

GODLY LIVING IN A PAGAN SOCIETY

Titus 1:1-5

How would you describe our culture?

How should we live in cultural conditions that surround us?

Conditions at Crete 1:10-16 Godless character of Crete

Legalism: 14 Warns them to be different than Cretans,
“Not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and commands of people who turn away from the truth.”

They're back!—Judaizers—“Earn your way to God living by rules!”

Ritualism: 16a

“They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.”

Going through the motions—talking religious talk

Lots of processions and religious activities.

Paganism: Religion doesn't depend on God—doesn't affect lifestyle **16b** *“They deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.”*

Religious profession doesn't change daily living.

How is our culture similar to Crete? How do *WE* repeat their error?

Conditions in modern society (in Brainerd Lakes area!)

“We're free!” We can do whatever we want!

Nobody can tell us what to do!

“If it feels good do it!”

“Don't impose your values on other people.”

“Don't criticize others! Don't judge!” =>

Unfaithfulness, gay lifestyle, abortion, divorce are all acceptable
Television, internet bring temptation into our living room!

Opportunities for sexual adventures in life—and cyberspace

Deception and fraud in business are rampant.

Trends in society are creeping into *the church* also!

“Frog in the Kettle.” Frog, trapped in a kettle, swims content on top of fire, unaware of gradually increasing temperature, until heat overcomes him and he’s cooked in the boiling pot.

Moral degeneration gradually increases. We don’t realize what it’s doing, until destructive influence takes its toll on us; family, or friends.

Hendricks: “Moral collapse never comes as a blow out. It always begins as a slow leak!”

How should WE live in culture marked by such values?

After Paul wrote 1 Timothy he visited Crete.

When he found problems, he left **Titus** to correct them.

Titus was a faithful co-worker.

He was sent to handle problems at Corinth twice

Now he’s left to straighten things out in Crete.

Titus: what our lifestyle *should* look like in pagan society.

Life in Crete is discouraging—lots of religion—little relationship to life

Paul instructs Titus what he wants him to do:

Organize church; deal with attitude toward godly living

THEME: Our faith ought to affect how we live!

1:16– *Their lives demonstrate falsity of their doctrine =>*

2:1–**BUT YOU** *“teach what accords with sound doctrine”*

2:10–*“So that... they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour”*

2:11-12– *"The grace of God has appeared... training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives..."*

Sound doctrine must be confirmed by sound lifestyle.

8 X emphasizes *"doing what is good"* 1:8, 16; 2:3, 7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14

MESSAGE TO CHRISTIANS IN PAGAN COMMUNITY:

SOUND DOCTRINE PRODUCES SOUND LIVING

False doctrine leads to a corrupt lifestyle.

False teachers show emptiness of their doctrine by their lifestyle.

Degenerate life flows from weak view of God!

[Contrast: =>]

Sound doctrine leads to a healthy lifestyle.

PAUL'S GREETING 1:1-4 3 parts: Parts reveal theme.

Usually 1 part is amplified. *Can you spot it?*

Author: Paul 1:1-3 1:1 *"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness"*

Servant of God and apostle of Christ.

He sees himself as God's slave.

He's official emissary of Christ—comes with Christ's authority.

Commissioned to promote faith; knowledge of truth

Mission's based on faith God entrusted to His people
and on the knowledge of the truth—truth matters!

NOT just theoretical or academic knowledge

=> This is **truth which produces godliness.**

Key idea: Knowledge of truth leads to godliness.

Truth of Gospel must be backed up by godly living.

Just as true in Brainerd/Baxter & lakes area, as in Crete.

Valid at church or football game—in board room or worship ctr

Truth is based on hope of eternal life **1:2-3** “*In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began³ and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I’ve been entrusted by command of God our Savior*”

Our message is an *eternal* message.

God promised it before time began.

God revealed it at just the right time.

Given by “*the non-lying God*”

Our hope of eternal life produces holiness now!

God trusted Paul to proclaim it.

It’s entrusted to us too; we’re commissioned to proclaim it.

It’s only *believable* when it’s accompanied by godliness.

Gospel is **truth that leads to godliness!**

Recipient: 1:4a “*To Titus, my true child in a common faith*”

Titus He’s **Paul’s true son**—a “chip off the old block”

Paul identifies with him showing they’re on the same team.

He’s to be respected with same authority as Paul.

He **shares Paul’s faith.**

Greeting: 1:4b “*Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.*”

Wish that Titus might *experience* the grace and peace that come from God the Father and Jesus our Savior.

He wants us to *enjoy* God's unmerited favor & unshakable peace.

Only people who know the truth, and live in accordance with it, really *enjoy* God's grace and peace.

How do we convince people to live that way? => Titus' mission!

TITUS' MISSION: 1:5 *"This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you"*

Commissioned to "straighten out what's crooked."

Like orthopedist--straightens out crooked parts of our body

Religion that doesn't affect life leaves God's people "crooked"

Titus is to straighten that out!

How do we do that? Does it work to harangue from pulpit? =>

Commissioned to appoint leaders

You straighten out crookedness in church by selecting leaders

–not just any leader will do! => **6a** *"If anyone is above reproach..."*

Popular view of leadership:

Leadership is determined by popularity.

Leadership is evaluated by "follower-ship"

[Is anyone following?]

Leadership is evaluated by success.

[Effectiveness–Is leader effective? Job performance?]

We're not looking for "strong natural leaders.

We're not looking for ecclesiastical politicians.

Paul's view of leadership:

Leadership is determined by character.

Leaders should be blameless; not perfect 6a

"If anyone is above reproach..."

If requirement were perfection, *no one* qualifies!

1 Jn 1:8-10 *"Anyone who says he never sins is kidding himself*

Perfection is NOT requirement—blamelessness is!

No cause for accusation against him.

We need leaders, looked up to by people in community—don't have flaws that jump out at you and drive people away.

"If ___ is leader in your church, I don't want anything to do with it!

He's always angry! He's always out to make a buck!

He always has to win! *Thanks but no thanks!*

I don't need that kind of religion!" *That's not **blameless!***

"Blameless", lit., *"without stain"*

—no basis to accuse us and reject our religion.

Blameless with respect to home and family life 1:6

Blameless with respect to personal character 1:7-8

Blameless with respect to use of God's Word 1:9

As we choose leaders (pastor), what kind of people do we seek?

Will any "warm body" do?

Is it fair—or even possible—to evaluate *our* leaders on this basis?

HOW SHOULD WE LIVE TODAY IN A PAGAN CULTURE?

The way to get people to live godly lives is by placing leaders before them who model what godly living looks like!

When leaders model what godly living looks like, people are motivated to follow them—live godly lives.

It's not "successful" people—not *popular* people!

It's **blameless** people—**godly** people make the difference!

Leaders demonstrate *by lifestyle* what true Christian looks like!

We may have different views about *kind of government* church should have, or what we *call* our leaders, or *how* they lead us,

We better not compromise on *character, integrity, lifestyle*, or we'll lose credibility—lose ability to speak to pagan world!

To resolve problem of God's people in pagan world which *claims* to be religious, solution is exemplary leadership—**blameless** leaders!

Some may be thinking—"I'm glad I'm not a leader!"

Even if you're not a leader, passage contains pattern for our lives:

If we're going to penetrate our society with truth—reach out to world—be a light in the darkness—our sound doctrine must be authenticated by godly living!

* Elders set the pattern for the whole church.

Leaders *model* what all God's people should look like!

* **Who do WE set the pattern for?**

Our children? Younger kids at school?

Someone we work beside, who's watching us?

We're *all* leaders to someone—maybe it's our kids who are watching!

Maybe it's your little brother or sister!

Maybe it's our neighbors—They watch, look for something real in us!

If we're going to penetrate—be light in the darkness—our sound doctrine must be authenticated by godly living!

Glaring need of the hour: Men and women, committed to live for God, willing to show our young people how it's done.

We need godly leaders who are blameless, to lead the way!

Are WE ready to take up that mantel?

Will we set example for God's people to shine as light in dark?

=> Take My Life