



# PT Butler

## Bible Study Notebooks

### Study of TITUS

prepared by P. T. Butler Th.D

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# Teacher's Notes

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

## TITUS 1:1-2:15

### Introduction to Titus

Don DeWelt in his book, *Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus*, College Press, 1961, pp. 19-20, quotes Lewis Foster from *Bible Teacher and Leader*: "The parents and home community of Titus are not known. It is made clear, however, that he was a Gentile (Greek), and he was at Antioch of Syria either fourteen or seventeen years after Paul became a Christian." (See Gal. 1:18,; 2:1). From this time on he was a close companion of Paul, entrusted with important tasks and held in high esteem by the apostle. It is strange that his name does not appear in the book of Acts. Since Luke omits his own name also, it has been suggested that Titus was a relative of Luke, or in some way was so close to him that Luke deliberately refrained from mentioning him by name. At any rate, we can conclude that Titus was included in the company that went to Jerusalem from Antioch when the question of keeping the old law was disturbing the church. Acts makes it clear that "certain other of them" went up with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (Acts 15:2), and then we read explicitly in Galatians 2:1 that they took Titus with them. After this occasion, Titus does not figure in the New Testament records until Paul is at Ephesus, on his third missionary journey, and is writing to the church at Corinth. Here it becomes evident that Titus, along with an unnamed brother, had been sent by Paul to Corinth to represent Paul and the gospel, perhaps to deliver Paul's first letter to them, and to defend their right. Later Paul, failing to find him in Troas, became so anxious to know of the state of affairs in Corinth that he sailed across the Aegean Sea to meet the returning Titus in Macedonia.

Here in Macedonia Paul's heart was made glad when he learned from Titus that the Corinthians had accepted his rebukes and corrections in a proper way. Out of comfort and relief Paul wrote his second epistle to them. In all there are seven references to Titus in 2 Corinthians (2:13; 7:6,13,14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18). From this we also learn that Titus had special responsibilities in making the collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

Following this we know nothing of the movements of Titus until Paul addressed a letter to him in Crete. It becomes evident that after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment, he did missionary work on the island of Crete and left Titus there to lead in the continuing work, even as he left Timothy at Ephesus. In this epistle Titus is asked to join Paul at Nicopolis as soon as he is contacted by Artemas or Tychicus (Titus 3:12); but whether these plans were carried out we do not know.

In his last epistle Paul states that Titus has gone to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10) Dalmatia was then, a Roman province on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea—today Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina—the Christianity implanted under Titus continues until

today. It seems unfair to suppose that this was against Paul's wishes, as was the desertion by Demas (2 Tim. 4:10). Rather, Crescens had gone to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia as Paul had directed them. Since no previous word had been given of work done in Dalmatia, this may have been a missionary enterprise into a new field. Some suggest that Titus was older than Timothy (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12 and Titus 2:15) and was chosen for situations that demanded the stronger and more understanding character. The apostle calls Titus "mine own son" (Titus 1:4). He also accepts him as his "brother" (2 Cor. 2:13) and his "partner and fellow-helper" (2 Cor. 8:23). Although Titus is not called an "overseer" in the sense of an elder or bishop, nevertheless he was a capable shepherd for the Christian flock as a representative for the apostle Paul in the service of the Lord. It is impossible to measure the power of his influence in the church, but we can be sure it was great."

It is our opinion that Titus was appointed by Paul to the office of evangelist (see Eph. 4:11). Paul bestowed on Titus the authority to "amend what was defective and appoint elders in every town" in Crete (Titus 1:5). Paul also told Titus to "rebuke" those who "had no right to teach," (1:11-13), that he should "teach sound doctrine" (2:1), to "declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority—let no one disregard you" (2:15), and to discipline the "factious" (3:10). These are responsibilities delegated to Timothy as an evangelist (see 1 & 2 Tim.).

## Crete & Cretans

Crete is an island in the Mediterranean Sea with Cythera on the NW and Rhodes on the NE, forming a natural bridge between Europe and Asia Minor (today Turkey). Crete is about 156 miles long and from seven to 30 miles wide. Despite its enviable geographical position, Crete has never attained a prominent place in history, partly because of internal dissensions and, in more modern times, because of its acceptance of Turkish rule and the Islamic faith. In mythology Mt. Ida is the legendary birthplace of Zeus, the head of the Greek Pantheon. King Minos, the half-historical, half-mythological character, and alleged son of Zeus, was an early ruler. Both Thucydides and Aristotle accept the existence of King Minos and claimed that he established maritime supremacy for Crete by putting down piracy. Aristotle compares the institutions of Crete to those of Sparta. Crete is said to have been colonized by the Dorians from Peloponnesus. The most important cities of Crete are Cnossos; Cortyna; and Cydonia. Around 140 B.C. the Jews established a large enough colony on this island to be able to appeal successfully to the protection of Rome. Crete in the OT—The Cherethites (1 Sam. 30:14; Ezek. 25:16) held to be a group of Philistines, are identified as "Creatans." Crete in the NT—a number of Cretans are represented as being present on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11) when Peter and the other apostles were preaching in the temple at Jerusalem. Paul visited Crete and left his assistant Titus in charge. In the opinion of the apostle Paul, most Creteans were not of high moral character: "Cretans are always liars..." (Titus 1:12). The first words of this quotation are to be found in the Hymn to Zeus by Callimachus (305-240 B.C.) and Lucian's Lover of Lies (A.D. 120-180). The particular lie of which the Cretans were always guilty was that they said the tomb of Zeus, a non-existent personage, was located on their island ("gods" were not supposed to die!). Laziness and gluttony also characterized them according to an epigram of Epimenides

(ca. 600 B.C.). Titus is charged to sharply rebuke them (Titus 1:13). A storm on his journey to Rome forced Paul's ship into the Cretan port of Cnidus (Acts 27:17). The narrative does not specifically indicate that Paul actually landed on the island.

## Chapter 1

The NIV translates the Greek word *kata* in Titus 1:1 with the English word "leads." The RSV and ASV translate the same word as "which accords with." The KJV translates it "which is after." Most commentators say the phrase should be translated, "...their knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness." The Greek word translated "godliness" here in Titus 1:1 is *eusebeian*. It, and other forms of it, is used 15 times in the NT (excluding the word "godly") and 11 of those times it is used in the Pastoral Epistles (4 times in 2 Peter). It is sometimes translated in the RSV "religion." One commentator says the phrase would most correctly be translated, "...the truth that God's elect have come to know is that which accords with true godliness...with emphasis here on its visible manifestation in godly behavior." No matter "how you slice it," without the truth (i.e., the gospel) there is no godliness! No human being is inherently possessed of godliness—nor can they earn it. **SO, ULTIMATELY, IT IS BELIEF AND OBEDIENCE OF THE TRUTH (THE GOSPEL) BY WHICH THE GODLINESS OF CHRIST IS IMPUTED TO US, AND, IN TURN LEADS US TO A GODLY LIFE—NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND!** Clearly, what Paul and Titus preached (the gospel) accorded with godliness, because the gospel is godliness! Synonyms to "accorded" are, "gave, provided, supplied, endowed, bestowed, awarded." In other words, when you "get" the gospel in you, you get "godliness" in you! That's why Paul emphasizes "teaching sound doctrine" so passionately in the Pastoral Epistles! Paul is actually saying here that the truth (gospel) is synonymous with godliness or godliness is synonymous with the truth. The two cannot be separated! **BUT TRUTH PRECEDES GODLINESS!** It is the "grace of God that leads to repentance" (and thus to life eternal), Rom. 2:4—and the grace of God can only be known through the gospel facts! The "straight and narrow way" leads to life (Matt. 7:14). Peter makes it plain that it is through a knowledge of Christ's very great and precious promises that we have everything we need for "life and godliness" and through that same knowledge we are made partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world (2 Pet. 1:2-4). **IT IS ONLY THROUGH THE GOSPEL AS RECORDED IN HUMAN LANGUAGE THAT WE OBTAIN A KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST AND HIS PRECIOUS PROMISES!**

Whether Paul meant a man must have one wife and if she dies, he can no longer be an elder, or whether he meant a man who has never married a wife he cannot be an elder, depends on how one translates the phrase from the original Greek language. In addition one must consider all the other doctrines involved in marriage and Christian leadership in the NT. The Greek phrase literally is: *mias gunaikos aner*. There are no definite articles in the phrase! It would be literally translated, "one-wife-man" or "one-woman-man." In other words, to be an elder, a man must be of the frame of mind of "one wife." He cannot be a bigamist or polygamist. He certainly cannot be of an attitude that adultery or fornication are acceptable to be an elder. Here is what the late brother Carl Ketcherside (an elder in the Church of Christ) once wrote in his *Mission Messenger* on the subject quoted in

Don DeWelt's book on Timothy and Titus, op.cit. pp. 289-300: "Is it your position that a man must be married to qualify as an elder? Yes, and I gave my reasons for so thinking in the November edition of this paper—and they were—(1) the primitive community of saints (Christians) being Jewish, was patterned after the synagogue in government; (2) ...the context (here and in 1 Tim.) relates to one who is domestically situated as the head of a household; (3) the Holy Spirit (in the Word) presents an analogy in which the home, or household, sustains a relation to the congregation of God, and it is in ruling the first that one demonstrates his ability to govern the second. Do you think that an elder must have children? Yes, I do, because he is contemplated as the head of a family, or household, and he must demonstrate his ability to take care of the church of God by ruling his own family well (1 Tim. 3:3). Do the scriptures teach that an elder's children must be members of the church, in order for him to qualify? I do not think so. I believe that the statement "having faithful children" in Titus 1:6 is misunderstood by a lot of people....I think...that a man may be appointed to the eldership before his children are old enough to accept the gospel and assume the responsibility of the Christian life...The statement to Titus is "having faithful children," and to Timothy, it is, "having his children in subjection." I conclude then, that faithful children are children in subjection to the will or rule of the father. Faithful children are those who are trustworthy and reliable because they are in subjection to paternal government. Paul defines what he means when he says "Faithful children not accused of riot or unruly." Is it not to be presumed that children who are reared by Christian parents will obey the Lord when they get old enough? That does not necessarily follow. God said, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isa.1:2) and I do not think that earthly parents are any better than God. The fact that God's children rebelled against him is no reflection against the way in which he nourished and brought them up. We need to be careful in assuming that a profligate child is always a reflection against the parents, lest we reflect against the fatherhood of God." Brother Ketcherside concluded by saying that if he had some Christian brethren who did not think a man had to be married to be appointed as an elder, he definitely would not be divisive about the issue and, while he could not conscientiously appoint such a man to be an elder, he could conscientiously worship with them while he would meekly and humbly offer them his interpretation of 1 Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:6. "Them's my (PTB's) sentiments, perxactly!"

Paul uses two different Greek words to name the elder (presbuteros, "elder" and episkopon, "bishop"). We get the English word "episcopal" from the Greek word episkopon. Episkopon literally means, "one who visits to take care of." The Greek word translated "sound" is hugiainous (pronounced, who-guy-ain-oose) and "doctrine" is didaskalia (de-das-ka-leeah). The term "sound doctrine" appears numerous times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:7,13; 4:3; Titus 1:9,13; 2:1,2,8). Hugiainous means literally, "healthy." Didaskalia means literally, "teaching" (it is the word from which we get the English word, "didactic"). Elders are "spiritual doctors-of-instruction." Sound doctrine ("healthy teaching") is the only kind of ministration that edifies and gives spiritual growth, maturity and strength. There is only one source for "sound doctrine"—that is the Scripture (OT and NT)—the Bible! Paul told Titus that an elder must "hold fast the faithful word (apostolic doctrine—especially the New Testament) as he has been taught that he may be able to give instruction and confute ("refute and convince" Greek elegchein) those who are "contradicting" (Greek, antilegontos, "the ones speaking-against" the "sound doctrine"). The elder is the "steward" of

God (KJV). The Greek word there in Titus 1:7 is oikonomon, “a house-manager for God.” If he is to “manage” or “keep” God’s house he must be thoroughly schooled in God’s instructions! It is not his own house he manages—but God’s! He must manage as God has decreed—not as he wishes! Therefore, an elder must be a constant and thorough STUDENT of the Bible! He must LEARN what God wants done and do it! Remember all the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels about stewards! The elder is treating “sin-sick” people—he must be more astute, incisive, intelligent, and diligent than any physician who deals with the physical body—the elder deals with eternal souls (Heb. 13:17). IT IS AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY TO BE AN ELDER IN GOD’S CHURCH! While the elders are primarily charged with seeing that “sound doctrine” is proclaimed and lived in the church (Acts 20:28-35), it is also the responsibility of “evangelists” (Titus 2:1) (i.e., preachers) and all the older and wiser members of the congregations (Titus 2:2,3; see also 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Jn. 2:12-14; 2 Jn. 7-11; Jude 3, etc.).

As Don DeWelt wrote, “Please keep this principle in its context.” Clearly, the Bible never teaches that sinful actions and thoughts are “pure” to anyone. Paul is admonishing against calling “impure” what God has called “pure.” Some Judaizers and perhaps some Gnostics were already at work among the Christians on Crete dispensing “Jewish myths” and “commands of men” to the effect that certain foods, objects, and relationships were “unkosher.” The Gnostics would teach that marriage was impure. Certainly the Mosaic law and rabbinical traditions teaching that some foods and some people were unclean was to be indubitably corrected! Paul had to write the same thing to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:1-16). As a matter of fact, Paul had to soundly condemn the teachings of Judaizers and Gnostics in almost every epistle he wrote. For the NT Christian “all” meats and people and other objects are “kosher.” Things or objects are all pure until they are made impure by employing them in ways that violate the express will of God in the Bible (Rom. 14:20). Even the human mind can be made to be impure by human beings willfully allowing impure thoughts to linger there! Christians are to keep themselves “pure” in mind (Phil. 4:8; 2 Pet. 3:1), in heart (Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Pet. 1:22), in conscience (1 Tim. 3:9) and in deed (1 Tim. 5:22; James 1:27; 1 Jn. 3:3). The Greek words Paul uses in Titus are kathara and katharois—they both mean “clean.” They are the words from which we have the English word catharsis (i.e., a “cleansing”). We must allow the word of God do a constant catharsis on our minds, hearts, consciences and actions (Heb. 4:11-13). Whatever God has called “clean” we must call clean—whatever God has called “unclean” we must insist is prohibited. The only way to be sure about clean and prohibited is to know what the Bible says!

## Chapter 2

Neither Titus nor the elders are given the responsibility of training the young married women. This is the responsibility of the older women. Who would be better qualified? Explicitly, Titus directs the older women (Greek, presbutidas, “women who are older”) to teach the younger women. They are to be are to be “teachers of what is good” (Greek kalodidaskalous, Titus 2:3). Since the Greek word didaskalous is used with the prefix kalo, it certainly means older women are to teach verbally as well as by example. The Greek word sophronizosin is 3rd person, plural, subjective and means the older women are to

cause the younger women to be “sound-minded, or sober, or wise.” It involves the cultivation of sound judgment and prudence. Paul uses a derivative of the same word in 2:5, *sophronas*, and it is translated in the RSV “to be sensible.” Evidently Paul thought many of the young women of his day were “scatter-brained” and lacking in sensibility and wisdom (1 Tim. 5:11-16). The older women were to “teach” the younger women by precept and example to (RSV) “love their husbands” (Greek, *philandrous* “men-lovers”); to love their children (Greek, *philoteknous*, “child-lovers”); to be sensible (Greek, *sophronas*); to be chaste (Greek, *hagnas*, “holy”); to be domestic (Greek, *oikourgous*, “home-workers” or “home-keepers”); to be kind (Greek, *agathas*, “good”); and submissive to their husbands (Greek, *hupotassomenas tois idiois andrasin*, “subordinate or obedient to their own husbands”). While all these character traits may be verbally taught by older women to younger women, the best mode of teaching them would be by example. And where would an older woman best teach these character traits by example?—IN THE HOME! In fact, the most efficient and indelible “school” for learning moral and domestic character for both boys and girls IS STILL THE HOME (not even “at church”) (see Prov. 31:10-31; 1 Tim. 2:11-12;; 1 Cor. 14:34-36).

Paul has only one admonition (2:6) to “lay on” the young men—“be sensible.” The RSV translates it: “Likewise urge the younger men to control (Greek, *sophronein*, “be smart, be wise”) themselves.” Apparently it wasn’t only the younger women who were “scatter-brained” and intemperate in that civilization (much like our own). Young men tend to be headstrong, self-willed, rebellious and unwise! One has only to read ancient history to know this was true in Bible times (both Biblical families and non-Biblical families). It began with Cain and Abel and Joseph and his brothers, and David’s sons, and has continued to this very day—MOST YOUNG MEN TEND TO BE SERIOUSLY LACKING IN SELF-CONTROL AND SENSIBILITY! While some may protest, “I was never rebellious or out of control when I was young!” if they are brutally honest with themselves they will admit they were rebellious in their minds whether they ever acted rebelliously or not! Paul urges both Timothy and Titus to set the example for the young men with whom they come in contact (1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8). Our young “preacher-boys” graduating from Bible colleges, who are themselves only 22+ have a tremendous responsibility to exemplify self-control and sensibility (sobriety). This must be a part of the curriculum of the church for its “Teen-agers”—both by precept and by example. Paul uses the Greek words, *aphthorian* (“free from moral taint”), *semnoteta* (“dignified”), *logon hugie* (“healthy speech”), *akatagnoston* (“that is unblameable”)—they are translated in RSV as “integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured.” All of this is so that “an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.” Self-control for the Christian ministry is an absolute must! Its absence indicates a person does not have the Holy Spirit abiding within. It must be a character of the Christian because a lack of it will give rise to unbelievers to blaspheme the name and cause of Christ which is the redemption of all mankind! CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN HAVE A “HEAVY” RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LORD AND HIS CHURCH! They must be taught this responsibility!

The “grace of God” has already appeared and will yet appear. The “grace of God” is the Master-Teacher. I have capitalized Master-Teacher because the “grace of God” was Personified in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. It was the vicarious death of Christ (and his resurrection) which convinces and controls those who receive his word with honest and good

hearts (see 2 Cor. 5:14-21). “For our sake he (God) made him (Jesus Christ) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” TRAINING IS IN ORDER TO CONVINCING AND CONTROL! It is the “grace of God” that leads honest people to logically understand they must present their bodies as living sacrifices unto God and allow themselves to be transformed (Rom. 12:1-2) “I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable (Greek, *logikon*) service.” GOD TRAINS US BY REMINDING US OF THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF HIS GRACE! Paul uses the Greek word *paideuouosa* which is translated “is training” in 2:12. Don DeWelt says: “The grace of God is a wonderful pedagogue. The word (*paideuouosa*) is stronger and broader than the term “teacher”—it quite literally means ‘to train a child, to bring up a child.’ Instruction is a part of child training, and God’s love toward us has provided such instruction in His word. But such training includes far more than mere instruction or information. ‘He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.’ The loving concern of God provides discipline as well as instruction. In what way will God our Father lead us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts? There are so many ways best known to Him, but all of them have their basis in a knowledge of His will.” The “grace of God,” manifested in his love and his chastening, is a continuing process! We never cease to be taught. It is significant that the verb *paideuouosa* is present tense and in Greek that means an action that is continuing. Paul used a present tense verb in Romans 2:4 when he wrote, “Do you not know that God’s kindness (grace) is meant to be leading (present tense) you to repentance?” (See also Eph. 2:1-22). TRAINING IS DONE TO BRING US TO REPENTANCE (A CHANGE OF THINKING AND ACTION)! Paul practically repeats himself about our motivation to live godly in this present world of wickedness in Titus 3:4 (i.e., the goodness and loving kindness of God). THERE’S NO GREATER MOTIVATION THAN GOD’S LOVE—TRUE, AGAPE, LOVE THAT CARES ENOUGH TO DIE FOR US AND DISCIPLINE US! But the ultimate “grace of God” will be given to believers “at the appearing (second coming) of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.” THEN WE SHALL INHERIT THAT “ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY BEYOND ALL COMPARISON” (2 Cor. 4:16-18). That ought to “teach” and “train” us to purify ourselves! (1 John 3:3). Our faith, love and works for Christ will be vindicated!

Clearly, Paul anticipated that some Christians on the island of Crete might tend to “disregard” what Titus was there to teach. Some Christians there might be like the Corinthians who played the game of dividing up the flock according to the “authority” of those who had brought them to the Lord (see 1 Cor. 1:10-31). Some Cretan Christians (and unbelievers) might disparage Titus’ teaching since he was not an apostle. But Titus taught with the full authority of the Word of God and had the sanction of the apostle Paul. AND SO DOES ANY TEACHER OR EVANGELIST OR ELDER TODAY WHO TEACHES AND LIVES WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS! God’s authority accompanies his Word when it is proclaimed. When God’s Word (not human opinion) is read, heard, or proclaimed, IT IS TO BE OBEYED regardless of who the “speaker, reader, or preacher” may be. Jesus told his disciples that even when Pharisees spoke the word of Moses (the OT scriptures), his disciples were to practice and observe whatever they tell you, but do not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice (Matt. 23:1-2). The authority resides in the Word of God, not in the evangelist (preacher) or elder or teacher—but the Word has full authority wherever and however and



whenever it is taught or read! So, give heed to your elders, your preacher and your Bible teacher—but always “check-out” what they proclaim that it is in accord with what the Bible teaches!

## Teacher's Notes TITUS

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

### Titus 3:1-15

The Greek word is *agathon*, but translated “honest” in the RSV but “good” in the KJV and NIV. One, specific, “honest or good work” would be to subject oneself to civil authorities and civil laws. Evidently the Cretans had a problem with “authority”—especially civil authority. Remember they had been subjugated by the Roman empire and occupied with troops as all of the Roman provinces were. They would have had to pay heavy taxes to Rome and worship the emperor. Ancient historians, Polybius and Plutarch indicate Crete was rife with talk of “revolt.” Paul tells Titus to remind the Cretan Christians, just as Paul had reminded the Christians at Rome (Rom. 13:1-7) that Christians must be willing to subject themselves to their rulers, even if such rulers live evil lives. God has ordained law and order. So long as civil law does not conflict with the laws of God, Christians are to obey those civil laws—whether they like them or not! Other “honest works” are “to speak evil of no one.” The apostle Peter admonishes Christians to “be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.” (1 Pet. 2:13-17). Paul was so attuned to civil obedience he sent the run-away slave, Onesimus, back to his master, Philemon. Paul was so attuned to civil obedience he was willing to be executed if he had committed a capital crime (Acts 25:11). Paul has mentioned to Titus many “good” works and will mention others yet in this epistle. Others right in this context are: (a) speak evil of no one (this doesn’t mean you can’t speak the facts about someone’s evil—it means don’t make up evil about someone where there is none); (b) avoid quarreling (this doesn’t mean Christians can’t “argue” or “debate” the reasons for their faith—1 Pet. 3:15—it means don’t arbitrarily wrangle over trivia and meaningless matters); (c) be gentle (this doesn’t mean a Christian must surrender what is true and good—even if that truth and goodness has to be firm and disciplinary—it means be forgiving); (d) and show perfect courtesy toward all men.

Yes! We are obligated by the “grace of Christ” to be “courteous” toward all people—even those who are impertinent, insulting, rude and uncivil toward us. The English word “courtesy” (RSV) or “humility” (NIV) or “meekness” (KJV) is, in the Greek text, *prauteta* and means “friendly considerateness.” I prefer the translation “courteous” because it is more proactive than the other words. It is the same Greek word that is used in Matt. 5:5—“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” Biblical “meekness” does not mean spinelessness! It literally means, “strength under control in consideration of others for their good.” Christian courtesy or meekness is graphically defined in Romans 15:1-3: “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me.’” Christ was “courteous” toward us when we were at enmity toward him (Rom. 5:6-11). To “edify” (build up in godliness) your neighbor is the meekest thing or most courteous thing you could do for him!

Christian “courtesy” is more than merely opening doors for the ladies—it is action that “builds” or “grows” others toward God! Christian “courtesy” sees no one any longer from a human point of view (2 Cor. 5:16) but sees all people as Christ sees them—in desperate need of the love of God, faith in God and repentance toward God.

Yes! Titus 3:3 describes, in one characteristic or in all of them, every non-Christian, at one time or another in their lives! “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). It even describes the apostle Paul when he was a non-Christian (Eph. 2:3). Those who have not been reconciled to God through faith in the vicarious death of Jesus for their sins are (or have been) enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). Those who seek to be justified before God by the law of Moses, or any other law (even one they make up themselves) are “hostile toward God” (Rom. 8:5-8). “Friendship with the world makes one an enemy of God” (James 4:4). Only the death of Christ could reconcile God toward sinners (Rom. 3:21-16). Only faith and obedience to the covenant Christ established with his death can reconcile sinners to God (see Heb. 9:11-28; 10:1-25; 2 Cor. 5:14-21, etc.). Those not in covenant relationship with Christ by faith and obedience in baptism are in the category described by Paul to Titus: “foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing their days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another.” Frightening— isn’t it? BUT TRUE! You want to know where all the hatred in the world comes from?—from those unreconciled to God. Paul told the Galatians, “the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would...now the works of the flesh are plain; fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing and the like.” (Gal. 5:17-21). For the all people—Christian and non-Christian alike—there is a constant war going on between their “fleshly” nature, and their “spiritual” nature (1 Pet. 2:11). Even Paul experienced this war after he was became an apostle of Christ (Rom. 7:13-25; 1 Cor. 9:24-27). The difference between the Christian and the non-Christian is that the Christian has been given the victory over the flesh by the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ for his sins so he is no longer at war against God—he has been reconciled. The non-Christian is still at war with God and will be for all eternity unless by faith and covenant obedience he becomes reconciled and at peace (Eph. 2:11-22).

Our salvation is solely because of the character or nature of God. His essence is that of “goodness” (Greek, *chrestotes* “uprightness, goodness, righteousness”) and “loving kindness” (Greek, *philanthropia*, literally, “love toward mankind” or English, “philanthropy”). That is God’s nature! He can’t be other than that! Our salvation is not because of any “good” or “love” in our nature! We love God because he first loved us! (1 John 4:19). God wants to be upright and loving toward all mankind—he was always that way and will always be that way. The problem is whether human beings, created with the freedom to will and to choose, want God to be that way toward them! That is the one parameter of God’s love—whether a human being wants God to love him/her or not! Every human being who sincerely wants God to love him has to surrender to what that love demands—it demands a reciprocal love and faith. That reciprocal love and faith is expressed in repentance and obedience. ISN’T THAT WHAT ANY KIND OF REAL LOVE OF ONE HUMAN TOWARD ANOTHER DEMANDS IN RECIPROCITY? Of course! That is the very fibre of the human marriage

relationship—reciprocating love and faith and obedience toward one another! That is why the believer’s relationship to God and Christ are metaphorically likened unto a “marriage” in both the OT and the NT (Isa. 62:4-5; Eph. 5:21-33). When we become Christians we become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:3-11) and become “one” with Christ and God in spiritual marriage! It is in our “partaking of his nature” that we are saved! When we partake of his nature we become, by the grace of Christ, “good and loving.” “Him who knew no sin, he made to be sin on our behalf so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). Yes, dear Christian, you have been re-created (regenerated, reborn) into the very “divine nature of God.” “Christ in us is our hope (our only hope) of glory” (Col. 1:27).

“Good works” (or “goodness”) is the essence of the reasoning of God for having saved us! God wants us to be like him. Before God began the plan of redemption—while our first parents, Adam and Eve were sinless in the garden of Eden—God pre-determined that we should be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29). All his redemptive work from Eden to the Cross and the Empty Tomb of Jesus was done that those redeemed by the blood of Jesus should be “good” people. To be a good person you must do good works! You can’t just sit around and think about doing good—you have to do good to be good. The grace of God in the vicarious death of Jesus cleanses us and makes us “good” so that we can do good. Christ “gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.” (Titus 2:11-14). “We are his (God’s) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10). WE DO GOOD WORKS, NOT TO BE SAVED, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE SAVED—BECAUSE WE WANT TO IMITATE OUR HEAVENLY FATHER AND BE LIKE JESUS, GOD’S “GOOD” SON! Christ “saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy...so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:5-7). Jesus, the Incarnate Son, “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). Here are some synonyms for goodness: “beneficence, compassion, dependability, honorableness, morality, obedience, purity, rightness, respectability.” Good works are not “second nature” to Christians—they are their “first nature”—their ONLY NATURE because they have been re-created and become “partakers of the divine nature.” God knows “good works” are the only works that satisfy the soul—he knows that “good works” are the only works that are not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58)—all works other than good works are empty, void, meaningless, unsatisfying and ultimately damning! Even a cup of cold water in the name of Jesus will not lose its reward!

Paul warns Titus to avoid “stupid” (RSV) or “foolish” (NIV) controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law because they are unprofitable and futile. Paul used the Greek word *moras* from which we get the English word “moron.” These “controversies” (Greek, *zeteseis*, “questions”) produce nothing good, and worse yet, they are futile (Greek, *mataioi*, “moronic, vain, void, useless, empty”). They can become HARMFUL when used by anyone to be “factious.” Just what these controversies over “genealogies, dissensions and quarrels over the law” were all about we do not know. Paul has a similar warning to Timothy in 1 Tim. 1:4; 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23, so they must have been prevalent and significant in disrupting Christians. They were probably the senseless trivia and “myths” among Jewish theologians and philosophers which later came to be written down in the Jewish apocryphal literature (the Talmud, Mishna, Gemara, Kabbala, etc.). “Where did Cain

get his wife?” “Where are the bones of Moses laid to rest?” “Were the ‘sons of God’ who married ‘the daughters of men’ fallen angels?” And the nit-picking, intricate, labyrinthine meanderings of the Talmud about what the Law of Moses means kept Jewish rabbis arguing hours and hours and hours. Just read some of the Talmud and you will know what Paul is talking about here! Titus is told to “avoid” (Greek, peristaso, “stand around, or away from”) this nonsense. These are the “human precepts and doctrines” Paul denounced in Colossians 2:20-23. They had an “appearance” of wisdom, but were of no value! Christian theologians and even ordinary Christian “lay-people” often stir up controversy (“questions, arguments”) over irrelevant, nit-picking trivia of theology or Christian behavior. It must not be allowed in a church that wishes to please Christ!

The Greek word airetikon is translated “factious” in the RSV, “heretic” in the KJV, and “divisive” in the NIV. It is the word from which we get the English word, “heretic.” A “factious” person is one who is “divisive,” “separatist,” and “schismatic.” The factious or heretical person is one who is self-deluded into “myths” and “controversies” such as described in Titus 3:9 above. Don DeWelt, op.cit. p. 181, says, “A factious man is any man who holds any opinion different from the Scriptures to be the word of God. It makes little difference if the opinion be considered important or unimportant. If he teaches it as from God and it is not in accord with the Word of God, he is a heretic! He should be treated in the manner here described. Please notice that a factious man and a heretic are the same man—a heretic is one who holds his own opinion in the realm of faith.” In other words, an heretic is a person who insists that what he says is what the Bible says when the Bible doesn’t say that! What is Paul’s instruction as to how to deal with such a person? Such a person is to be “avoided” (Greek paraitou, from which we get the English word, “pariah” and it means to “reject, spurn, avoid association with”). The Greek word translated “perverted” RSV, “subverted” KJV, and “warped” NIV is exestraptai from strepho. The word strepho means to turn in repentance—exestraptai would mean, then, “impenitent.” Don DeWelt, op.cit. p. 181 writes, “This verse indicates the seriousness of the sin committed, from the viewpoint of the one committing the sin. Such a one is ‘perverted’ or ‘turned out from’ the true doctrine of Christ. When the elders from the church attempt to lead him back into the path of truth, he rejects both attempts. Yet all the while his conscience condemns him. This is no pagan unbeliever; this is a prominent member of the church. Even while loudly and energetically promoting his own opinion, he is yet aware that he is wrong and is, therefore, sinning. But because of the popularity, the money or the prestige, he will not listen; he will not change—it costs him too much by human values. No one need condemn him; he is self-condemned. What a havoc such a one can cause both to himself and to those who heed him. Let all the members of the churches give such a one the cold shoulder of indifference.”

The Greek words translated “cases of urgent need” RSV, “for necessary uses” KJV, and “for daily necessities” NIV, are eis tas anagkaias chreias. The word anagkaias means, “pressing, compelling, necessary, urgent” and the word chreias means “need to use, have a lack of.” Thus, Paul is telling Titus to have the Christians on Crete (and Christians everywhere in all ages) to learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help in cases of “necessary–necessities.” Paul is not instructing Titus to fret about what people may dream about or wish for—but for urgent necessities. Food, clothing, shelter, medical assistance—the “necessities” to sustain life! One wonders, sometimes, about “Christian” charitable

organizations devoting their energies to so many issues and “wants” people day-dream about in America, whether they couldn’t be spending their time and money for much more basic “necessities” of life on those in urgent need. Christians have to learn to be discriminate in their benevolence and charity. Wastefulness is clearly not a Christian virtue! And those who day-dream and wish for things and issues which are not necessities need to learn what the writer of Proverbs says: “Two things I ask of thee; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ or lest I be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God.” “There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” 1 Tim. 6:6-7. Those who cannot provide for themselves (due to an actual inability) will need Christians to supply to them the “necessities” of life—but those who can provide for themselves need to heed Paul’s admonition to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 4:10-12): “But we exhort your brethren, to do so more and more, to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we charged you, so that you may command the respect of outsiders, and be dependent on nobody.”

### Introduction to Paul T. Butler Th.D

Paul was born in Springfield Missouri and graduated from Conway High School prior to enlistment in the US Navy. He began serious bible study with correspondence courses from San Jose Bible College. He later enrolled in Ozark Bible College and acquired his Bachelor of Theology degree June of 1961. He received a Master of Biblical Literature degree from Ozark in May of 1973. He received a Doctorate of Theology from The Theological University of America in October of 1990.

Paul taught at Ozark Christian College from 1960 to 1997. He also served many years as registrar for the college.

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