

LIVING A PRODUCTIVE LIFE

Titus 3:12-15

Princeton Religion Research Center: "... **religion is gaining ground, while morality is losing ground...** Evidence of a moral vacuum:

94% believe in some kind of god or universal spirit

84% believe in a personal God

75% pray at least daily

30% say religion is the most important part of their lives

13% have "transforming faith," with measurable attitudes & behaviors

Barna: **Same paradox has spilled over into the evangelical church.**

Gallup: "NEVER have so many claimed to be religious; never has it made so little difference!"

Nothing new here! Paul sent Titus to Crete to address similar problem

Town was famous for **lots of religion; little impact on life.**

Professed to know God; lived as if there were no God – ***This attitude spilled over into church!***

Paul's instructions are relevant to church in 21st C.

Some things were crooked; they were "bent out of shape."

Titus was to help straighten out those things, to get them back into line.

Underlying assumption: ***Our lifestyle reflects our real values.***

People who believe like pagans act like pagans.

Pagan doctrine produces pagan living.

People who believe like Christians act like Christians.

Sound doctrine produces sound living

AUTHENTICATION OF TRUE LEADERS 1:1-16

Best way to produce change:

**Identify leaders who model lifestyle God wants
His people to imitate**

Good testimony required of true leaders 1:6-9

Designating the right kind of leaders will demonstrate the difference following the true God makes over following pagan gods.

Contrast: **Bad testimony modeled by false leaders
1:10-16**

Lifestyle demonstrates they're following religion that'll never solve man's problems, nor bring us into fellowship with a holy God.

Requirement for *leaders* in ch. 1, is applied to *whole church* in ch. 2.

The church will only penetrate pagan society with Good News about Jesus when our *life* confirms the *truth* of our message.

If our doctrine is true, it must produce a distinctive lifestyle.

Adorning of True Believers 2:1-3:2

We should model lifestyle that "dresses up" our doctrine!

Every follower of Christ should **adorn our doctrine** with lifestyle that's different from neighbors who don't know Christ

Otherwise, we'll never convince them of truth about God's grace.

Ch. 3 shows us **the reason** to live a different kind of life, as well as **source** that *enables* us to live that way:

God has transformed us.

3:3-7 describes How God has changed our life.

We used to be: rebels, filled with jealousy, anger, and hatred;
God has saved us.

He's given us new life and a fresh start—godly lifestyle pleasing
to Him

Conclusion: Implications for ministry in 3:8-15.

Stress what's really important:

God changed our life—so we'll live a godly life in our
community.

That's what we should be stressing

NOT meaningless trivia so many focus on—delight to argue
over!

Titus motivates us to **demonstrate by our daily life
the change God has accomplished in us.**

Our neighbors watch us everyday.

What do they see when they watch us?

Is our life different because of God's grace?

Take a moment to review message of Titus.

What areas of our life has God exposed?

***What's He want us to deal with that we haven't gotten
around to?***

Identify the next couple of steps you need to take.

PERSONAL INSTRUCTIONS 3:12-14

Even concluding personal matters show **importance of doing
good** as evidence of our faith which **adorns** our sound
doctrine.

Paul's plan for Titus 12 *"When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there."*

Paul wants Titus to visit him in Nicopolis where he plans to go as a **"winter visitor."**

His concern for Crete obligates him to send substitute to take Titus' place. They're not ready to be left on their own.

Paul is sending a replacement

Paul wants to spend time with his disciple.

He wants more time to **prepare his disciple for ministry.**

Investing in disciples: *"What you've heard from me in presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."*

Importance of hospitality 3:13-14

Paul plans to send two other ministers, Zenas and Apollos.

3:13 *"Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing."*

They're passing through, en route to another ministry.

Paul gives Cretans an opportunity to participate in their ministry.

Specific situation converted to **general principle** 3:14

"Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful."

Paul wants us to participate in mission of people committed to serve God—to help them on their way.

2 THINGS PAUL WANTS GOD'S PEOPLE TO DO:

1. Dedicate ourselves to **do what is good**
2. **Live productive lives**—lives that are **fruitful.**

2 REASONS WE SHOULD DO GOOD FOR OTHERS:

1. It helps them—it's good for them!

It supplies what THEY need, so they don't lack anything.

2. It's good for us—helps us become what God wants us to be

We meet needs of others for our own sake—it's good for US.

Another way to adorn our doctrine with healthy lifestyle.

By doing good, we produce fruit that brings glory to God.

CLOSING GREETINGS AND BENEDICTION 3:15 *“All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.”*

His companions send greetings to those who love them.

Don't miss importance of greeting one another!

Final blessing reminds us of what we've received: God's grace.

Paul's prayer: that those who receive God's grace might be conscious of its presence with us, and benefits it brings to God's children.

God's people should dedicate ourselves to doing what is good and to living productive lives.

Evidence of work God has accomplished in our lives.

We ought to dedicate ourselves to doing what is good in general.

One way: support those God calls to other parts of the world. Like doing good, supporting those God sends serves **2 purposes:**

It helps meet their need.

Frees them to carry out what God calls them to do.

It also does something for us.

We do it as **part of becoming all God wants us to be.**

**THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED GOD'S GRACE
OUGHT TO DEDICATE THEMSELVES
TO DO GOOD
FOR OTHER PEOPLE IN NEED!**

Part of God's purpose in calling us: **2:14**

"to purify for Himself a people... zealous for good works!"

NOT something we do to earn salvation, or earn fellowship with God.

We do it as an act of gratitude for what He has done for us.

That's how we live a fruitful productive life.

God's people are fruitful when we're sensitive to needs of others and dedicate ourselves to doing what's good to help them.

God has called us to serve others, to seek what's best for them.

Sometimes we act as if we think that since we're saved by grace, without works, we can take it easy and live for ourselves.

Show me that concept in Scripture!

Any time you see people living with that attitude in Scripture,

God reminds them that this wasn't what He had in mind!

We're called to serve, NOT to be served!

Man recalled encounter with **D. L. Moody** before he became famous: "[It] was in a little shanty he managed to get possession of to hold a meeting that night. First thing I saw was a heavy-set man holding a small black boy in his arms. By the light of a few

candles he was trying to read the story of the prodigal son. He couldn't make out many of the words, so he had to skip them.

I thought, *if the Lord can use such an instrument as that for His honor and glory, it will certainly astonish me!*

After the meeting, Moody said, "I have only one talent; I have no education, but I love the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to do something for Him."

Moody became great because he loved the Lord and wanted to do what was good!

How about US? Is that OUR desire?