

Titus – A Pattern of Good Works (Titus 2:7)

Ron Cosby

Titus was a companion and fellow-worker with the tireless apostle Paul. This closeness to the great apostle of Christ gave Titus opportunities and advantages that few preachers have experienced. Such closeness speaks highly of Titus. Paul did not just take anyone to mentor (Acts 15).

Being with Paul afforded Titus first-hand knowledge and guidance in his doctrine, deeds and demeanor. Of course, Paul's driving force would lead young Titus to achievements seldom reached by others. Before studying the teaching, works and attitude demanded of Titus, here are a few details of his life with Paul and a minor discussion of the textual differences between the KJV and the ASV in Titus 2:7.

Details of Titus and His Relationship with Paul

At the time of writing to Titus, 65-68 AD, Paul considered the young man a dependable, mature gospel preacher (Titus 1:4-5). A dozen years earlier, 54- 55 AD, Paul rehearsed the events of the Jerusalem discussion. In this rehearsal, we learn that a much younger Titus was at his side during the Jerusalem confrontation (Galatians 2:1-3). In between the Jerusalem discussion and the letter to Titus, 57-58 AD, Paul demonstrated his dependence upon Titus and his dependability to edify the Corinthians, knowing that he was a fellow-worker who served God from the heart (2 Corinthians 8:16-17, 23), and was not one who took advantage of others (2 Corinthians 12:18). Everything we know about Titus gives us good reason to walk in his example.

Differences in the Text

As students can see, the ASV and the KJV differ slightly in their translation of Titus 2:7.

ASV: in all things showing thyself an **ensample** of good works; in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity.

KJV: In all things shewing thyself a **pattern** of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, **sincerity**.

Whereas the ASV says "ensample," the KJV translated the word as "pattern." Definitions of ensample from *The Online Plain Text English Dictionary* show that there is no basic differences between these words: "An example; a pattern or model for imitation. (v. t.) To exemplify, to show by example" (Onelook). Therefore, both versions advocate the very thing that the Greek text is saying: Titus is to show by example virtuous qualities in his deeds and in his doctrine and in his demeanor. Paul didn't say "tell" them but "show" them. Yes, he was also to tell them.

What about the omission of the word "sincerity" in the ASV. The ASV followed the Greek text which Westcott and Hort developed and presented to the world in the 1800s. With misplaced honor to this eighteenth century Greek text, scholars tell us that some of "the oldest MSS" omit the word. After one hundred and fifty years of study, we now know that eighteenth century proponents of the Westcott-Hort text were wrong to conclude that it was the most reliable text. We now know that the opponents of the Westcott-Hort text were right. The so-called "oldest" MSS are not the *best* MSS. However, if

someone feels that such distinctions weaken the text under consideration, rest assured. After all, dozens of passages advocate that the man of God be sincere. Therefore, we are not adding to God's word when we listen to the KJV and incorporate into our study the virtue of sincerity. The man of God must not be artificial but genuine

Show Thy Self an Example in Doctrine

Declare Sound Doctrine (Titus 2:1). Paul understood the misery of gospel preachers who were prevented from or failed to preach (1 Corinthians 9:16). Many preachers today do not fail to preach some truth, but they do avoid reproof and rebuking (2 Timothy 4:1-7). This failure is contrary to Paul's instructions. When it comes to preaching the gospel, silence is not golden. Preach the whole gospel.

Declare Sound Doctrine (Titus 1:9; 2:1; Galatians 1:6-9). Any other gospel is another doctrine; any other doctrine is another gospel. One internet preacher fails to recognize what "sound doctrine" is, and he mischaracterizes what faithful brethren think it is. He says, "Usually, 'sound doctrine' is used to refer to the fundamentals of the faith. We call one sound who preaches the old truths in the same old way his father's generation did" (Barnes, 4). How mistaken can a so-called gospel preacher be! Preach the same message as the last generation? I don't think so, unless the last generation preached sound doctrine. Thayer is correct with his comment on sound doctrine, saying, "to be sound, to be well, to be in good health; metaphorically, of Christians whose opinions are free from any mixture of error [emphasis, rlc]" (Thayer). Therefore, "sound doctrine" is to preach the old truths as delivered in Holy Writ, regardless of what the previous generation preached. When it comes to preaching the whole counsel of God, silence is not golden.

Declare Sound Doctrine with Authority (Titus 2:15). This passage does not teach evangelistic authority. The authority of the evangelist is not in the "office" but in the source of the word of God. Book, chapter and verse preaching is never out of fashion with God, and it must not be out of fashion with God's people. A text taken out of context will always be a pretext, whether we say it or not.

One infamous writer and preacher among us tells us that it was not his idea to initiate and institute the reaffirmation and reevaluation of the eldership. *The elders made me do it* was his plaintive cry. This reaffirmation and reevaluation is error. An old gospel preacher said that a faithful preacher would have stood up in the meeting and decried the innovative false doctrine. When gospel preachers declare the whole counsel of God, and nothing but the counsel of God, neither the threats from brethren nor from elders ought to prevail. Elderships are to stop the mouth of the gainsayers, not the mouth of gospelsayers.

Of course, no one ought to question the obligation of the eldership and the right of the brethren to suggest to the preacher subjects of study. The man of God welcomes such godly guidance.

Show Thy Self an Example in Deeds

Deeds must be a major focus for Titus (Titus 2:7). Paul wrote a similar statement to Timothy. "Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all. Take

heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:15-16).

Dissimulation and divided godliness is denounced by God. Gospel preachers must not preach one thing and practice another (Matthew 23:3). In Matthew's record of Jesus' strong rebuke of the religious leaders of His day, the Lord blistered the dissemblers who said one thing and lived opposite of their words. Few of them repented, but the Lord still preached it. Even good brethren may fall prey to this destructive deed (Galatians 2:13). Peter repented. The leaders in Jesus' day are not the only hypocrites (Titus 1:16). Paul calls for Titus to think and to practice and to speak with incorruptness, gravity, and sincerity. Paul didn't say "tell" them but "show" them.

Deviation from God's word must to be avoided. Similarly to Sarah of old, leaders today seek to substitute their own schemes for the plan of God. God clearly declares that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16) and that the spiritual drawing power is the Christ and Him crucified (John 12:32; 3:14-16). Men deviate from the dynamite of God when they substitute games, gimmicks and grand dinner speeches for the gospel.

What is the derivation or source of what God's creation must practice in religion? To know what God calls a "good work," students must seek from God's handbook, the Bible (2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4). Creeds, confessions, and traditions of men must not be accepted as equal authority, or closely equal, with the doctrine of Christ. God defines what a "good work" is in the immediate context of our text. In answer to a question concerning a Lutheran practice, a Lutheran "Pastor" e-mailed a quote from his prayer book instead of book, chapter and verse. Turning to book, chapter and verse, Paul demands that we deny the world (Titus 2:11-12). In contrast, he denounces those who by their works deny Him (Titus 1:16; Matthew 10:32-33). Furthermore, Paul demands dependableness, while he denounces disobedience (Titus 1:9; 1:16; 3:3). And, he demands that we declare sound doctrine, and he denounces the divisive teacher (Titus 2:1; 3:10-11).

With the repeated call and emphasis on works, some jump to the false conclusion that we must be trying to ignore or eliminate grace. Not so! The letter to Titus begins with God's grace (Titus 1:4), and it ends with grace (Titus 3:15). Grace is a main ingredient in chapter two (Titus 2:11-14) and it is a main ingredient in chapter three (Titus 3:4-7).

Show Thy Self an Example in Demeanor

"In all things shewing thyself a **pattern** of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, **sincerity**" (Titus 2:7, KJV).

The Christian's demeanor should display decency. "adiajqoroç, which means among other things 'incorruptible' - not to be influenced by entreaties or bribes - seems to make it preferable. The word describes the quality of the *teacher* rather than of his doctrine. He is to preach the truth without fear or favor." (*Pulpit Commentary*).

Brethren conform to the world without being aware of their indecency. Time and again, distasteful and questionable slogans are paraded before assemblies on t-shirts and the wearer fails to consider it a

lack of decency. One young man wore a t-shirt that had a message on it that would not be allowed to be printed in the newspaper, yet all could read his nasty story. London papers report that Britney Spears was spotted wearing a T-shirt in Santa Monica market with the slogan, "I'm a virgin (but this is an old T-shirt)". This slogan is mild in comparison to many that could be given, most of which we cannot say from the pulpit or in private. A worldly visitor wore a t-shirt to the assembly. Bad enough! However, he also wore baggy shorts that were distasteful, especially on a big man.

How many congregations have had young ladies wear shorts that would be indecent at Wal-Mart and forbidden in restaurants? Too many. In recent months, at least four individuals have worn shorts to worship or Bible class, though one of them was not a Christian. Men think nothing of wearing their casual clothes to worship God. This casualness is so ingrained that it is nearly impossible to convince them that their casualness demonstrates a lack of respect. However, such casualness would not be worn to their mother's funeral.

The Christian's demeanor must display dignity (everything that was said about decency could be repeated concerning dignity). One student noted,

Semnotes refers to decency, gravity, venerableness (calling forth respect through age, character, and attainments; conveying an impression of aged goodness and benevolence), dignity and a seriousness that is fixed on God and honors whatever honors Him (Unnamed).

Vine correctly notes that semnotes

is a necessary characteristic of the life and conduct of Christians.... Trench (Syn. xcii) points out that "grave" and "gravity" fail to cover the full meaning of their original; "the word we want is one in which the sense of gravity and dignity is combined" (Vine).

Another student quotes Aristotle's understanding and observation:

Aristotle defined *semnótes* as the average of a virtue that lies between the extremes of arrogance on one hand and attempting to please everyone on the other hand. Therefore, *semnótes* stands between caring to please nobody and endeavoring at all costs to please everybody. It is the ability not only to perform well one's duties as a citizen, but also to adhere to the highest principles and ideals of earth and heaven, and thus drawing respect and approval (Unnamed).

The Christian's demeanor should be the pinnacle of sincerity. "Insincerity—this is not necessarily a lie. Artificiality is also insincere" (Pomerantsev). Artificiality describes most of our politicians, too many preachers, and some brethren. A student has observed,

Purity is Greek *aphthoria* which is a negative form of a term that carries the basic idea of being morally corrupt and vile, and in extra-biblical literature was often used of morally depraved people such as rapists, seducers, and abortionists. Here it refers to the absence of self-seeking and all perverse motives such as deceitfulness and guile (Unnamed)

Two young Christian sisters attended their Catholic grandmother's funeral. The youngest remembered a non-Scriptural ritual that the two of them were expected to practice. At the appointed time, all grandchildren anointed the grave with water. With this spiritual ritual before them, what should these two young Christian ladies do? They spoke volumes when they courteously refused to compromise Bible truth with traditions of men. They were sincere when they avoided spiritual artificiality.

Design and Driving Force

From chapter one to chapter three of the book of Titus, Paul delineates at least four motives or purposes that stand as the driving force behind Christian conduct (Titus 2:8 [2nd that], Titus 2:12, Titus 3:7, and Titus 3:14). In these passages, the inspired writer used the Greek conjunction *ina* ["that"] which means, "to the intent ... design and purpose" (Thayer).

Divine favor or grace is the major driving force for faithful preachers like Titus. The letter begins with God's grace (Titus 1:4). It ends with grace (Titus 3:15). Grace is a main ingredient in chapter two (Titus 2:11-14), and grace is a main ingredient in chapter three (Titus 3:4-7).

Titus 2:8 reminds us of another driving force: Put to shame those who are contrary minded. Peter echoes the sentiments of Paul when he says, "For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:15). And again, "but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ" (1 Peter 3:15-16). Shaming a man is not sinful, nor is it sinful to design your actions toward shaming them. Yet be sure and avoid shaming yourself when you embarrass the one who is contrary to godliness.

Let us be clear about the man who is of the contrary part. He is the adversary or opponent of Christian conduct. You have, no doubt, heard of the fellow who was contrary. Well, Paul knew him. By Paul alerting Titus to such people, it is clear there exist those who are of the contrary part. Time and again, the man of God is reminded that evil men, in the world and in the church, will oppose and fight against right conduct.

To a lesser degree, being fruitful and the benefit that others receive from the Bible student's godliness ought to be added to the aforementioned motives for practicing goodness (Titus 3:14).

Conclusion

We pray that the motives of Titus permeate young preachers and Christians today. The doctrine, deeds, and demeanor that served him and saved souls in the first century will save souls in any age. Make Titus a pattern for your Christian walk.

Works Cited

Barnes, Leon. *Expository and Textual Preaching On 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, <http://mentorchurch.com/Preachingon12TimothyTitus.pdf>, August 10, 2006.

Onelook, <http://www.onelook.com/?w=ensample&ls=a> Pomerantsev, Vladimir. "On Sincerity in Literature" <http://www.sovlit.com/sincerity> (08/2006).

The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic edition, E-Sword Computer Software V 7.6.1, Copyright by Rick Meyers.)

Thayer, Joseph Henry. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. (E-Sword, Electronic edition, e-sword.com)

Unnamed, "Titus 2:6-8." http://preceptaustin.org/titus_26-10.htm (08/2006)

Vine, W., *Vine's Expository dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (E-Sword, Electronic edition, e-sword.com)