

**The Book of Titus:
A Pastoral letter**

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Paul turns from the negative subject of the necessity of refuting false teachers that endanger the churches to positive instruction for Titus to convey to those who gather in those churches (“but”).

A. Stated, vv. 1-10

1. The instruction of Titus, v. 1

He is to teach sound (“healthy”) instruction. He defines what “sound doctrine” is in the following verses; here teaching/doctrine is quite practical and behavioral in content; it concerns the conduct of people in the churches.

2. The specifics of the instruction, vv. 2-10

It is interesting that in these several groups no reason is stated for the conduct of older men (no “that), yet there is for the other three groups (vv. 4, 8, 10 and for younger women v. 5)). It seems that old men model by quiet example, perhaps!

a. Older men, vv. 2

The instruction for older men concerns outward observations (v. 2a) and inward (v. 2b). Each is composed of a trilogy.

temperate: clear-headed

dignified: worthy of respect.

sensible: self-controlled

(Each is an elder qualification)

(The second trilogy is the foundation of the first trilogy)

“being” sound in faith: trust

“being” sound in love

“being” sound in endurance: hope

b. Older women, vv. 3-5

1) Instruction for themselves, v. 3

“Likewise,” suggests that Titus is to teach older women in a similar manner.

The instruction contains two negatives and two positives.

Reverent in the way they live.

Not malicious gossips: avoid slander.

Not enslaved to much wine: not addicted

Teachers of good things

2) Duties to younger women, vv. 4-5

It is interesting that younger women are not addressed directly (actually, a cultural norm of the times), but are part of instruction to older women to do (husbands were to teach their wives). “So that” or “then” introduces a purpose statement. Older women are to create a culture of virtue for younger women. Clearly, Titus is not to teach them directly. The instruction is in three pairs with one singular addition. The instructions are not in the imperative mood, only the language of discourse or description.

Loving wives (the Greco-Roman world was a culture of arranged marriages) and mothers.

Development Christian character.

Self-control

Moral purity

Engagement in duties.

Busy managing their homes.

Kindness in the manner of doing so.

Subject to their mates (Paul expands the meaning of this term in Ephesians 5:21 (“Love you wives as Christ...”). The term literally means “to arrange under;” an arrange to support the spiritual and physical nourishment of her household.

The purpose for such instruction is that our conduct should match our confession; that the Scriptures be not maligned. The witness of the wife in the home is a proper witness to the gospel.

c. Younger men, v. 6

When speaking to this group (twenty to thirty years in age) Paul uses the imperative mood. He not only says it; he demands it.

Self-controlled

d. Titus himself, vv. 7-8

Be an example of proper conduct “yourself”).

Paul defines proper conduct as it relates to teaching.

Integrity

Seriousness

Sound of speech

The purpose in doing so is that his opponents may be put to shame as he lives above reproach.

e. Slaves, vv. 9-10

It is interesting that he does not speak to the propriety or impropriety of slavery but instructs those in slavery. What is clear is that the Paul saw the slave as free in Christ and equal to all believers in spiritual privileges. Paul embraced the concept of equality within a patriarchal culture. Think of Philemon. These slaves were in the community of faith as those cited in the previous verses.

Be subject to masters.

Seek to please them.

Do not talk back to them.

Do not steal from them.

The purpose ("so that") is to show that trust in God is like changing and a better way to live regardless of status.

B. Reasoned, vv. 11-14 "for")

1. What God has done for us, vv. 11-12

Paul presents incentives for faithfulness as Christ-followers.

First among these is divine forgiveness. The extension to all people of divine righteousness through grace. The issue of "all" has brought two primary interpretative options. First, if the "all" is defined by "appeared" then the appeal is to a universal fact. However, since the "all" would include false teachers, it seems unlikely that "grace" appeared to them. The second way is to take the "all" as applicable to all categories of people, as enumerated in the previous verses (vv. 2-9), since it leads to the experience of transforming grace (false teachers lack this). The latter seems preferable.

The experience of divine grace is an educational phenomenon ("teaching us"). The forgiveness of God through "God our Savior" radically changes our perspectives and priorities (Change comes for all of us when something greater appears to us that makes other things fade in significance, however important they may have once been. This is what happens when God shed divine light into our lives.).

2. What God has done in us because of embracing His redemption, vv. 13-14

a. The expectancy of His return (hope), v. 13

The coming of our Lord is the "Blessed Hope;" our hope is in a person who has redeemed us. (He saved us through His first coming and will gather us in His second; both unimaginable!! This redemption fills us with expectancy that the incomplete will be made complete.

The phrase “our great God and Savior Christ Jesus” is a clear statement of our Lord’s deity! The “and” connects two equivalents defining God and Savior as Jesus.

b. The redeemer’s redemptive purpose for us, v. 14

His redemptive goal was to create a people through whom to reveal His grace to a lost world. The admonition to a holy lifestyle is that we have been ransomed, bought (the price to redeem paid in our Savior’s voluntary, substitutionary sacrifice.) With the bondage price paid, he cleansed us to become a people zealous for Him.

C. A final admonition, v. 15

Paul concludes the section by telling Titus the manner of executing his duties. The tense of the verbs (speak, exhort, reprove) indicates continuous imperative action on Titus’ part. This is his duty.

Applications:

1. Blessed is any assembly of saints that has within its members older men who are exemplars of dignity, respectability, and wisdom.
2. We all have teaching roles; what varies is the context in which we express our roles. Each is important in the health of our families, friends, class, and associates.
3. God does not demand of us what He has not provided. He gave us hope in the promise of His return when all will be made right, saints rewarded, and evil put away forever. Before He returns, He has told us what we should be doing and the purpose for doing so (“that”). We live to honor the Lord and bring recognition and praise to Him!
4. Notice that the emphasis for all of us, not just the leadership, is upon character, not so much function (function displayed through character).