

ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS

“In all things showing THYSELF a pattern”—Tit. 2:7

PAUL’S EPISTLE TO TITUS

Paul’s fourteen epistles appear to fall into five groups—

1. The earliest, 1&2 Thessalonians (and possibly Galatians) were written on his second missionary journey when he first went into Europe.
2. 1& 2 Corinthians, & Romans during his third journey, when he spent most of his time in Ephesus. (This was at the time of the troubles in Corinth when Titus was sent there).
3. Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon and Hebrews near the end of his first imprisonment in Rome, when he was expecting to be soon released, as he indicates in several of them.
4. 1 Timothy & Titus in the period after his release, when he is back working in the same area of Greece, Macedonia and Asia Minor again.
5. Finally 2 Timothy, right at the end of his life, from prison again in Rome.

We know Titus to have been a companion and helper of Paul for a period of about 20 years, possibly longer, but he is only mentioned 4 times during that period—

1. He went with Paul from Antioch to Jerusalem (about 50AD) regarding the issue of the Gentiles being circumcised and keeping the Law. Titus, a Gentile, was the test case. Paul refused to let him be circumcised, and the apostles supported him, and the freedom of the Gentiles from the Law was established. Thereafter Titus was a living symbol of that freedom, as Timothy was of not needlessly offending Jews.
2. About 5 years later (about 55 AD), during Paul’s 3-year stay at Ephesus, Titus was sent twice to Corinth concerning the ecclesial troubles there, as we learn from the Corinthian epistles; and he was successful in correcting the problems and reconciling the Corinthians to Paul. Due to the seriousness of the matter, and Paul’s great concern, it would appear he considered Titus his most qualified fellow-labourer.
3. About 10 years later, (about 65AD), as we learn from this epistle to him, Titus was left in Crete to complete the work Paul had begun in organising ecclesias in various cities there, and setting up suitable elders and a strong discipline for guiding the new ecclesias in constructive godliness. Here again he is chosen for a difficult and important task, and when the foundations were laid, he was to be relieved by Tychicus or Artemas, who would carry on, so he could be used for pressing work elsewhere. Clearly he was one of Paul’s primary helpers.
4. Finally, a few years later in Paul’s second letter to Timothy, in his second imprisonment just before his death, he says Titus has gone to Dalmatia.

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According to this epistle, then, Titus was left in Crete to follow up and complete Paul’s work of forming and organising ecclesias and arranging for elders to carry them on.

Then he was to join Paul at Nicopolis (on the western shore of Macedonia) where Paul was to make his headquarters for the winter in carrying on the Truth’s work in a new region.

This would be just south of the Dalmatian coast, and doubtless the labours of Paul and Titus extended there, for later, from Rome (in 2 Timothy) we have noted Paul sent Titus to Dalmatia.

There is great emphasis in this epistle on the practical application of godliness. **The leading thought of the epistle is the vital importance of good works in any who profess the Name of Christ—“ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS”** is the key expression.

Everyone is zealous about something—usually about their own interests and affairs. Some are zealous about talking about the Truth. But the important thing is to be “*zealous of good WORKS*”—this is enough to keep anyone both happy and busy.

The ideal presented in this epistle is of a society living and working together in the calm beauty and joy of spiritual self-control, with all the selfish, evil motions of the flesh recognised and restrained.

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“Ordain elders in every city.”

“*Ordain*” simply means to appoint, and should be so translated, as it is in some versions. The “ordination” of “clergy” in the world’s churches is a later invention.

Great stress is laid (v. 6-9) upon the qualifications of bishops (elders, arranging brethren). Seventeen requirements are listed, and they are worthy of much study and contemplation, for they are not just for elders—they are the required qualifications of ALL—Titus just had to make sure the elders he chose had the necessary Christian qualities that God requires of all believers.

Most are quite clear and, like most Scripture, need not explanation but **application**. The practical requirements of the Truth are usually quite clear and leave no excuse for neglect or misunderstanding.

It is the theoretical aspects we like to get side-tracked and bogged down in. It’s more pleasing and less demanding upon the flesh to bandy unlearned questions than to face plain commands.

Overall, an elder must be strong, firm and determined, but gentle, calm and self-controlled.

The word “bishop”—literally, an overseer—occurs only 5 times, one of them applying to Christ. In the 4 times applied to brethren, the context in all cases indicates more than one in an ecclesia, and generally identifies them with “elders.” The lordly “bishops” of modern churches have no similarity with New Testament bishops.

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“A bishop must be blameless” (Tit. 1:7).

An elder, or bishop, must first of all be blameless. He must be free from any grounds of criticism. He must give up and put away anything that could be a matter of question or censure, to the detriment of the Truth—anything that might trouble his brethren or cause the outsider to doubt.

A bishop is to be the husband of one wife, and his children must be believers (v. 6). It is unnecessary to point out how the Catholic Church has blasphemously contradicted the Word of God in forbidding marriage to their clergy.

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“Not (soon) angry” (Tit. 1:7).

Like the similar addition of the word “*easily*” in 1 Cor. 13 (“*not easily provoked*”), the word “*soon*” is not in the original, but is a fleshly addition to weaken the command. “Not given to anger” is the true meaning.

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“No striker” (Tit. 1:7).

The meaning is, “not pugnacious or belligerent, quarrelsome, contentious”—the opposite of a peacemaker.

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“A lover of hospitality” (Tit. 1:8).

Not just hospitable, but a LOVER of hospitality—one who takes joy in hospitality—who always reacts positively and eagerly to the opportunity, regardless of his own convenience. One at whose house all are not only welcome but also actively desired as an opportunity for service to God. One whose desire and pleasure is to help and take care of anyone in need.

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“Sober” (Tit. 1:8).

“Sober” is calm, balanced, restrained, thoughtful, steady-minded—nothing silly or flippant—not changeable and excitable—thinking carefully before speaking, and meaning all that is said—a spiritual quality developed only by long contemplation of spiritual things.

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“Temperate” (Tit. 1:8).

“Temperate” is self-controlled, self-disciplined, always acting, not according to feeling or emotion or personal desire, but according to the guidance of the Spirit and the Word of God.

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“Holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught.”

This is especially timely and important today, when there is such a tendency to innovation and seeking *“some new thing.”*

The sound and consistent continuity of the Truth is essential. The Truth does not change.

The true elder is not an innovator or tinkerer or speculator, but a faithful preserver of sound truth passed on by pioneers before him. That, in God’s mercy, is our position today, and it is our wisdom to be on guard against current fleshly attempts to belittle and destroy the foundations laid by past brethren.

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“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers.”

It would be pleasant if there were no such things as these in our experiences in the Truth, but these things are part of the necessary pattern of our training and development.

They are to school us both in self-control and in defence of the Truth. BOTH aspects of training are necessary. It is important that the Truth be defended, but it is equally important that it be done with the pure, calm sword of the Spirit, and not with any of the ugly natural weapons of the flesh—

“The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

It takes no special effort or ability to criticise and condemn error. Any limited minds can do that, and enjoy the boost it gives their ego.

But it takes much self-discipline and self-preparation to confront error with a calm manifestation of personal godliness and a CONSTRUCTIVE, upbuilding presentation of the deep beauties of the Truth.

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“Whose mouths must be stopped” (Tit. 1:11).

False teaching **MUST** be faced and dealt with. We must constantly labour to make ourselves as competent as possible in defence of the Truth, and we must confront error as it arises. Life is a continual training for God’s service and we have NO time to follow our own interests. And just going on record as objecting is clearly not a sufficient and faithful fulfilment of the command, for Paul says their *“mouths must be STOPPED,”* plainly showing that **action of separation must be taken if persuasion is not effective.**

We tend, according to our natural constitution, to go either too far or not far enough in this matter. We must try to get a full understanding of ALL the Spirit’s teaching on fellowship, and go just as far as God instructs us to go by commands and examples of Scripture.

This epistle to Titus is an important part of this scriptural picture which we must clearly get and be guided by. Some seem always looking for something to find fault with, and to glory in separation as evidence of their holiness and zeal.

Others temporise and hesitate and tolerate far beyond the point where the Scriptures call for action.

There is corrective guidance here for both tendencies. On the one hand we have a picture of a condition almost unbelievably bad existing in the ecclesias—

“Unruly, vain talkers, deceivers, teaching wrong things for filthy lucre’s sake” (Tit. 1:10-11).

This is sad, but encouraging for us. We would think that all hope was gone if we faced such problems and conditions. But it teaches us there always were and always will be—problems that must be prayerfully and courageously and patiently and joyfully contended with.

Joyfully? Yes, **joyfully!** For ALL things have a wise divine purpose and are steps toward the ultimate glorious end. We should never regret anything unpleasant that happens to us, or wish it had not happened.

Truly we should not SEEK such things, but when they happen we must believe they have a necessary purpose in our education, and development in godliness, and we must recognise that our wisdom lies in thankfully accepting the training and seeking the purpose.

On the other hand, we are taught these things in the ecclesia cannot be tolerated or ignored, but must be faced and grappled with and brought to a faithful conclusion.

“Whose mouths MUST be stopped”—if not by persuasion, then by exclusion. These were newly formed ecclesias just drawn out of the evil world.

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“Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons” (Tit. 1:12).

This is strong language. It makes us think. It seems out of place in talking about brethren. Why does Paul use it? Would we be justified in doing so? **We would, if used in the same sense and purpose and spirit.**

We can never too strongly delineate the basic characteristics of human nature. We must honestly face what we are naturally, so that we can clearly realise the tremendous transformation that is needed if we are to be any use to God.

Paul is not especially singling out the Cretians. That is not his style. He too clearly saw the evil of ALL human nature.

To make a strong point, he is quoting a very appropriate and obviously well-known statement by one of the nation itself, as he used the inscription to the Unknown God at Athens, and as we quote from news sources showing in man's own words what an evil state mankind is in.

This is the raw material out of which God is calling saints—liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons—

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“Rebuke them, that they may be sound in the Faith” (Tit. 1:13).

“Exhort one another daily, while it is called Today.”

We constantly need mutual encouragement and mutual sharp warning, to face and combat the evils of our nature. It was this constant contemplation and realisation of what he was naturally—his natural tendencies—that led Paul to exclaim—

“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?”

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

The thanksgiving will be in proportion to the realisation—

“To whom much is forgiven, the same will love much.”

Cretians, and every one else, **ourselves included**, are—naturally—liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. It's much more easy to be an idle glutton—lazy and greedy—self-centred and self-pleasing—than we like to think. It is man's normal condition.

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“Rebuke them SHARPLY” (Tit. 1:13).

This may seem like a contradiction to the gentleness and patience and meekness that is commanded in dealing with others (as in 3:2), but it is not. BOTH aspects are important.

It is the spirit and purpose in which the rebuking is done that is important. The faithful brother is **always** loving and gentle, but **never** weak and smooth.

A sharp rebuke from an obviously affectionate brother who has established a consistent record of personal self-control and labour for the Truth and true loving concern for all his brethren, would not need to be very strong to be effective, if anything at all could be effective.

But without first laying such a foundation of godliness, no rebuke would have power.

This command to “*rebuke sharply*” does give an opening for the sourness and harshness of the flesh to intrude, parading itself offensively as “righteous zeal,” but it does not **justify** it.

The rebuke, though sharp and clear, and followed by appropriate action if necessary, must be in patience and love and sincere concern and true inner meekness and humility, and continual consciousness of one's own shortcomings. Only God can give us this combination of gentleness and divine strength.

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“Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men” (Tit. 1:14).

It is the tendency of the flesh to ignore God's very searching rules of life, and to make its own self-pleasing rules, according to its own particular fancy.

We see this illustrated in its extremist form in the Jewish nation of Jesus' day—the multitude of added regulations by which they thought they served God, but by which they completely blinded themselves to the practical application and deep personal requirements of the Law.

It was all so sincere and well-meaning, and a very easy course for the flesh to slip into, and miss the realities.

Bro. Thomas may often seem over-liberal and tolerant when he opposes so vehemently all the well-meaning crotchets of his day, as anti-pork, anti-tobacco, anti-slavery, anti-liquor, etc., but it is not that he was necessarily in favour of, or defending, these things.

He could clearly see that—blown up to special issues—they were but shallow, self-glorifying crotchets that fatally diverted the mind and zeal and energies from the real transforming power of the Gospel.

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“Unto the pure all things are pure” (Tit. 1:15).

This is a deep and important saying, but it can be very easily misapplied to justify impurity, by those SEEKING such justification. It must, like other Scripture, be spiritually discerned by those seeking true purity. It will not mislead **such**, for they seek not self-justification, but constant self-examination.

The great point is that we must purify the HEART itself—go right to the root of the evil, and not veneer it over with self-satisfying external regulations. It is THEN, and only then, that EVERYTHING will be pure. It is just as Jesus said—

“Not that which goeth into a man defileth him, but that which cometh out of his heart” (Mark 7:15-23).

Paul is talking especially about clean and unclean meats and ritualistic regulations that are dangerous seeds of retrogression into legalistic Judaism—the course the majority of the early Ecclesia followed that ended with the Catholic Church.

We are commanded to break bread and drink wine in remembrance of Christ—a very simple command with a deep spiritual import: no details, no ritual.

But a host of crotchets—about what kind of wine, and what kind of bread, and how to break, and how to pour, and who takes first, and just what to say in prayer about it—have always swirled murkily about this very simple and beautiful command through all the Truth's history.

Let us be careful we just keep to the simple command, and try with all our power to concentrate our zeal on the deep and PERSONAL application—

“Let a man examine HIMSELF—and so let him eat.”

“Unto the pure all things are pure”—a wonderful saying, a wonderful revelation—as long as we keep our minds centred on its true inward heart-searching and spiritual application.

Defilement comes from within, and purity must come from within—ever growing and pressing outward from within, rejecting and casting out all impurity.

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“But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine.”

Through this chapter and the next the great emphasis is on practical, personal holiness of life, and dedication and service to God, and against getting side-tracked into theoretical questions and contentions and genealogies and strivings. The thought and contrast is carried forward from Tit. 1:16—

“They PROFESS to know God.”

They make a big show of talk and argumentation and threadbare *“foolish questions”*—*“but in works they deny Him.”*

When it comes to their OWN daily activities and service and self-sacrifice, they deny God by living for themselves and their own desires and pleasures. The questions they bandy about are just a hobby and a conscience-salver.

Talking and arguing and making regulations for others is so easy: disciplining **ourselves**, giving up our **own** natural desires, bringing our **own** lives into full service to God, is so hard.

To keep talking about the Truth, and then to follow the flesh in what we do with our time and money (actually God’s time and money) is just hypocrisy.

Our big concern must be how we ourselves live our daily life—what we do with our time and money and strength—and whether we manifest the spiritual character of the mind of Christ: purity, Patience, gravity, goodness, kindness, love.

Apparently the Cretians especially manifested a fondness for hair-splitting and arguing and a constant going round and round on the same old worn and threadbare crotchets, instead of getting down to practical day-to-day holiness and self-sacrifice.

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“That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate (rather: self-disciplined), sound in faith, in love, in patience” (Tit. 2:2).

“Sober,” for which the margin gives *“vigilant,”* means to be clear-minded, wide awake and aware, watchful, thoughtful—spiritual THINKERS, rather than, like most of mankind, mere animal FEELERS.

It is easy to drift into self-centred thoughtlessness and obsession with present trivialities—what shall we eat, what shall we wear, what shall we do to enjoy ourselves—chattering like monkeys about foolish, passing things.

The mind must be constantly disciplined and directed outward—away from present and self to the world and eternity—to the purpose of God and the service of God.

“The aged men.” Old age can either follow the usual and natural course of recession to the small-mindedness and self-centredness of childhood, or it can be God-guided into the golden age of experience, understanding and usefulness.

It depends on how we have prepared for it in earlier years. In the ideal ecclesial community that Paul portrays here, each age has its place and work—the aged to give counsel and wisdom and deep knowledge of the Word of God, the middle-aged to carry forward the work and activity, the young eager in all things to learn and to help—a healthy, wholesome, united Body of beauty and usefulness.

But we must guard against the very natural tendencies that Paul mentions that can so easily mar this picture. In the aged (Tit. 2:2), patience is emphasised, and (v.3) avoidance of gossip and criticism.

Patience, because spirituality is a matter of gradual growth. Youth inclines to many things that Age has seen the emptiness of and grown out of. But Age must have patience while Youth is maturing. If there is movement in the right direction, we must be careful to encourage it, and not destroy it with fault-finding and impatience.

And Youth will be much more inclined to listen if Age can show in its OWN life that it has learned to manifest the fruit of Spirit.

We must examine ourselves—recognise how little we have really learned of godliness, and how long it took us to learn that little. This teaches patience.

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“In all things showing THYSELF a pattern” (Tit. 2:7).

This is the vital thing. Christ, above all that he did or said, was an example. And so was Paul. Example is the greatest and most powerful exhortation.

It is not worthwhile giving any attention to anyone who does not first discipline himself and live up to his professed faith. Regardless of any appearance of knowledge, such have **nothing** to offer as to useful guidance in the way of life.

Examine a man’s own life and characteristics. If he is not fulfilling the practical part of his professed faith, **pay no attention to anything he says, nor to any criticism he has of others.**

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“That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil to say of you” (Tit. 2:8).

Here is the power of godliness, for which there is no substitute. The Truth is not so much a matter of presentation and reasoning and logic, as of manifestation in beauty and power. If we do not manifest the beauty of the Truth in ourselves, then we cannot teach it in any living way to others.

We can pass on doctrines as such, but there will be no transforming power of godliness. We must **SHOW** the way of life and holiness, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed.

The way of God, truly and joyfully lived, is the greatest persuasive power on earth. But it must be lived **joyfully**—not as a burden but as a glorious privilege. Jesus Christ single-handedly changed the course of this evil world by the sheer impact of perfect holiness. The Proverbs say—

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion” (Prov. 28:1).

There is far more depth to this than we realise. Holiness **IS** power. We read of occasions when Christ’s opponents were ashamed before the pure brilliance of his sinless perfection. They could not stand up to him as he probed the depths of their hearts and motives.

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“Exhort servants to be obedient to their masters” (Tit. 2:9).

It should be, as in the New Revised Version “slaves.” Why tell slaves to obey their masters? Is not holding a man in bondage manifestly unjust and contrary to the spirit of Christ?

Yes, but so is everything else in this evil world. Paul here takes direct issue with the reformers and philosophers of this fleshly order of things, who do not get to the root of evil; and we must stand squarely with him for he represents the wisdom of God—they of the flesh.

The Scriptures tell us that *“The whole world lieth in wickedness,”* and God’s present purpose is not to change it, but first to develop, by means of the discipline and trials of that evil background, a purified and spiritually-minded people for His Name and glory.

If, in God’s wisdom, slavery helps prepare a man for God’s Kingdom, then slavery for him is a blessing from God. The way and theories of men are right in their own eyes, but only God knows what is best.

To the mind of the flesh, this is foolishness. Paul says the natural mind cannot comprehend these things—only those whom God enlightens.

Truly we should not **seek** handicaps and disabilities and tribulations. *“If thou mayest be free, use it rather,”* is Paul’s counsel.

But we must see—in everything that comes upon us—God’s hand and God’s wisdom. We must never regret or resent anything that happens—but always seek to learn and benefit from it.

Whatever we do, even in slavery, can, and **must**, be done unto God and for God, and God will gloriously accept it as such, and so we patiently and joyfully work out our salvation.

We must, like Moses, “*see Him Who is invisible.*” We must, in our mind’s eye, eliminate all the non-essentials, and boil the picture down to just God and ourselves. That is the only reality for us. Everything else is merely a passing background that God has provided to test and develop us.

All people and events in this background—real though they may seem—are but temporary experiences of our consciousness in the great eternal relationship of ourselves and God.

Where are all the people of 100 years ago? Completely gone from existence and reality—and most of them gone eternally. They **seemed** so real in their day, but time proved that they were but briefly passing shapes and manifestations that the transient vapour called human flesh took temporarily.

They can become realities by attaching themselves to the Great Eternal Unchanging Reality, God Himself, for—

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to ALL MEN, teaching us that—denying ungodliness and worldly lusts—we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-12).

This is how we achieve reality and eternity—denying ungodliness and worldly desire. What is “*ungodliness and worldly desire*”? Can we define these terms the Spirit uses for our instruction? It would be very well for us to be clear on this.

The Scriptures leave no doubt. “*Ungodliness*” is anything not connected with, and in harmony with, God, and “*worldly desire*” is anything to do with present passing life. These we must deny—repudiate—put away. And we must live—

“Soberly, righteously, godly.”

SOBERLY—according to wisdom and reason;

RIGHTEOUSLY—according to truth;

GODLY—in harmony and union with God.

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“Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13).

More correctly, as in the Diaglott and RV—

“The appearing of the glory of the great God.”—as we read in Matthew: 16:27—

“The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father.”

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“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14).

*“Redeem us FROM (out of, away from) **all iniquity.**”* Iniquity is a word that does not make a strong personal impact on us, because no one really thinks they are iniquitous. But the literal meaning is “lawlessness,” failure to submit, to bring ourselves in harmony with Divine law—

“Redeem us from all lawlessness.”

Law is beauty and order and harmony. Conformity with God’s law is the way we achieve unity with God. And the Perfect Law—the Royal Law—the Law of Liberty is, as James tells us—

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Anything we do that is not in perfect harmony with all God's will is lawlessness; and Christ suffered and died to redeem us, to deliver us—lift us up—OUT OF all lawlessness, into perfect harmony with God, as he was.

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“To PURIFY unto himself a peculiar people.”

To cleanse, to make pure, to remove impurity. All of the Law of Moses teaches us that the natural flesh and its thinking are unclean. To be clean we must learn and walk by the mind of the Spirit, whose fruits are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, etc.

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“Purify a PECULIAR people.”

What is a “*peculiar people*”? The word has two meanings, both of which apply. Literally, it means “something beyond, something special or superior.” It also means a “personal possession”—a people especially belonging to himself—a people of his own—at one with him.

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“ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.”

This is the key and central thought in this very practical epistle. It is not sufficient that we just DO good works. Even more important is that we be **zealous** about it—eager, enthusiastic—that this be our pleasure and consuming desire—that we never feel we have done enough for God and the Truth, but are always striving to do more.

That is “*zealous of good works*.” If we do not manifest this characteristic, we are not Christ's peculiar people. We are just ordinary, self-pleasing people, like all the rest of the perishing world.

“*Good works*” means helping people—both temporarily and eternally, especially the latter, but by no means ignoring the former—labouring, doing something practical and constructive, comforting and encouraging.

If we are sorry for ourselves, full of self-pity, we are USELESS to God.

We cannot even begin to fulfil this requirement of good works. For if, having the glorious gift of Truth, we have not enough faith and appreciation to be eternally and joyfully thankful to God, we are blind indeed. We just do not know God: we have never found Him.

Let us test **every** activity by this expression “good works.” Talking, arguing, discussing, contending, are “good works” ONLY if they perform **constructive good** for someone, only if they lead closer to practical godliness of life—only if they guide others in God's Way, or deepen and strengthen them in that Way.

The flesh has a hankering for crotchets—for what Paul calls—

“Foolish questions, contentions, unprofitable and vain strivings” (Tit. 3:9).

Flesh prefers to avoid facing issues which have an uncomfortable practical bearing on its own conduct and character.

It would much rather argue about who was Cain's wife, or whether the Transfiguration was a vision, or whether Christ's temptation was “subjective” or “objective,” than to think about the **personal** bearing of the command to love one's neighbour as one's-self, or about how it uses for its own gratification God's goods entrusted to it in stewardship, or the command to sell what it has and give to the poor.

These **practical** questions the flesh avoids, preferring the crotchets and speculations which do not interfere with its pleasures and self-will. But “*zealous of good works*” is still the clear distinguishing mark of the peculiar people of Christ.

They are too busy doing good for others to waste time and effort on barren contentions that have no practical value toward godliness.

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“These things affirm CONSTANTLY” (Tit. 3:8).

Keep on about them over and over and over. About WHAT?

(vs. 8-9) —

“That they maintain good WORKS, and that they avoid unprofitable, unpractical, unproductive questions.”

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And finally—

“A heretic after the first and second admonition reject” (Tit. 3:10).

This is the last command. A sad but necessary reminder that the way is narrow and against the flesh, that TRUTH IS important and must be faithfully defended, even to the point of separation when that becomes necessary.

May we, in God’s love and mercy, be spared from such sad duties. But may be given the wisdom and courage to resolutely face and deal with such things when necessary—in infinite patience and kindness, but with firmness and faithfulness, realising the great and life-giving value of that Treasure which has been entrusted to our care.

(Taken from “Be Ye Transformed” Volume 3 pages 229-243 by Bro. G. Growcott)