

NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP STUDY OF THE
LETTER OF PAUL TO TITUS
PART THREE – CHAPTER TWO

Paul had introduced himself, an ordinary man with an extraordinary God, to whom he belonged and who had sent him. His mission in life was simple, to further faith in Christ and knowledge of truth in the confidence that this alone could produce godliness. He was excited to be writing to a young man, Titus, who had begun as his child in the faith and was now his brother and fellow worker. Titus had proved himself in Corinth and now was to be responsible for building a strong church in a short time among another tough bunch, the Cretans. His strategy was to be to find potential leaders whose faith worked at home as well as among their fellow Christians. Titus was to seek out those with the necessary qualities both negative and positive who were, above all, able to teach truth and answer error. He was warned about how opposition would come not so much from the Roman government or the army but from false teachers who knew the truth but had twisted it for their own financial benefit.

The only way to deal with his opponents was with a clear, solid grasp of the gospel. One by one he was shown how to deal with older men, older women, young women and young men whose unique needs and problems he needed to recognize. First the older men were to be-

- temperate – which means ‘sober’, ‘abstaining from wine’
- dignified – is the idea of being ‘serious’ about God
- sensible – ‘of sound mind’, has already been used of the elder in 1:8
- sound in faith – sound is ‘healthy’, which we have already been told is the objective of teaching,(1:13), and must be mixed with sound doctrine.(2:1)
- sound in love – is therefore being healthy in God’s kind of love
- sound in perseverance – is again healthy, this time in perseverance, literally ‘remaining behind’, when everyone else has given up and run away.(2:1,2)

The older women were to be:

- reverent in their behaviour, - which were the words used to describe ‘behaving befittingly in the temple’
- not malicious gossips – is also the word for ‘devil’! There is only one kind of gossip, the malicious kind.
- not enslaved to much wine, - enslaved is the idea of being ‘owned by’ something or someone.
- teaching what is good – is a word which combines teaching and good.
- able to encourage the young women – this word ‘encourage’ is not the usual word for encourage but means ‘recall to one’s senses’, to keep them on track.(2:3)

It is clear here that the most appropriate people to teach the young women were not the men but the older women. They understand them so much better. Men trying to teach young women have often created problems for both of them. In the same way the young men were to be taught by the older men, not by the women for much the same reasons.

The older women were to teach the young women to:

- love their husbands – ‘love’ on this occasion is ‘friendship’
- love their children – ‘love’ again is in the sense of ‘friendship’
- be sensible – ‘of sound mind’, the instruction already given to the elders and the older men
- pure – is from the same word as ‘saint’, holy, belonging to one man only
- workers at home – which did not mean that the men could not help!
- kind – is also the word ‘good’
- subject to their own husbands – is controversial in modern times. It is the same word used in Eph.5:21 to describe all of our relationships, and means the respect we have for each other. It was not therefore to be just one way.(2:4,5)

Only one instruction is given to the young men, to be:

- sensible - of sound mind, the same word already used of elders, older men and young women. Otherwise Titus himself was to be a powerful example to them of:
- good deeds – a faith that worked in action not just theory.
- purity of doctrine – God’s kind of doctrine with nothing of our ideas mixed in.
- dignified – ‘serious about God’ - and sound speech, the healthy speech which would result from healthy teaching and healthy faith.(2:6-8)

Bondslaves were also to respect their master, be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering – the small scale stealing which they supposed they could get away with - but showing all good faith which would advertise their teaching to others.(2:9,10)

The grace of God is for all of us, men and women, old and young, slave and free and will produce the same quality of life in all of us now while we live in expectation of Christ’s return. He redeemed all of us from how we were, to be His people, passionate about His purpose.(2:11-14)

Titus, said Paul, keep your focus on this message. Let your teaching encourage those on track and convict those off track. Don’t let anyone shut you up!(2:15)

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Would the instructions to each group - older men, older women, young women and young men still be relevant in today’s world? Which part of the exhortation to our age and gender group do we find most difficult? How does sound teaching and sound faith help?
2. Do the instructions to slaves still apply to workers in modern times? Again how would Christ-centred teaching and real faith make a difference? How can we help as employers, or fellow workers?
3. How will Christ’s return change the distinctions between us?(Gal.3:28) How can knowing this change our attitudes now?