if you are ignorant of its falsehood, can affect and mislead others. This misleading will result in sin, which you are responsible for.

The action based on false doctrine is certainly sin if it violates the Word of God. For a person to know that materialism is wrong, to continue to add unto himself things, is wrong - is sin.

So, false doctrine is sin in three areas for sure.

False doctrine is sin in and of itself if you know that it is false.

False doctrine is sin if you teach others and it leads them into sin.

False doctrine is sin if you act upon it yourself.

False doctrine is also sin if you don't know that it is false. Believing in anything that is counter to God's Word is missing the mark that God has set. It is possible that this type of sin will be cared for by I Jo. 1.9 in that the verse mentions ALL unrighteousness, and many feel this is unknown sin.

Thus there are six areas where false doctrine is sin.

1. If you know it is false.
2. If you don't know it is false.
3. If you act on it knowing it is false.
4. If you act on it not knowing it is false.
5. If you teach it and others act on it.
6. If you allow it to continue in your church.

You might even add sin against the family when you allow false doctrine to continue. The father has the responsibility to his family to see to it that only truth is taught in the home. If he or a family member teaches false doctrine then trouble can occur.

Going back to the Charismatic wife. The husband was a firm believer in truth, but allowed his wife to teach her falsehood to the children, and to cause problems in the family. I do not know the specifics of that family, but I wonder if he had attempted to settle the issue much earlier, if the wife might have submitted to truth.

The term "heretic" is "hairesicos" - humm does that mean bald people can't be hair-ethics :-) I'm safe! The term means schismatic, factious, or is used of someone that "takes or chooses a thing" - one that has taken a false teaching as his/her own. Notice I used both pronouns - women can also be heretics and should be treated with equal opportunity when they choose to go into error.

The admonition seems to ask for patience in rejecting the person as there is to be a first and second admonition. I would think this might relate to the confrontation mentioned in Matthew eighteen where you are to confront personally, then with others and if all is futile, then go before the church and have the decision to reject. This is a process that will take a little time, giving the erring one time to reconsider his views and an opportunity to change his mind/course.

Gill suggests, and he may well be correct, that since this is a public problem in the church that

rather than the Matthew formula that the admonitions should both be public in nature by the church leaders so that all the church knows what is going on publicly.

This might be the better course though at the very least use the Matthew concept. A church had a problem of division and the leaders tended to the problem privately. There was never a public explanation of the problem, nor the fact that the divisive ones left the fellowship at the leader's request. Nothing was said, only rumor was allowed to circulate. The problem festered due to this secrecy to a much larger problem. Public admonition would be the best.

"Reject" simply means to refuse or reject something. It means to remove yourself from the false doctrine. It could mean isolation from. In the fifteen hundreds there was a document called "On The Ban: Questions and Answers" by Menno Simons the founder of the Mennonite movement, which among other things spelled out in detail how church members were to refuse to interact with one rejected. It even gave instruction about how the heretic's family was to relate to the wrong doer. It was some serious rules for rejection and removal from the false teacher.

It was somewhat harsh, but if some of its principles had been used through church history many a mess would have been averted. It is all too common for a church to just allow false teaching to continue rather than rocking the boat.

We attended what we thought was a sound church a few years back. The people weren't overly friendly so we kind of found a Sunday school class - we went in and were treated to some very liberal views from the teacher relating to Scripture and its validity. We left class feeling this was a very liberal church. We went ahead and stayed for church to see what the pastor was like.

The message was powerful and fundamental as could be. We left totally confused. The pastor called that afternoon to thank us for visiting. I started with some questions about our confusion. He asked what class we had attended. He said, "Oh yea, that class - they are people that split from another church in our group and they decided to settle with us. They kind of do their own thing in that class. The right class you should attend is"

This man had rank liberals in his church, he had one of them teaching in his church and doing nothing about it. What a dangerous situation that could be. Unwitting visitors could easily be sucked into that false doctrine, and what is worse, the interaction with these folks could confuse and lead astray other believers in the church.

"Reject" is used in another way, but the idea is the same - reject. In Luke 14.18 invited guests reject the invitation. "And they all with one [consent] began to make excuse."

In I Tim. 4.7 the word is translated "refuse," "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself [rather] unto godliness."

The term translated "subverted" has the thought of tearing loose from something, or even turning

inside out. Not just a little bend, but a bending that does some real damage.

Recently I saw a Discovery channel show on shipping accidents on the Great Lakes. There was a paddle wheel steamer loaded with people that was caught in a storm, while a sailing ship was having problems of its own and not paying attention to what was going on ahead of them rammed the steamer. The sailing ship thought their vessel could not have hurt such a large steam ship so continued on its way fighting its shifting load and the terrible storm.

Unknown to the sailing ship the steamer sank due to the large hole that was torn in its side.

Great damage can come from seemingly insignificant doctrines. We must be on our guard for those that would tear a hole in our churches.

Let's look at church discipline for a few moments and see what we can learn. This is a section from my systematic theology.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH Copyright Rev. Stanley L. Derickson Ph.D. 1992

I personally have only been in a church involved in church discipline one time and that only recently. Church discipline is a topic that many let slip for many years. It is coming back into the foreground again for which we should be very thankful.

It is the means of keeping the local assembly pure, and it is a needed tool at times.

It is not hard to recall a minister that has fallen from his position due to immorality or theft. It is not hard to remember several members of local congregations that have gone off into open sin.

The hard thing to recall or remember maybe that any of these people were ever disciplined for their activity.

In the past there have been many that have taken church discipline very seriously. We have a series of Questions and Answers from history that were set forth by Menno Simons in 1550 concerning how the disciplined person should be treated. The "ban" in these questions refers to the fact that the sinner is banned from the local congregation. (I have included this complete article by Simons as appendix two.)

I would like to share some of these questions for you. So you can see how seriously some believers in the past were about discipline.

"Should husband and wife shun each other on account of the ban?"

"Should we greet one that is banned, with the common, everyday greeting, or return our respects as his greeting?"

"Are we allowed to show the banned any charity, love, and mercy?"

"Are we allowed to sell to, and buy of, the apostates....?"

"Are we allowed to be seated with an apostate in a ship or wagon, or to eat with him at the table of a tavern?"

We might assume from the questions on the ban that these people were serious about what the word says about church discipline.

I read an article some time ago that mentions a study in the south. The author had done some research on church discipline in a specific area (Mississippi). The church members did not know of any serious church discipline, except for one person that remembered a discipline of a singing star in Hollywood. The point? Church discipline is not a common thing.

Someone has, tongue in cheek suggested, that church discipline today is the pastor and elders keeping quiet about the sin in deacon Jones life so that he won't rock the financial boat.

To say the least, discipline is not a prime topic of activity or discussion these days in the local church, yet the Bible very clearly teaches that open sin should be dealt with by the church body.

DEFINITION

Let us define church discipline as the correction of action, or the removal of the erring believer from the local church body, for the purpose of correction and/or restoration. This is normally undertaken for immorality or deviation from approved doctrine.

At the outset we must realize that discipline is NOT to make the church sinless. It is to maintain a proper testimony before the world. Anyone thinking that discipline can make the church sinless does not understand the teaching of man and his relationship to sin.

Matt 5:23-24 is a text that would indicate we should be right with any brother that has anything against us before we offer to God. This is under the law but in the New Testament context I would assume we could apply this to coming before God with our gifts or offerings. In short if we have anything against a brother, we should settle it before we move into a place where we are approaching the Lord.

This alone would eliminate many of the problems of the church. We need to work on these items as we attempt to build a body for the Lord.

Matt. 18:15-17 is the text which gives us the guidelines for correcting a brother. If you have a problem go to the brother alone and confront him. If this does not work take one or two with you

so all can be established in front of witnesses. If this fails then tell it before the church. If this also fails then "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a tax collector".

Some might wonder if this text is appropriate for the church age. The fact that it appears after Matthew 13 where the Jews seem to reject the Messiah, and He begins to teach of things other than the millennial kingdom indicates that it is for this age. Even if you saw it for the kingdom age the principles seem to be good, and I think some of these ideas are born out in the epistles.

Most definitely the most drastic account of church discipline is found in Acts 5. Ananias and Saphira have lied to the church and more specifically to God, and their discipline is very quick and strong. Their lives are taken upon confrontation with their sin. This is a text which relates to the apostolic leadership however the idea that the sin was confronted and cared for immediately should be usable to us today. Note should be made that it was God that took their lives and not the church. The church confronts and in our age takes action of reprimand and/or removal. This is the extent of the church's authority. God may and I personally believe in some cases does, take further action in the lives of unrepentant believers. I believe that John 15:1-14 and I Corinthians 11:30 show that God may remove a sinning believer that is unwilling to turn from their sin from this life.

In Rom. 14:1-15:1 Paul sets down some principles for handling differences of opinion. This chapter shows clearly that differences of opinion are not in view for church discipline. These items are of personal decision and Paul lays down principles to deal with these situations.

The basis for removal of an erring believer from the assembly is based on I Cor. 5:4-11. I would like to consider this for a moment. First of all is this a believer or nonbeliever? It seems to most that this is a believer for we see in verse five that Paul is concerned for his soul. If this was a nonbeliever their soul would be on the way to destruction and there would be no need to turn it over to Satan.

Some suggest that verse 11 mentions him as being a so-called brother or lost ("...any man that is called a brother..."). However, the context seems to shift in verse nine from the man in sin to another topic.

This man was involved with his father's wife. Paul is quite plain there is a problem and that it should be dealt with. Verse seven uses the terminology that indicates the removal of the person from the church assembly. "Purge out." The term purge would indicate there is to be a cleansing action in the whole process. If you have removed a man that is in open sin, you certainly are cleaning up the church.

In verse five they are to deliver him to the Devil for the destruction of his flesh. The purpose of discipline is seen in seven and eight. Sin is like leaven and you must get it out of the lump before it leavens the whole lump. (Leaven is the same as yeast.) Leaven is usually seen as a type of sin in the Bible.

I have wondered if Paul's choice of words wasn't deliberate. "Puffed up," would picture a lump with leaven throughout - fully raised. His comments then in seven and eight would call on them to clean out that pride - which is sin - they can be a new lump. Indeed verse six indicates this.

It seems somewhat hard to envision a church that is proud of the sin that is within. The idea may be they were proud of how tolerant they were of the sinners. Tolerance is not something that is to be desired in the church, be it tolerance of sin, tolerance of false doctrine, or tolerance of improper activities.

We attended a Sunday school class in the South while on vacation and the teacher was involved in this idea of being pleased about how tolerant the people in her church were of one another. She mentioned they even had fundamentalists and liberals in the church and they all got along fine.

That is not getting along, that is being tolerant of false doctrine in your church assembly!

We need to look briefly at II Cor. 2:6-11 before we move on. Most agree that this is speaking of the man in I Cor. 5 that was to be put out of the church. Paul tells them to commend their love to him and to forgive him and comfort him. Restore your fellowship with him would be the idea of the text.

Another text which relates to the topic is Gal. 6:1,2. If anyone be taken in a fault restore him in meekness. The warning also is given to consider yourself so that you aren't tempted in the same manner.

The question is, "Does this relate to church discipline?" Specifically I would doubt it. It seems more of a generic type sin rather than immorality etc. The principles set forth may well apply however. Restore in meekness - and seeing to it that you don't become tempted. Along with this we must not forget that Christ was very forceful when he ran the money changers out of the temple (John 2:12-17), and most consider him meek.

There seems to be evidence that unruliness or disobedience is also a basis for taking steps of discipline. I Thes 5:14 "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient toward all men." II Thes. 3:6,14,15, mentions that we should withdraw from those that are disorderly and those that walk not after "the tradition which he received of us." Verse 14 tells us to "have no company" with anyone that disobeys the words of the epistle.

The elders or church leaders are not exempt from the possibility of discipline. I Tim. 5:19,20, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." Trouble with elders should be heard only if two or three witnesses are available. Then confront him before the assembly.

In our "don't scare people" atmosphere today we don't dwell on the aspect of hell because we don't want to scare anyone into heaven. This text tells us that disciplined people will cause fear in the assembly. Fear is not the best motivation to obedience however, the Word states that it is a possible motivation.

Titus 3:10-11 sets a basis for discipline for divisiveness. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject, Knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself." This verse tells us to reject after the second admonition the heretic. The term heretic seems to have the idea of one that is divisive.

Another text which we need to look at is II Jo 7-11. First of all we need to see that verse seven shows these to be lost people! This seems quite clear that we are to have no part with "RELIGIOUS" people that have a wrong view of Christ. This would be in the realm of having them in our homes for hospitality and encouragement. I'm not sure it prohibits having them in to witness to them yet I'm not sure that is a good idea either. You might run into difficulties. We can certainly witness to them - that is not a thought in the text!

From what we have seen there is plenty of evidence to show that we should and must discipline believers that are in sin. If we do not then we are allowing the leaven that Christ spoke of to contaminate the entire assembly. If we do not discipline, then we invite trouble and strife into our churches.

Discipline is not popular in our churches today. I have talked with pastors that have taken a needed stand and found themselves questioned for their activities.

The next question. What offences do we discipline for? I would submit a list of topics and references for your consideration.

- a. Immorality. I Cor. 5
- b. Unresolved disputes between brethren. Matt. 18:15-17
- c. Elders that sin. I Tim 5:19,20
- d. Repeated troublemaking. Titus 3:10
- e. Outward sin, such as divorce or immorality.

A related question. Are there others that we should separate from?

- a. Those teaching false doctrine. II John 7-11.
- b. Professing people involved in fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drinking or cheating. I Cor. 6:11.

We have shown that discipline is Biblical and that it is being ignored in our day. So, why do churches today fail to discipline? May some possibilities be set forth for your consideration and

future avoidance?

a. Afraid to rock the boat. Financial problems will come if we make trouble. We might hurt someone's feelings. How would it look to the community?

b. Indifference. We don't care.

c. There is always the usual outcry that "We can't judge." This argument is illogical. God states that we are to discipline. Thus we must assume that discipline is not "judging," or else God is telling us to do something that He has told us not to do. Now, just how logical is that?

All of these allow the leaven to leaven the whole lump.

Now that we see discipline to be correct, we need to consider who it is that should do the disciplining? Yes, the individual should confront, yes there should be witnesses on the second trip. These witnesses should be the elders so they are involved from the beginning. Several references indicate that the elders are the ones to become involved. Acts 20:28 show the elders over the church. I Thess. 5:12 mentions some are over the church for the purpose of admonishment. Heb. 13:7,17 mentions those that rule over the church and that the church is to submit them.

If you have been reading newspapers or listening to the network news over recent years you know that churches have been sued for disciplining a member. There is a lot of worry about lawsuits.

First of all we need to remember that the law of man is not the law of God. God tells us to discipline. If the law of the land punishes us for doing so, then so be it. We must do that which God has said.

The lawsuits that I have heard about seem to have been caused by improper application of the discipline. One lawsuit in particular was brought because the church broadcast the sin of the person far and wide. There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that we should take out a personal want ad to advertise a persons' sin. We should be as discrete about discipline as possible without causing hurt.

We need to consider a few easy steps of prevention that might save your church from a lawsuit.

I might suggest an article from Christianity Today, "Church Discipline Without a Lawsuit" by Carl Laney, Nov. 9, 1984 which deals with this problem. I have adapted some of Mr. Laney's points into the following list for you in case the magazine is not available to you.

1. Get insurance for the problem. Some church insurance companies have it available. We have insurance to avoid lawsuits for accidents etc. so there should be no real moral question in taking this step. Yes, it is sad that our Christian society has degenerated to the place where we have to

insure ourselves against such activities, but this is the society that God has asked us to operate in.

2. Don't slander while the discipline is going on nor after. There is no need to cause pain and suffering. Present the facts to the church family, act and keep your mouth shut.
3. Don't spread the information outside the church family. This is a family problem and there is no need to take it outside the family, no matter how badly you want to talk about it.
4. Include in your constitution a clause that allows for church discipline. Have each member sign the constitution as they join the church. This may or may not take care of the possible situations.
5. Possibly a visit to your lawyer in your state would be of good advantage.

Include just what you believe church discipline is, why it is to be used, and the procedure which is to be followed. Indeed if there is no clause in your constitution, put one in and ask all to sign it, be they new members or old.

Dr. Laney suggests the inclusion of a paragraph which forbids the member to sue the church leadership or the church if they bring church discipline action against the member.

I would work into this statement, something that covers you and the church in case they withdraw membership during the procedure. This would give them a moral obligation not to sue. You could also include information on the fact that Scripturally the believer is not to go to law with a brother etc.

5. If someone tells you something in confidence then you are bound to keep that confidence. If there is a real problem it will probably come to the surface in time.

I might take a side track for a moment and state there is a real lack of keeping confidences in the church today. Many of the illustrations I hear come right out of counseling sessions. That is not confidence!

6. In all of the activities attempt not to embarrass those that are involved. This can only hurt and bring about hard feelings. The desired result of discipline is restoration and hard feelings will not aid in this process.

7. During the process be sure to reveal only the information that is necessary for a proper procedure. Disclosing all of the little details is not necessary.

If at all possible, keep all discipline activities within the local assembly. If the person tries to transfer membership to another church, you should be bound to let the new church know they are under discipline. The details may not need to be given unless it affects the new church's decision.

If it is a pastor that is disciplined then there should be contact with the men of his ordination council, so that proper steps can be taken if any are needed.

Now, the following is my OPINION! DOCTRINE OF DERICKSON.

If you have someone come to your church for membership from a church close by, take time to find out why they left the other church. It may save you a multitude of trouble. Usually when people leave it is because of problems. You don't need those problems. If this is the case it would be good to talk to them and ask them to return to their previous church to solve their problem, and then they can be considered for membership.

8. If a lawsuit comes into your future, find a good lawyer so that you know you are doing things correctly and seek an out of court settlement. This will allow you to not go to court with your brother. If this is not possible, then you are bound by the law of the land to answer the charges and you must do the best you can to bring about a peaceful end to the matter.

9. Be very careful to inform the congregation. A church in Oregon discovered a teacher and woman were involved. They were guilty and would not cease their activity. The elders wanted to keep it quiet because both parties were very prominent members. The couple left the church voluntarily, but the elders did not inform the congregation. Rumors began flying and the elders still kept quiet. Before the situation was over others left because they mistakenly thought that the elders had kicked the erring couple out of the church with no reason.

Let's draw some conclusions to our study.

1. Church discipline is not a four-letter word. It is taught in Scripture and we should be practicing it!

2. We need to know our own attitudes. Discipline is to be done in love and concern for the other person. Forgiveness is the required when confession and repentance are forthcoming. (I Cor. 5:2; Gal. 6:1; II Cor. 2:7)

3. There should be a restraining influence from discipline upon the rest of the membership. I Tim. 5:20

4. For the church that is contemplating not bringing discipline I would recommend they read Rev. 2:12-17.

5. I Pet. 1:15 calls us to holiness. II Tim. 3:2 mentions that the elder is to be "above reproach". I Thess. 5:22 calls us to avoid any appearance of evil. Let these be your guide.

In light of such verses, we as local churches must maintain the purist assembly that we can. This comes from personal purity. This comes from prodding our friends to purity. This comes from

purging impurity, if need be.

Years ago we attended a church in Denver, CO that had a missions conference. Two missionaries from Africa came to the conference and were talking about how great the church was doing in Africa. It was growing, it was evangelizing, and it was an alive church.

I asked the two missionaries why the church in Africa was such an alive, growing church. The younger missionary quipped out some quick answers that I accepted. (I wasn't convinced that he had answered my question.) The next day the older missionary came to me and said, "Stan, I think I can answer your question from last night with one word. "Purity." He went on to explain that the church was pure on a personal basis and they were pure on an ecclesiastical basis as well. That was an answer that made much sense.

6. In the end result, I believe our emphasis should be squarely upon the Word of God. If lawsuits come they come. If bankruptcy comes it comes. God's Word must stand and we for it!

Mr. Laney ended his article with I Tim. 3 12, "Indeed, all who desire to live Godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.."

I suspect that the following is the best policy. **PROBABLY THE BEST CURE FOR CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS CHURCH DISCIPLIN'**. If we teach them right there will be less chance for error.

Some other references which might add to your personal study: Ex. 12:15-19; Ex. 13:7; Lev. 2:11; Deut. 16:4; Matt. 16:6,12; Mk. 8:15; Lu. 12:1; Gal. 5:9; I Cor. 6:11.

Enough of that let us move on in the passage.

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

We now shift to some personal matters and plans of the apostle Paul.

Artemas: This man's name means "gift of Artemis." This reference is the only allusion to this man in the Bible.

Tychicus: Tychicus means "fateful."

We know little of these two men, but they must have been quite valuable for Paul to send one of them to Crete, probably to carry on the oversight of the churches of Crete after Titus had gone.

Tychicus is mentioned also in Acts 20.4; Eph. 6.21, 24; Col. 4.7,18; II Tim. 4.12 and here in Titus 3.12.

He is more than an acquaintance it seems from Acts 20.4 "...Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord..." From the Ephesians passage it is learned that he wrote the book to the Ephesians believers for Paul, or at his direction/quotation. Again in Colossians we see the closeness between this man and Paul, "...Tychicus declare unto you, [who is] a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:"

Like Ephesians, Colossians was penned, at least partially, by Tychicus (Col.4.18). A very important man to Paul it would seem, yet Paul was willing to give up this man to gain benefit from Titus. You can only imagine how valuable Titus must have been to Paul. It may also be that Paul needed Titus's spiritual gift rather than that of Tychicus for the next portion of his ministry.

Nicopolis: Nicopolis means "city of victory" and there were a number of cities by that name around the travels of Paul. Many of the conquerors would rename a city Nicopolis to commemorate their victory. (Gill suggests that this is the Nicopolis of Thrace but gives no real basis for that statement. Life Application Bible states that it was on the western coast of Greece.)

Now, little can be gained from this verse but note that Paul wants Titus to leave Crete and come to him, thus he EXPECTS Titus to finish his work in a matter of weeks or at most months! Think back through all the things he is to teach the people and wonder at how he could accomplish so much. It must have been done by some serious time spending on the part of the people with Titus to learn all this stuff. More than three hours a week I'd guess!

There is another truth here of interest. Some quote James 4.13 "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what [shall be] on the morrow. For what [is] your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." as teaching that we ought not make plans for the future. This passage in Titus counters that thought. The James passage and the Titus passage must be understood within their own contexts as well as the Bible the context in which they reside.

Paul made plans. This is evident elsewhere in the Word, however the Spirit stopped him from accomplishing some of those plans. We should plan the best we can knowing our situation, then allow God to make modifications to our plans as the need fits His Will.

James is simply telling his reader not to make and count on plans, for their life is tenuous. He is not saying make no plans whatsoever.

APPLICATION:

1. Paul determines to winter in a specific place. Does that mean this is a proof text that "Snowbirds" are doing God's will? Snowbirds are those folks that go to the sunny states for the winter then return home for the summer.

No, this has nothing to do with Snowbirds, though it may relate to the thought of hiding out for the winter. There would be a lot of difficulty in traveling during the winter. It is my feeling that the shipping might have been quite hampered by winter storms in that day and area.

It also would give the apostle time to care for his writing and teaching responsibilities.

2. So, just how important are you to your pastor? Are you a valuable servant of God which your pastor can use to assist him in his ministry? What a responsibility the congregation has to minister in the church - to assist in the overall ministry that the church has to its own body and to the lost outside.

What a responsibility, also, for the pastor to assist ALL members of the congregation in finding ways to use their spiritual gift for the edification of the body of Christ. He is not totally responsible to see to it that all have a place to minister, but if someone is not ministering it is his responsibility to encourage that one to find a place to work.

Most churches operate with about fifteen to twenty percent of the body doing all the work while the other percentage sits and lets them. This is not the way that God wants it. He wants all people ministering with the gifts that the Spirit has given.

3. The term "heretic" deserves a little closer look by way of application. Barnes quoting Webster mentions the word "occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The corresponding noun ... occurs in the following places: Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5 Acts 26:5; 28:22, where it is rendered sect; and Acts 24:14 1 Corinthians 11:19; Galatians 5:20; 2 Peter 2:1, where it is rendered heresy, and heresies."

Barnes goes on to say, "The true notion of the word is that of one who is a promoter of a sect or party. The man who makes divisions in a church, instead of aiming to promote unity, is the one who is intended. Such a man may form sects and parties on some points of doctrine on which he differs from others, or on some custom, religious rite, or peculiar practice; he may make some unimportant matter a ground of distinction from his brethren, and may refuse to have fellowship with them, and endeavour to get up a new organization. Such a man, according to the Scripture usage, is a heretic, and not merely one who holds a different doctrine from that which is regarded as orthodoxy."

We often think of the word "sects" as being some large movement such as the Pharisees of the New Testament, but it more probably relates to a small group within a larger group that holds to different doctrine. Thus a reformed man gathering adherents in an Armenian church could be considered a sect or heretic.

The word relates not only to doctrine or religious belief, but can relate to philosophy. Now, that tends to get a little touchy, in that many groups find themselves differing in philosophy with a Biblical basis. This would make them a sect as well in my thinking.

The sad thing is that many a pastor has caused the older, founding people, of churches to become outcasts in their own churches by installing and forcing contemporary music upon them. The older folks differ and rightly so - the problem is that they become the heretics and are shunned rather than the interloper that subverted the congregation.

The person that forms a sect is actually causing division. Now isn't it the pastor, with his contemporary music, that is splitting churches then the older folks that are forced to leave. I think many pastors owe a grand apology to many congregations for causing division within a body that formerly was quite united.

Pastor, beware what you do in a church. You are there to feed not divide. The same goes to a reformed pastor that takes on a church he knows would reject him if they knew he was reformed. I have been told of a large number of churches that have been taken into reformed groups by unscrupulous pastors that came in unawares on the part of the congregation. Yes, the congregations should have been more careful in their selection, but if the pastors had been ethical and open in the first place none of the problems would have developed.

4. I would suggest you consider this possible application. If you believe, say the Charismatic movement, is divisive and incorrect theologically should you invite one that believes in such things into your church to minister to your people? It seems rather a fundamental violation of the term reject used here yet many pastors do just that.

Many pastors do not even ask of the doctrinal background of missionaries and speakers that they are asking into their pulpits. It is their responsibility to assure the congregation of like minded speakers, not just someone to fill the slot left when the pastor wants to take a break or a vacation.

In my mind this is tantamount to the shepherd inviting a wolf in among his congregation for a shot at feeding himself on one of the sheep.

It is no different when a music group is asked to minister. If the pastor does not know the type of music and the content of the lyrics before the invitation, he is asking for trouble and most likely will soon find it in his church.

Many reject the teaching of separation, but this is what separation is all about. Separating your sheep from the wolves that would come in and make converts to their line of thought.

5. Keathley uses an Old Testament account to show that this admonition is not just a telling of someone that they are doing wrong, it is much more. In I Sam. 2.24ff Eli tells his sons of their error, yet in 3.13ff Eli is rebuked by God for not taking care of his sons' problem.

What might be included in this admonition?

a. Identification of the problem. Firstly, just what is being taught? Secondly, just what is wrong

with what is being taught? Thirdly, what is the remedy for what is being taught?

b. Confrontation of the person accused. Are these things found above, true and accurate? If so then the person should be correctly accused of being divisive and given opportunity to question his accusers so that all are plain and clear about the wrong of the person.

c. Elaboration of the consequences and any further action that is expected of the accused and any action that will be forthcoming from the accusers, such as the second admonition.

d. The second admonition should go along the same lines.

e. Closure of the situation should be next. Either rejection of the false teaching by the accused, or rejection of the heretic from the assembly by the leadership.

It must be clear for all parties lest there be confusion or misunderstanding.

Note however in our society of rationalization, lack of ethics and general moral malaise don't assume the above is a slam dunk. It will be difficult to get the congregation to realize the black and white of the issue that most likely will be viewed as a gray area as most sin and incorrect doctrine appears to so many.

Be clear, concise and courageous and God will bless your effort.

II Thess. 3.14 also relates to this process. This passage probably relates a little closer to the Matthew concept, however to both. "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet count [him] not as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother."

Note, the reconciliation aspect of the process. Even in the admonition process the reconciliation is the aim, not the rejection. The rejection comes when the reconciliation attempts have failed. Even after rejection, reconciliation is the goal of the whole process. (See Romans 16.17 also)

6. The idea of the person being "condemned of himself" relates to the fact that he has been confronted twice, and has been rejected. It is his fault that it has gone this far, it is his problem to assure reclamation by the church by repentance, and it is his failure before God. Most people in this situation will rationalize all of the problems away I'm sure, but in reality it is they that condemn themselves.

Week twelve: Titus 3.13-15 THE WORKS

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

I won't tell any stories about lawyers, because I'm sure they have a multitude of theologian jokes that they would love to send my way, but suffice it to say, that Paul saw benefit to lawyers. I guess the surprise is that Zenas must have been an itinerant lawyer of some sort to be able to just pick up and go at the apostle's request.

Not sure, given the growing antichristian climate in the world that this might not be a possible ministry for our own present age; someone that could go place to place giving assistance to people that are in need.

Zenas means Jupiter, while Apollos means "given by Apollo." Zenas was a lawyer, which may be a lawyer or one that knows the law, but it can also denote a man that works with and teaches the Old Testament law. (The Net Bible note feels that he was a civil lawyer.) Tradition suggests that he was "one of the seventy disciples of Christ, and afterwards bishop of Diospolis."

We know a little more about Apollos. He is introduced in Acts 18.24ff as a Jew from Alexandria (North Africa). He is noted for his eloquence and after he became a believer, was quite convincing to the Jewish people. He was evidently a disciple of John the Baptist or one of the Baptist's followers, for it is noted in Acts that he was preaching in the synagogue with only the understanding of the Baptists teaching. It is also noted in this passage that Aquila and Priscilla nurtured him in the things of Christ.

He was an itinerant preacher and recommended by the brethren. He is mentioned as one of the leaders in Corinth (I Cor. 1.12) that the people were becoming divisive over. Some were claiming him as their leader while others held to the leadership of Paul. Paul goes on to deal with this problem in the following context.

To have been thus viewed, he must have been an exceptional communicator as was Paul. Both must have been striking men to know and sit under while they preached.

In I Cor. 16.12 Apollos is shown to be in compliance with Paul's wishes for his travels. A good preacher, eloquent, a good minister of the Word and a good cooperating servant with Paul.

One brief side note about Apollos might be that he was teaching wrong doctrine as a disciple of the Baptist, yet we have no indication that he was condemned by anyone. We are told that others took him under their wing to properly teach him.

As we go through life, if you run into someone that is teaching false doctrine, speak to them and attempt to teach them correctly. If they will not admit to their error, then there might be basis for

discipline, as we have seen, but if they are accepting of correction and proper teaching, then do so and be sure it is not in a condemning manner.

It is suggested that Titus is to bring these men with him. Either they were with Titus on Crete or they were going to be passing through on their way to Paul, however the later makes little sense, in that Crete is an island and is not on the way to anywhere unless the two men were arriving by boat from ports unknown. Gill holds to the idea of them being at Crete at the time and preparing for a journey.

Some suggest, on the other hand, that these two were traveling from the north and heading via Crete and continuing on by ship to some other destination. They further suggest that the verse is a request for Titus to care for their needs as they travel. The Net Bible follows this line of thought. "Make every effort to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; make sure they have what they need." They further translate the next verse as follows, thus backing those holding this position. "Here is another way that our people can learn to engage in good works to meet pressing needs and so not be unfruitful."

Gill says that the Syriac Bible has a postscript to Colossians that mentions it was being sent by Zenas and Apollos thus indicating they were with Paul and it might be possible that they also were carrying this letter to Titus on their way to a final destination.

Keathley holds to the thought that the two were carrying the letter to Titus as part of their journey on past Crete to a final destination.

"Diligent" not only has the idea of "be sure you do it" but also the idea of quickness about the task as well as earnestness in the task.

There is one element that is quite clear in this passage. Diligence. When you are involved in the Lord's work, be diligent. Don't allow all things to come before your service to God, but allow all things to become subservient to your service to God.

Servanthood is an option to the believer, in that God does not force servanthood. Servanthood is the command, and it is up to us as individuals to place ourselves in that position. Christ bought us and we are His property, whether we act like it or not.

One that is not "serving" God should consider the ramifications of deciding not to do what they are told in the Word. If SERVING is commanded, and you do not, then you are walking in sin. If walking in sin, you cannot have the full blessing of God. If walking in sin, you cannot have an adequate and proper relationship to the Spirit. If you do not relate properly to the Spirit, you cannot have proper leading and guidance from Him. Just how proper can your life be? I trust you will amend your decision quickly so that you can be right with God. There are a lot of other ramifications if you want to consider them.

There is a priority in life that must be maintained. God first, family second, employer or occupation third. There are many marriages - Christian marriages, where one partner places occupation above the other two and splits the couple. This is wrong and should be corrected.

God must come first in everyone's life in the family, and then the family and occupation will come into proper perspective.

Be diligent in your visitation; don't allow a minor headache to keep you home to watch TV.

Be diligent in your teaching; don't allow a busy schedule to rob your students of proper preparation.

Be diligent in your cleaning of the church; don't decide that someone else will clean it up.

BE DILIGENT!

Gill goes to some lengths with the thought of good works. He runs with the fact that this can be translated "honest trades" and comments to the thought of a father's need to teach a son a trade, as was the custom of the day. He does then go on to give emphasis to the idea of "good works" as they are normally understood.

14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

Again, those good works! The good works are linked with unfruitfulness. We need to understand that we are believers on this earth to be fruitful. Now, some relegate this fruitfulness to soul winning, and that if you aren't a soul winner, then you are unfruitful. No, soul winning is not the only fruit that you can bear. Here good works are tied to fruitfulness.

Paul elsewhere mentions that he wants to have fruit among a group and it has the idea of teaching or preaching. Philip. 4.17 shows giving to be a fruit. "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." Rom. 1.13 is written to believers and Paul desires to have fruit among them clearly showing that fruit is not "only" soulwinning. "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles."

Fruit is the requirement. The type of fruit is up to the individual, their gifts and God's leading. If God leads you to witness to someone, and you refuse, then you have been unfruitful.

Bear fruit for your Lord!

"Let ours also learn" is of interest. It would seem that linked with verse thirteen, that Paul is encouraging Titus to see to it that Zenas, Apollos, and others, keep up their good works. Not only this, but since Paul used the term "learn" it would seem that some had not learned to maintain

good works.

This might have application to multiple staff churches where they encourage one another into good works. Not to miss, the fact that all believers should be encouraging each other to good works.

15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace [be] with you all. Amen.

"All" would indicate a real union of character, of thought, of purpose. The type of thing that a local assembly should have.

"Salute thee" pictures it is not wrong to bring attention to the work that individuals are doing. Bringing pride and glory is wrong; however giving attention to the work of another Christian is not wrong. It may even detract from your own work for a time, but it is something that you should do.

I have seen many pastors that are very unwilling to open their pulpit and congregations to missionaries. They feel that the pulpit is THEIR'S to use! Feeble is the flock that does not have diversity of messengers. Christians need to be challenged with the work of the world.

The church is the place that we need to be hearing what is going on around the world, it is a place where we should be finding challenge, and it is a place where we should be trained for the work. One man can do it in the pulpit, but a multitude of men can make for a much better vision for the people.

I once heard a radio program and the preacher was relating that people pay big money to go to football games. He related that they paid that money to see the action, to see the excitement, to see the victory, not to see the huddle.

The huddle is needed, but the huddle is not the spectacle. If you huddle quickly or neatly or circumspectly it is not of interest to the paid viewer. The action is the spectacle!

The preacher then related this to the church. We are huddles all over the world. The huddle of the church where we pump each other up with things we've heard many times before - it is not where the action is, the action is during the week. The victory of the church is not in the huddle, but in the world where we fight the opposing team - the forces of the devil.

You could take this analogy further. The huddle is where strategy is planned, where action is planned, and planned well. What strategy or planning do we have in the churches today? What planning do we have to get the players out on the field Monday morning?

Most pastors are more interested in feeding the flock, fleecing the flock, and funing the flock. WE

ARE TO BE PLANNING THE ATTACK ON THE DEVIL'S FORCES IN OUR COMMUNITY, NOT ENTERTAINING THE TROOPS - IF GOD WANTED BOB HOPE BRINGING A TROUPE TO ENCOURAGE THE TROOPS, HE WOULD HAVE COMMANDED IT!

The final words of the letter are indication of the general recipients of the churches at Crete, not to just Titus alone. "Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace [be] with you all."

APPLICATION:

1. Paul uses the term "salute" in relation to greetings between believers. Salute can mean embrace, though that isn't the thought here. I would like to consider greetings between believers for a while.

I have been known to ask a class if they believe in literal interpretation of the Scripture. Of course all agreed. I would then ask if they REEEALLLLYYY believed in the literal interpretation of the Word. Again, all agreed. Then I would read one of the following verses.

Rom. 16.16 "Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you."

I Cor. 16.20 "All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss."

II Cor. 13.12 "Greet one another with an holy kiss."

I Thess. 5.26 "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss."

Paul reiterated this four times in his writings. There must have been something in it that he wanted believers to get. Do you suppose that he wanted them to greet one another with a holy kiss? Yes, in our society it might not be a wise greeting, though I am not so sure that we should allow an amoral, homosexual accepting society to dictate our greetings.

At the least, we ought to greet one another with as much love, concern and honesty as with an holy kiss. This would be something a little different from the usual, "How's it goin?" or the "How ya doin?" that we usually get out when we see another believer.

I have used the illustration before that I used to walk the halls of our church - one Sunday I would greet everyone that I met, and all would respond with a greeting. The next Sunday I would greet no one and no one would greet me. Having done this many times I know that it wasn't just a fluke, but a natural and normal problem. Now, that isn't saluting another believer, and it is certainly not showing the love and concern that a holy kiss would communicate.

Years ago we were picking our son up at a Bible camp where he had been ministering. The camp was being used by a very conservative group that greeted one another with a "holy kiss" on the cheek. I could see on their faces the joy of seeing one another when they came up to greet one another.

What a different face we might put on the church if we were to somehow grow to like, enjoy and look forward to spending time with other believers, and then communicate this by our greetings. By greetings, I think you know I am not talking about how we greet one another during the "GREETING TIME" either. (Don't suppose those two are related do you :-)

How might we foster this closeness of believers?

a. By fostering times of togetherness. Having pot lucks is good. Having smaller get together groups should help. Have a "surprise guest" time each week. (Everyone signs up, and someone else pairs up the couples.)

Work days can foster "togetherness" as well.

b. Having special day get togethers. Valentine's Day, Labor Day etc. Make these inexpensive or free so all can participate.

c. Start hobby type fellowships. Electric train people, airplane people, exercisers, bikers etc. Be sure to mix them up now and then.

d. Do you suppose preaching from the word on how to relate to one another might work? A series on "One Another People" might get things rolling. Maybe a study or two or three on great friendships in the Bible. Maybe a series on the "holy kiss" would be a good start.

e. Foster unity of purpose in the church so that all are going the same direction.

f. The leadership should "Lead" maybe - this would be a tremendous asset - for the people to see some genuine concern from the leaders.

g. Encouraging believers to gather around people that are in trouble or that has lost a loved one. Death and trouble tend to open a person to feelings they usually lock up. When they are open to feelings and they see someone responding it can be a powerful message. It also will open up feelings in the other person as well.

Actually, just being "One Another People" will do the trick. Just do a search for the references containing "one another" and take a slow read through the contexts and see how we are supposed to be treating one another.

We have not been taught these things in most churches.

2. The idea of Christians being hospitable has been covered in some of my studies, so if you have heard it before, skip to the next point of application.

Hospitality is one of the great lackings of the church today. It is also one of the great privileges a

believer has, and it is also one of the great sources of blessing to the believer.

I will dwell again on the lack of hospitality shown to missionaries that are on the road in this country. I will specify that I have knowledge of only the western part of our country, but I suspect it is true country wide. Missionaries are often on their own for housing and meals between meetings.

It is rather normal to give them a meal before or after the meeting, but other than that, duty is fulfilled. I was on the road for nearly five years and most of the time I was on my own for meals and housing between meetings.

Indeed, I had very few that offered either food or housing. I seldom knew from one meeting to the next whether I would have a meal before moving on and only once was I expected to stay overnight. In that case there had been no mention of staying, so I had planned a visit some distance away for early the next morning.

There are some churches however that take the truth of this verse to heart. I arrived at a missions conference in California and noticed a bad cut in one of my tires. I had just mentioned the tire in passing to the pastor when I told him I needed to run an errand. When I returned from getting the new tire, I was handed a, more than ample, check to cover the cost of the tire. The pastor was sensitive to the missionary's needs on the road. What a blessing to know that the church was thinking of my needs when I am sure they had many other places to spend that money.

Hospitality relates to how we treat people visiting our churches, it relates to how we treat people that come into our homes, and it relates to how we treat people in general. We need to be very careful to be as hospitable as we can to all people.

We live in a multi-racial neighborhood and when we first moved in, there were some that started borrowing tools, asking for help with bike repairs, etc. I can't say that my attitude was always as gracious as it should have been, but I always helped as I could.

The results of this interaction were quite evident one day. Our garage had been decorated with graffiti and I had been out cleaning it off which was a time-consuming job. One of the prime borrowers and his brothers knocked on our door and apologized for the tagging. They said "It was some of our friends and when they said they tagged your garage we told them they shouldn't have done that cuz you are a good guy!"

Our hospitality can make a difference in how we are perceived. I have lost a couple of hand tools to the borrowing, but it was a good investment.

Hospitality is not only a good work, but it is a work that the church dearly needs to involve itself with, for the believer's sake as well as the sake of the lost.

3. Keathley sees two characteristics of Paul in these closing comments. He sees the fact that Paul was a team player. Even though he was an apostle, even though he had direct revelation from the Lord and even though he had the ultimate authority on earth at the time, he chose to surround himself with able men to assist him in his ministry. He did not go it alone as so many preachers of today. He chose good men and used their gifts to the utmost, rather than to stifle those around him.

Further he sees that Paul used every day occurrences to stimulate believers to doing what they should spiritually. Here he uses two travelers as a reminder to hospitality and caring for other believers.

4. These final letters of Paul's should be a large challenge to church leaders. He thought the things contained within them to be important enough to commit a lot of time to their creation rather than take time for other things.

Leaders, I trust that you will take a lot of time to understand the implications of these pastoral letters for your life as well as the life of your church.

Imagine if you will, just following these Pastoral Epistles in pursuit of Godliness. What a shift in the church we would see if church leaders started applying these principles to their churches. What a shift in the congregations we would see if lay people started to live by these same principles.

5. Just an observation - here we have a lawyer and a preacher traveling together. No, I am not going to find a joke in that situation. These two are probably at least comfortable with one another as believers. How do professionals today view preachers? Do preachers have the respect that they deserve? Do preachers respect the professional as they ought? Is there a mutual goal between the preachers and professionals?

The spiritual leader in a congregation must be the spiritual leader of all in the congregation, not just the non-professionals. This is not a condemnation of preachers or professionals, just asking questions - are these relationships correct in your church? On the other hand, are professionals involved enough in the church for the preacher to build a relationship with? Are there wrong feelings between the two groups?

It isn't impossible that the preacher could wonder at the high salary/living of the professional. It is not impossible that the professional might look down on the "poor" preacher.

In fact these final verses tend to point out the good relationship, the closeness and the respect between an apostle, the man with the most authority in the church at the time, and the lowest of Christians. We will see in the next lesson the apostle even had a good, close and helpful relationship with a servant.

A church leader should never be standoffish to the people he serves. The pastor should always be on common ground with the lowest and the highest of his congregation and all those between. We are all common people before God. We all were lost sinners before He graciously touched our lives for Himself.

So often I have seen a pastor and his board make decisions that the congregation would never have desired and implement the ramifications of those decisions without any input, concern or respect for the congregation.

6. In verse fourteen Paul adds a little phrase that deserves some thought. "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses"

First of all we are to learn to maintain works. It is a learned process, not something that is natural. How will people learn if they are not taught - pastors/teachers think on those things awhile - many are the pastor that is disgusted with a non-working congregation - have they been taught?

Secondly, they are to maintain - continue on in good works. It isn't a, "this month is good works month" thought that would be better than nothing, but it is continuing from this point forward to do good works.

Thirdly, we are to do the good works.

And fourthly, this is the phrase I wanted to think about - "for necessary uses." What in the world did Paul add that for? What was in the back of his mind when he added those words? What situation of life was prompting him to clarify the "let ours also learn to maintain good works" - was it a specific situation in Crete, was it something from his past, or was it something he had observed recently?

The preposition "for" may give us a clue. It is rather like the phrase the lexicon uses to illustrate this usage. On a poster it says, "Jesse James wanted for robbery." This can be taken two ways. Either James is wanted so that he can commit a robbery for us, or the better usage, James is wanted because he has robbed.

In the phrase "for necessary uses" there are two ways to view it. Maintain good works for, or to get, salvation is one way, but this is against all of Scripture and especially this context, so the other meaning, maintain good works for necessary uses, is the preferred and correct.

Paul may have been making this distinction to be sure no one thought he wanted to see works tied to salvation. He may also have had another thought in mind.

Are there good works that are not necessary? I suspect so. I personally feel many things today classified as "Christian" works are unnecessary. Today I received an email ad for a "Christian" debt counseling service. Now, this business seems to be questionable at best, to me, but some

might think it a valid "Christian" work. The thing that caught my eye was the subject line, "Jesus saves and so can you."

Personal opinion here - that is sacrilegious, improper, and obnoxious to me. How can one relate the free salvation that Christ died on the cross for to saving money, which in itself may be unbiblical in view of a number of New Testament passages concerning laying up stores etc.?

That would class as a good work that is not necessary in my book. We might mention "Christian" dating services, though I can see the desire of a believer to find other believers to date, but can't this be accomplished for free by going to church?

We are becoming the world folks. We want it all - every smidgen of the world, we want to "Christianize" so we can have it to. No matter it is right, wrong, or logical, we want what the world has and we are going to do it by just tacking on the term "Christian."

I suspect there are many good works that are done that really aren't necessary - and probably by this definition not "good works" so we ought to consider how we do things and what works we involve ourselves in.

Some principles to consider:

- a. Is this work going to make me feel good, or bring about good for someone else?
- b. Is this work going to benefit God in any way?
- c. Is this work necessary or is it something that I want to do?
- d. Is this work for God's glory or my own?
- e. Is this work going to be beneficial to the other person?
- f. Is this work a necessity that really needs to be done?
- g. Is this work to fulfill a guilt need?

I think the point has been made.

7. The next phrase in that verse is "that they be not unfruitful." Note must be made that this phrase breaks Christianity into two categories of believer. Fruitful and unfruitful. To be fruitful you must do good works, if you do no good works you are unfruitful.

I made the point that soul winning is not the criteria by which fruit is measured, but I did not make the point that good works are fruit and lack of good works is being unfruitful.

Can Paul make it any more plain and clear than that? Christian, if you sit in the pew week after week not doing anything in the church, if you sit in front of the television set all week and do nothing, you are an unfruitful servant.

Now, at this point - BE AFRAID - the Scriptures are rather clear on this. In John we have a teaching that is seldom given to congregations. I am going to quote a lot more than the needed text just because it is a fantastic passage ending in one of the neatest thoughts of Scripture aside from salvation itself.

John 15.1-14 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every [branch] that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast [them] into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. 9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and [that] your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

I trust that you get the picture. We abide in Christ if we are believers. If we abide not in Christ, we aren't his and will be cast out and burned according to verses five and six. Now, back up to verse two we see that if a branch bears no fruit it is taken away. If it bears fruit it is pruned so that it will bear more fruit. Now, think. What is the result of a branch being taken away - this is a Christian that bears no fruit - taken away. Not burned, not thrown away just "taken away."

Now, to me the only logical expression of this passage is that there are three classes of people in view. There are unfruitful Christians, there are fruitful Christians and there are non-Christians. The non-Christians are taken away and burned, the fruitful Christians are purged/pruned, and the unfruitful Christians are taken away. Seems clear to me that physical death is the result for a believer that is not involved in good works. I have considered this passage for years and there seems no clearer teaching to me to come out of this passage.

If you are not involved in good works, you are unfruitful, and you may well be taken home lest you be an embarrassment to your Savior.

I think good works are good. And while we are doing them, we should be sure they are necessary. Humm, I wonder if we have found a third possible explanation of Paul's added phrase "good

works for necessary uses."

Week 13 Philemon

We know little about this book other than what we can read from it. Onesimus seems to have been a slave of Philemon. Onesimus had run away, but he ran into Paul and his usual evangelization. The result was that he had met Christ. Paul is seeking restoration between the two men, even unto Paul offering to pay anything that the slave owes his owner. Not a small offer, in that Paul was self supporting and probably not well-to-do at all.

Col. 4.9 mentions Onesimus as being "one of them" at Colosse thus most assume Philemon's home was in Colosse, and most likely the home of the church that Colossians was written to.

Ephorus is also mentioned in Philemon as well as twice in Colossians, thus another indicator that Philemon was at Colosse. (Col. 1.7, 4.12)

There is no other information about Philemon and we have no idea of his decision that this letter would have required. From reading the letter, it would take a cold cold hearted man to not respond positively.

Most feel this letter was written about the same time as Colossians thus it was around 62 A.D.

Barnes introduction to the letter is of worth. "THIS letter is almost wholly of a private character; and yet there is scarcely any portion of the New Testament of equal length which is of more value. It is exquisitely beautiful and delicate. It is a model of courtesy and politeness. It presents the character of the author in a most amiable light, and shows what true religion will produce in causing genuine refinement of thought and language. It is gentle and persuasive, and yet the argument is one that we should suppose would have been, and probably was, irresistible. It is very easy to conceive, that the task which the apostle undertook to perform, was one which it would be difficult to accomplish--that of reconciling an offended master to a runaway servant. And yet it is done with so much kindness, persuasiveness, gentleness, and true affection, that, as the letter was read, it is easy to imagine that all the hostility of the master was disarmed, and we can almost see him desiring to embrace him who bore it, not now as a servant, but as a Christian brother...."

1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy [our] brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,

2 And to [our] beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Now, I don't want to accuse Paul of anything, nor detract any from his character, nor who he was. However, after such introductory verses could anyone, but a cold hearted nasty man, not feel that he has been complimented and set forth as a prominent citizen to be looked up to? Nor could someone so complemented say no to any request that might come along later. Paul has given credit where credit was due.

Note that Paul points out that he is a prisoner rather than the apostle that he often mentions. Seems he is putting himself on the lowest plain possible.

Philemon is not only a slave owner, but he has opened his home to the meeting of the brethren, and he is a loving caring person. Not a bad example for us to follow.

8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech [thee], being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Again, Paul reminds Philemon that he is a prisoner and that he is OLD, that old age, senior citizen card might bring some sympathy to the request. Also, he has called upon Christ - in fact kind of blames it on his boldness in Christ.

We don't know how old Paul was, but in Acts 7.58 he is mentioned as being young. Commentators place him in his twenties to thirties at this point which would make him in his fifties or sixties at the writing of Philemon. Either way in that day and culture he was old and probably was feeling most of the physical problems of age as well as the compounded problems of all his beatings and ruff living over the years with the addition of age. Many physical problems get worse with age and then there is the age problems themselves.

There are days when one feels like all they do is labor at trying to stay healthy. Exercising an hour or so, taking pills, moving around at a slower pace, taking longer to plan and cook healthier meals and spending time trying to figure out what the doctor DIDN'T tell you about your maladies. Trust me, getting old ain't for sissies as many have said before me.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

Now to the point - we need to discuss your servant Onesimus - note nothing has been said about why Onesimus is with Paul - that he had run away from his owner Philemon.

Barnes sees a significance of the order of verse ten. He says that the verse appears thusly "I entreat thee concerning a son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds--Onesimus." He points out that Paul declares this man to be his son before naming him to give Philemon time to know the sonship before knowing it is Onesimus, thus avoiding the displeasure of hearing the name till he knows that Paul has a spiritual father/son relationship to the man.

The old "Give them the good news first and then get to the bad news" tactic. All through this letter you can see the wisdom and in my mind cunning of Paul as he writes with a very specific purpose in mind - get Onesimus off the hook or at least get him back into good graces with his owner with as little upset as possible.

We see that Paul has given the gospel and Onesimus has responded. He has, in the time Paul has known him, come to find out he was unprofitable to Philemon, that he, as a Christian, is quite beneficial to Paul and most likely will be also for Philemon.

Since Paul does not know what it will be like when Onesimus returns, how can he say that he will be profitable to Philemon? I assume that Paul knows what the new creature in Christ is like. It seems to me that it must be, in Paul's mind, a guaranteed item for a new believer to be a profitable person to all around them.

Think on that truth for a few days and see what you come up with for new believers - for how old believers live their lives - well, how you live your life.

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: 13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

Paul has determined to send this new believer back to his owner - to slavery, even though he is a new Christian. Christianity does not guarantee a grand life.

Paul wanted to keep him for assistance with the ministry, but is sending him back - with a request for Onesimus to return to him a free man, is the implication.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

Here we see the request - take him back not only as a returning slave, but as a brother in Christ, a man that can be profitable to you. He is your brother and you should treat him as such is the implication.

Paul is not going to leave it at that. He even offers to pay anything that Onesimus owes Philemon.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth [thee] ought, put that on mine account;

19 I Paul have written [it] with mine own hand, I will repay [it]: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

I will pay it and not even mention, well in passing, that you owe me big time brother Philemon. You owe me so big time that you really ought to do this for me, even if you think I should cover the wrong - I will.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

I know you will do as I ask, in fact if you are the man I know you are you will do even more. I don't think this is a way of getting more out of Philemon, but more just a valuation of Philemon's character and way of living.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

Two items to see here. First the fact that not only was Philemon housing a church, but he was opening his home to the apostle for a place to stay. Not a bad way to use that huge house you have folks - it is empty and gathering dust, why not put it to use for the Lord. Invite missionaries/speakers into your home for their time with your church.

Secondly, Paul is suggesting clearly that his itinerary was dependant on the Lord and prayers offered on Paul's behalf. He often made plans, but he was always open to the Lord's leading and closing of doors. Remember, that he is in prison and he is making plans to travel - he may have had some thought of coming freedom, but he may also have just had the desire and was waiting on the Lord to take care of the details.

23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with your spirit. Amen. [Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant].

We see here as we did in our study of Titus, if you have gone through the Pastoral Epistles that Paul knows a lot of people in the churches, and he recognizes them as fellowlabourers, people that are assisting him in his work for God.

It is good for the minister of God to have many co-workers - men and women that are able to give of their time to assist in the work of the Lord in the local church. This is the way the Lord seems to want it. If He didn't want all involved, He wouldn't have had the Spirit gift EVERYONE with a spiritual gift for use in the local church.

We also see that he appreciates these people enough to send his greetings to them.

APPLICATION:

1. A church was meeting in his home. Not only must it have been fairly large, but it was open to believers to use. This was the common occurrence in the early church as they did not have First Baptist church down on the corner to go to, and they weren't large enough, nor wealthy enough to build buildings at the first.

A question has arisen in recent days as to the validity of home churches. They are seen as a distasteful and often cultic work. True, many of them have cultic leanings, but there is nothing in the Word to say that a church in a home is not right and proper, indeed Scripture seems clear that it is a valid methodology, if not the norm to be followed.

Imagine what we could do for world missions if we had no building mortgage and repair costs. If we met in homes, we could assist the owner with upkeep which would not take much in the way of cash and have lots left over to support missions and other outreach work.

Imagine, the time the pastor would have to study the Word - no painting, no lawn mowing, no lawn fertilizing, no taking care of wedding rentals, no cleaning of the church, no setting up of chairs and all that stuff. (This is of course if it is meeting in someone else's home - we had one in our home awhile and I was the one doing all that stuff :-). He might even have some time to call on the congregation now and then.

The advantages of home churches are many.

- a. Low overhead
- b. Low maintenance
- c. More small groupish - comfortable for many people that don't like crowds

- d. More personal - time to get to know all in the congregation
- e. More challenging - more personally known people to challenge your life
- f. More accountability - people will know what you are doing and assist you in knowing right
- g. More supportive - all know when one is hurting and all can be involved in helping

If you are a small group just getting started consider the possibilities of a home church or at the least a church in a rented facility. Many buildings that are not used on Sundays can be rented very reasonably.

While on deputation, I was in the home of a church board member for dinner. After dinner several other men showed up for a meeting of the board and they invited me to sit in. They were meeting in a rented facility and were meeting to consider building their own building.

While others discussed the need of a building, my host was busy with a pencil and paper. The meeting went on for a while when one of the men asked our host what he was thinking. He said that he had been doing some figuring. He was a contractor so knew building costs quite well. He said we have a monthly cost of this much with our rental, which by the way is quite adequate for us now and for a lot of growth in the future. We have possibilities of long term use of this facility. On the other hand to build a building of sufficient size it would take so many thousand dollars which if financed would cost us this many dollars. We would also have cleaning and maintenance of the facility on top of that.

The men looked at each other and to a man agreed that their present situation was the best decision hands down. There was no further discussion of the new facility, only thankfulness to God for His good provision.

I am not saying buildings are wrong, but consider what a church could do with the millions of dollars of real estate that they already own and will have to acquire to continue their growth.

2. No clearer understanding of the Christian/slavery topic can be found than this small letter from Paul.

He does not decry slavery.

He does not tell Philemon he ought to know better.

He does not tell Philemon he should set Onesimus free.

He does not tell Philemon he ought to set all his slaves free.

There is no indication that anything was wrong here, other than Onesimus had wronged his owner.

I am not suggesting that the people of the South were correct, nor that they were right concerning slavery before the Civil war, but this passage as well as others that speak to proper treatment of slaves by their owner, may well be some of the reasons why they felt slavery was okay and maybe even Biblical.

There is also the principle of living under the governmental system that is over you that related to the slave owners.

No, I do not condone any of the wrongs of our country's slavery, nor do I say that slavery is right and correct; I am just saying there are some things we should understand about people before we rush to judgment and condemnation.

3. In verse five we are shown three characteristics of Philemon. "Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;"

Love: This is not just brotherly love, but it is the self sacrificing love "agape" which Paul has heard about.

One must wonder if Paul heard of Philemon's love from Onesimus. It would seem a logical conclusion. What a testimony this man must have had before his fellow man.

Faith: Faith is simply believing in what someone says. Faith in God is belief in His Word. Faith in man is no different, faith or belief in the truthfulness of their word. Now, I have to tell you I have this faith in God, but in His saints - not always.

Not only to Christ but to all saints: It is understandable that Philemon would love Christ and have great faith in Christ, but it is said of Philemon that he had this love and faith for all the saints, or all the holy ones as the term translated "saints" means. It is the normal word that is translated holy in the New Testament.

I always try to give everyone a freebie trust. After they have betrayed that trust the books may remain open, but I am protecting them quite closely. I have been wronged and lied to by so many believers over the years that my faith in the saints is little, I fear.

This is not necessarily wrong in my mind, because many of those that have wronged me are not saints in the meaning of the word - holy. They may be saints in that they are believers, but they are not saints in that they are holy living people - that is kind of obvious if they are liars and people that wrong other people.

We should attempt to keep a good respect and faith in our fellow believers, even though it may be difficult at times.

Barnes suggests that the love is toward the saints alone and the faith is toward God. "Hearing of thy love and faith. Either by Onesimus, who, after his conversion, would be disposed to state all that he knew that was favourable of Philemon, or hearing it by some other persons who had come from Colosse to Rome. The faith which is mentioned here refers to the Lord Jesus; the love, to the saints. The order in the Greek is indeed the same as in our version, but it is not unusual by synthesis, or uniting two or more things together, to arrange words in that manner. Thus Matthew 12:22; "The blind and dumb both spake and saw;" that is, the blind saw, and the dumb spake. The meaning is that he had strong faith in the Lord Jesus, and ardent love towards all who were Christians."

4. There is a point of interest in the why of Onesimus leaving Philemon. Philemon sounds like a really neat believer, thus why would a slave leave such a good master? There is the possibility that he just wanted to be free, but there are some other possibilities.

The term translated servant is the usual term that is used of a believer's relation to God - that of a servant, one that has placed themselves under the control/authority of another. This could possibly relate to an adoption, or even a relative that has placed themselves under Philemon's authority.

At any rate why would a man leave a great situation for the unknown? I suspect the desire for freedom or self control might be the biggest possibility.

This may be a good lesson for anyone that is in a position of controlling others. Even though you might be a great guy there is still a strong desire to be out from under that control.

There is also a possibility that Onesimus had stolen something when he left. This might be assumed from Paul's offer to repay anything that Onesimus owed Philemon.

A little more might be drawn from Paul's statement "I have begotten in my bonds:" in that Paul was imprisoned, thus Onesimus must have sought out Paul when he reached Rome. Why would a man run away from a good master to seek out Paul?

There might be the possibility that Paul had spoken to him while in Colosse at some point in time. They might have been friends and a mutual concern may have drawn Onesimus.

Barnes lists some reasons why Onesimus may have been uneasy about returning and the reason for the letter from Paul.

"(a.) that he had done his master wrong by the mere act of leaving him, depriving him of valuable services which he was bound to render; or

"(b.) that he may have felt that the mere act of running away had injured the character of his master, for such an act always implies that there is something in the dealings of a master which makes it desirable to leave him; or

"©.) that he had in some way injured him in respect to property, by taking that which did not belong to him, Philemon 1:18; or

"(d.) that he owed his master, and he may have inferred from his leaving him that he meant to defraud him, Philemon 1:18; or

"(e.) that the laws of Phrygia were such, that Onesimus apprehended that if he returned, even penitent, it would be judged by his master necessary to punish him, in order to deter others from committing a similar offense. The laws of Phrygia, it is said, allowed the master to punish a slave without applying to a magistrate."

5. We see in Paul and Onesimus a great illustration of spiritual leader and believer relationship. Paul led him to the Lord and immediately talked to him about the wrong of leaving Philemon and the need for his return. OR there is the possibility that Onesimus was seeking Paul for a limited time and was planning to go back to Philemon, however I'm not sure there would have been a need for this letter if that were the case.

I would suspect that Paul and the Spirit of God brought about this change of mind. Anyway, to the application. When a leader confronts you or you realize you are wrong and the leader encourages you to do what is right, following that admonition is the correct action.

6. Col. 4.9 states "With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is [one] of you. They shall make known unto you all things which [are done] here." Philemon twelve says " Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:" It seems that Onesimus may have been with Paul before, and was one of the men that conveyed the letter to Colosse, and then here he is sent again, to return to his master.

This may be part of the why that Onesimus left. He may just have had a strong desire to see or be with Paul in the ministry. However, Paul mentions in verse eleven that Onesimus is "now" profitable to Paul so their relationship prior to this meeting was limited it would seem.

7. We note in this letter that Paul, in verse four, tells Philemon that he is praying for him. This is not uncommon to Paul. He mentions his prayers for people in other books as well. (II Cor. 13.7; I Thess. 5.23; II Thess. 1.11; Phil. 1.9; Col. 1.9.)

It would have been interesting to know how Paul prayed. We do know from this that he and the Lord kept tabs on those that he knew and those that were ministering to others. He was concerned that they do a good job for God.

A solid prayer life is founded on praying about God and for others. It is not wrong to ask for personal assistance, but "others" seem to be the focus. We can't be the center of the universe all the time, though if there is need in your life, certainly pray for it.

What are some of the items that we might pray for as we seek the Lord's assistance for them?

- a. Spiritual strength to face the day.
- b. Physical strength to face the day.
- c. Mental strength to face the day.
- d. Emotional strength to face the day.
- e. Physical provision of needs.
- f. Strength of character in light of our society.
- g. Strength of courage to witness as there is opening.
- h. Wisdom to seek the Lord's direction in all actions.
- I. Desire to serve God.

Remember some of this prayer/concern for others was while he was a prisoner. He certainly had strength of character to concentrate on others when he has such a large need of his own.

8. In verse six we see "That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." The term communication is the Greek word "koinonia" - the word which we call fellowship. Paul is saying that he trusts that Philemon's fellowship of his faith would be effectual, by the good things within him. This sounds to me like as he lives his life he will be showing others all the good things within and that this will effectively fellowship or share his faith with others.

Relate this to the previous point relating to prayer. Paul was praying that Philemon would be a good witness.

Both Barnes and Calvin agree with my astute observation (:-) when Barnes quotes Calvin, "What, therefore, did he desire for Philemon? That his faith expressing itself by good fruits might be shown to be true and not vain. For he calls that the communication of his faith when it does not remain inoperative within, but bears itself forth to benefit men by its proper effects. For although faith has its proper seat in the heart, yet it communicates itself to men by good works."

Guess that kind of puts us all on notice to be sure our lives are on the right track and showing forth Christ and not ourselves.

9. I wish I had a Corvette for every time I've heard the phrase, "We are not supposed to judge

others." Well we have in this passage the call to evaluate and understand what sort of person we are dealing with. No, we aren't supposed to judge others on eternal matters, matters that are clearly God's jurisdiction, but He does expect us to view a person's life and evaluate where they are, from time to time. In the pastorals there are qualifications for elders - if you have qualifications, if you are going to make them meaningful and useful then you must use them to evaluate a person's life.

Here in Philemon Paul has evaluated a number of people. He has looked at their lives and come to conclusions about their worth, trustworthiness and usefulness. Not only generally, in those that are mentioned in the letter, but of Philemon and Onesimus. First, in Onesimus, he had to have evaluated his worth to himself and to Philemon and then he also had to evaluate whether he was trustworthy after running away. As a side note there is another truth here. A person that has just sinned or committed a crime, as Onesimus had, may deserve a good word in spite of his actions.

Secondly, Paul has evaluated Philemon and approached him in the best manner to gain the most advantage for success of the mission. He has pretty much evaluated his spiritual strengths and weakness based on what he had heard of his character.

No, don't condemn people to hell, but certainly evaluate them in light of the Scripture and react to them as needed. Over the last couple of years one of my neighbors has borrowed a number of items. He has not brought all of them back and some items I had to ask for return. I have evaluated him and his actions and have come to know, that if I loan him something, the chances of getting it back would dictate that I view handing him the tool as not really a loan, but rather a gift, for it shall not return.

Evaluation is a part of life, and if you have someone state we aren't supposed to judge, you might take a moment to clarify the truth surrounding the statement.

10. There is another very important point. Paul, when he had brought someone to Christ felt a father/son bond with the person. This is a concept many in today's church fail to understand. Many are the evangelists that go nation to nation winning people, but never setting any relationship up with the person. This is understandable in that it would be hard to have a close relationship with hundreds of people, but on the other hand the Scriptural example might make one wonder if winning hundreds at a time is really the proper work of an evangelist.

I'm sure they would argue that they do as much as they can to get the people to go to church, and give literature etc. which is admirable but it still is not the Scriptural father/son relationship. Possibly it would be better to spend more time in pre-service training to set up a one on one relationship with people in the local area so that closer relationships could be developed.

Years ago while doing door to door visiting, one of our team ran into a couple that had accepted the Lord at an evangelistic campaign over three years prior. The couple had no idea what they should do with their new found faith, and had not gotten into a local church. They were invited to our church and they became quite faithful in attendance and began to grow spiritually. Three years

of wasted time in their lives because this close discipling relationship was not established.

The problem with some of these campaigns is that even though they try to get people to go to church after accepting the Lord, they try to get them to go back into their state and/or Catholic churches - this is not where new believers should be sent. Would you send a new born child into a wolf den to be raised?

11. We see in verses twelve and thirteen a neat concept. We see Paul sending Onesimus back because it is the right thing to do, even though he really wanted to keep Onesimus for his own gain; he was sending him back - the right thing to do. It would have been quite easy to just keep Onesimus busy with ministry, and forget about Philemon.

In many business colleges around the country they have added "ethics" courses to their curriculum. Ethics is a concept that has been lost in our society. This is part of the problem today between business and customers. The business is in it for the huge profits that they can make rather than to make a profit while giving a good product.

We have seen this lack of ethics in the banking problems, the business collapse of Enron and the many others. We see a lack of ethics in the way churches operate. I was sitting in a church office one day and overheard (because the voice level was getting quite high) a discussion between a secretary and church business manager. They discussed whether their church should deal with businesses in town based on Scriptural principles, or as other businesses would act. The manager was quite emphatic that the church should never give heed to Scriptural principles with outside businesses. The secretary was arguing hard from a Scriptural standpoint, but the manager flat rejected the Scriptural points for his own ideas.

Ethics must be a basis for our lives or else we will be operating as the world operates. In my younger days the business world operated ethically, but no more - not today.

Actually Paul is living the proper Christian life in this area. Proper love between believers brings one to be self-sacrificing for the benefit of the other believer. Paul wants Onesimus for his own assistance, but will do the right and natural thing by returning him to his master. Not that Paul didn't lay a healthy dose of, "I sure would like to have you send him back to me" on this master that is a believer.

This concept is again seen in verse eighteen where Paul offers to pay for any damage Onesimus might have done. This was not Paul's responsibility, but he wanted to take on the responsibility if there was one.

12. As I view this passage I am reminded of two passages that teach us a very important concept. Romans 10.12 "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." and Gal. 3.12 "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."

The concept is that all believers are equal and should recognize one another as equals. This could translate into elders and deacons being selected on a "all are equal" basis rather than as a winner of a popularity contest. It might come to application in making all activities available to all economic classes of people. There are many areas of application, just take some time to dig them up out of your own church experience.

We visited a church and were sitting in a Sunday school class that seemed quite adequate for our spiritual needs and desires. At the end of the lesson they began talking about their monthly social event which was exciting - we could get to know some of the people and get more settled into the church. The social event turned out to be bowling and then pizza at one of the local pizza parlors - not an event that we could afford to even consider attending in our economic state.

Many times we have been limited on finance and long on desire to fellowship with believers, but the two could not happen. There are some ways that a church or class can avoid these problems.

a. If there are people that can't afford things and you really want to have that particular event, those that have the finance could invite others to go with them. You could also take up collections and finance the event out of the collection so that all may attend, but not feel that they had to put themselves in a financial bind to be part of the congregation.

b. Plan events that aren't costly. Picnics, potlucks etc. are all quite acceptable to most believers as events and are minimal in expense.

c. Center some of your events on service to the church or community. These would be gatherings where fellowship can occur without the expenditure of money. Community projects, church maintenance days, sports events etc.

d. Make it a get together where the Word of God is studied and discussed. You don't always have to have "fun" at events; you could have some "LEARNING" now and then.

13. In verse seventeen the word partner relates to someone that is partaker of the same beliefs, someone that is on the same page with you, someone that agrees with your principles and wants to advance the same ideals as you. Notice, that Paul's only basis of commonality with Philemon seems to be the work of the Gospel, the evangelization of the lost.

Reflecting back for a moment, this is Paul the APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST - Christ had appeared to this man personally. Yet, this man associates with a common criminal on a one to one basis. If Paul thought himself to be one on one material, I think every single one of us ought to have the same attitude. Now moving on to the evangelization topic.

I have to wonder if we aren't looking at the basis for what we ought to be doing as a church. We are in the business of evangelization, not all the other things that the church is involved in.

We attended Sunday school in a church in the south while we were on vacation. The class was filled with professors from a local denominational college. The text was Matthew 28.18ff which is called the Great Commission. It is Christ's commission to the apostles to go forth winning and discipling.

The class began to discuss how we might apply the passage today. The discussion covered all sorts of social gospel type ministries, the food bank, the rescue mission, the soup kitchen etc. They covered a number of other ways to minister to people socially, but nothing much was said of spiritual ministry to people.

The teacher at the close of the class turned to me and point blankly asked, "Well, Mr. Derickson, you haven't said anything, what do you think?" So, as is my usual self I gave them my view of missions and evangelization. The class was rather quiet, but at least they listened without casting stones.

The church is involved in about everything but evangelization today. By evangelization, I am not talking about the big campaigns and the big rock concerts that are common today, but that one on one transfer of saving faith that was the keynote of Paul's ministry - that one person sharing the gospel with another - that one person listening to the Word presented by another in love and concern. This is evangelization, not what we do today.

We ha visited a church a number of times and were seriously considering attending there. However, two Sundays in a row the pastor followed us out into the parking lot trying to convince us that we belonged in his church. The last time he told me that we really needed to come to the Sunday evening services, because that was when the Word was preached. He went on, that the morning service was for the Gospel, it was a time to evangelize. I was tempted to ask him who he was evangelizing, because the only people there were members, and all should be saved. There he is feeding believers things which they don't need for the sake of "We've always done it that way." syndrome.

We are to evangelize outside of the church and bring the new believers into the church to be trained.

14. Barnes mentions a letter that is of similar content done by Pliny and it is regarded as good literature, yet this letter from Paul is much superior in content, courtesy and love, yet literature buffs ignore it - probably just because it is Biblical.

Barnes points out some characteristics that are of note.

a. Paul was the model for politeness and correctness in his letter. He was most courteous in his request of Philemon.

b. The letter shows that Paul was a master of tact and proper decorum. He did not demand, he

only made a good logical argument for a hoped for outcome.

One sees a letter that ought to be studied in the secular realm as literature and manner.

Barnes seems to go quite far in attempting to suggest that Onesimus is not set forth as a slave in this book. It seemed that he was reacting to the many commentaries of his time that held to this position. It also seemed that he was reacting to the many people that used the book to point out the Biblical support for slavery. I would guess that the two are closely related in the minds of the commentators.

Again, I would suggest that the book does not support nor disclaim slavery, only the Christians proper lifestyle within that system. The Bible seems clear to me that we are to live a proper life no matter what system of government we find ourselves in. The Biblical life is the key, not the system.

In the way of final thoughts on the Pastoral Epistles, I only would encourage all pastors to seriously consider the ramifications of these books upon their ministry. If these books were applied to today's church there would be a modern day reformation of the church and we might see righteousness returning to the believers life on a more regular and permanent basis.