

Letters to Live By

TITUS 3

FIRST DAY: Introduction

It is always good to be reminded of who we are in Christ, what His love has done for us, and how we can practically reflect the kindness and love that we have been shown. Too easily we lose patience with government authorities and nonbelievers. We forget that we once thought and acted like they do before the kindness of God appeared to us. This is why we need to be constantly reminded of the difference that God has made in our lives. As we reflect on the great work of God toward us through Christ Jesus, we become beacons of the love and kindness of God to others. In this way, our attitudes and actions are distinguishable from the attitudes and actions of those without Christ. We shine as lights, offering the hope and salvation of Jesus to a dark and dying world!

In Titus 3, Paul instructed Titus to *remind* the believers in Crete of how their lives should reflect the transforming work of Jesus. Unlike the rest of the culture, the believers there were to be subject to authorities, looking for opportunities to be of service to others and showing kindness to everyone. Paul based this distinct behavior on the great transforming work of God's mercy for them and in them. In other words, the believers in Crete were to look and act like Jesus, who now resided in them. The indwelling of Jesus was to be evidenced in all their attitudes, actions, and interactions.

Like these ancient believers, we also need to be reminded of all that God has done for us, in order that we might reflect the kindness and mercy of God that has been abundantly poured out on us!

Take a moment to reflect on God's transforming work in you and for you.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Cretans were notoriously turbulent, quarrelsome, and impatient of all authority. ... The welfare of any community depends on the acceptance by the Christians within it of the duty of demonstrating to all the world the nobility of Christian citizenship.¹
 –William Barclay

SECOND DAY: Read Titus 3:1–3

1. After Paul had given directives to Titus for specific groups in the church (Titus 2), he proceeded with essential exhortations for all the believers. The impetus was the grace of God that teaches men how to live godly lives, which was in stark contrast to the Cretan culture. In this final chapter, Paul directed Titus to *remind* all the believers of the type of behavior that would reflect the work of God's grace. Use Titus 3:1–2 to note and comment on this behavior in relation to:

- a. *Rulers and authorities* (verse 1a)

- (1) Link this with Romans 13:1–5 and 1 Peter 2:13–15 to understand and remark on the biblical principle for this directive.

- b. Their works (verse 1b)

- (1) Contrast this with Titus 1:16. What do you see?

- c. Their speech (verse 2a)

d. Their demeanor toward *all men* (verse 2b)

(1) Considering the behavior of the average Cretan (Titus 1:10–12), why would this behavior be outstanding?

2. To underscore the importance of gracious conduct toward unbelievers, Paul reminded the believers of their own state before coming to Jesus. Use Titus 3:3 to list and define the attitudes and actions of the lives of the Cretans before Christ.

a. List a few of the ungodly characteristics of your life before Jesus.

(1) What is the greatest transformation God has brought to your life?

b. Notice that those who do not know Jesus are *deceived*. How does this fact affect your attitude toward unbelievers?

- d. *He washed away our sins*
- e. *Giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit*
- (1) Link this with John 3:3 and 2 Corinthians 5:17.
What do you see?
- f. *He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior*
- (1) Connect this with John 7:37–39a and Acts 2:33.
What do you see?
- g. *Because of His grace He declared us righteous*
- h. *And gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life*



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Greek word for *washing* is the same word used in Ephesians 5:26 to describe the *washing of water by the word*.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

According to the Greek lexicon, *regeneration* indicates *the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better*.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Bible scholar John Stott, in speaking of Titus 3:4–7, declared that this is *perhaps the fullest statement of salvation in the New Testament*.²

- (1) Use 1 Peter 1:4 to comment on what awaits us eternally as *heirs* of God.

- (2) How does our former state, as described in Titus 3:3, magnify what God has done for us? See also Romans 5:6–8.

- (3) Notice that in each aspect of salvation, God is the initiator. How does this speak to you?

- (4) Which of these phrases most ministers to you presently?

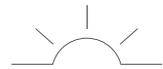
3. Concerning this description of our salvation, Paul stated definitively, *This is a faithful saying* (Titus 3:8a). Why do you think *these things* are important for believers to *affirm constantly*?
 - a. According to Titus 3:8b, what should our faith in God make us *careful to maintain*?

- (1) What emphasis do the words *careful* and *maintain* add to this exhortation?
- (2) Considering all God has done for us, why is this a *good and profitable* response?
4. Paul used four significant words in his description of our salvation: *kindness, love, mercy, and grace*. Take a moment to express your gratitude to God for each of these great gifts.

FOURTH DAY: Read Titus 3:9–11

1. After reminding the believers how they were to live in light of their great salvation, Paul cited what things the believers were to *avoid*. From Titus 3:9a, list them here.
 - a. Paul declared that such things were *unprofitable and useless* (Titus 3:9b). Contrast this with what he said about *good works* in Titus 3:8b. What does this contrast indicate to you?

2. The Greek word for *divisive* is *hairesitikos*, from which we get the word *heretic*. According to Titus 3:10, how was Titus to deal with *a divisive man*?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Greek word for *avoid* is *peristemi*, which literally means *to turn the other way or do an about-face*.

- a. Why do you think Paul's instruction concerning this type of person was so sharp?
 - b. Observe the stipulations for rejecting a *divisive* person. What does this convey to you?
3. If someone continued to be divisive, what did Titus need to recognize about them? Titus 3:11
- a. Link this with Romans 16:17–18. What do you see?
- (1) How can you recognize a divisive person?
4. Although these directives from Paul were stern, why are they crucial for the body of Christ?

FIFTH DAY: Read Titus 3:12–15

1. As Paul closed his letter, he wrote in Titus 3:12a that he planned to *send* either Artemas or Tychicus to help Titus. Although we don't know anything about Artemas, Tychicus

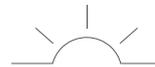
appeared in several of Paul's epistles. Use Ephesians 6:21–22, Colossians 4:7–8, and 2 Timothy 4:12 to explain why you think Tychicus would be a good man to send to Crete.

2. What was Titus to do when Paul sent these men? Titus 3:12b

3. Paul instructed Titus to send Zenas and Apollos *on their journey with haste* and to make sure that they lacked *nothing* (Titus 3:13). What do you find interesting about this?

4. Paul added a final word of exhortation for the believers in Crete. Note and comment on his instruction from Titus 3:14.
 - a. This was the fourth time Paul had exhorted Titus and the believers concerning *good works* in his epistle. Why do you think Paul placed such great emphasis on this?

5. From Titus 3:15, summarize Paul's closing remarks to Titus.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Bible scholars believe the term *lawyer* could indicate that Zenas was either a Roman jurist or an expert in the Law of Moses.

- a. Considering that Paul closed all of his epistles, including this one, with a benediction of God's *grace*, why is this an especially fitting benediction for this letter? See also Titus 1:4b, 2:11–12, and 3:7.

- b. Why is this a fitting benediction for us today?

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. From your study this week, share something that you need to be reminded of concerning:
 - a. Godly behavior

 - b. Your salvation

 - c. Good works

 - d. Things to avoid

2. Paul desired all the Cretan believers to have and live in the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. What have you received from the epistle to Titus that you desire to **live by**?