



STOP going to church... START being the church.

week 9

Scripture to Read

Sermon text: Titus 3:12-15

Summary of Titus 3:12-15

Although Paul had left Titus in Crete in order to get the churches there properly established, he was not expected to stay there indefinitely. Paul writes some final instructions and greetings for Titus. This section gives us a summary of what discipleship training is all about. To be *devoted* means to have a single aim and to persevere in that aim no matter what. That is how Christians should pursue the goal of doing good, for their God is a God of goodness, who in his goodness saved them.

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation

And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful. [Titus 3:14]

Questions for Personal Study and/or group discussion

- Whom does Paul intend to send to relieve Titus on the island of Crete? Where does Paul want Titus to go? Find this place on a Bible map.
- Often Christians will so closely identify with a pastor or leader that they cannot perceive how God will advance his kingdom without that pastor or leader. What does this passage suggest to us about our attachment to specific pastors or leaders?
- What kind of heart does Paul have toward his fellow servants of Christ? Was there a sense of jealousy or competition among them? How far does your interest and affection for fellow servants of Christ extend?
- In what ways have you devoted yourself to good works?
- What are you going to do today to realign your life toward devoting yourself to good works?
- What would it take for you to have gospel fruitfulness in your life? What next step do you need to take?

Thoughts worth thinking

The church needs YOU, not more staff! "It is not possible for a pastor, or even a team of pastors in a large church, to meet the many pressing needs of a congregation. Not only is there not enough time for one man to do it all, but other believers in the church invariably have spiritual gifts and abilities that the pastor does not have." [John MacArthur, Jr. *Titus: New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 185.]

Grace is the message: "Paul Kooistra, seminary and mission leader, once distressed some of his listeners when he was asked why he preached so much on grace. He said, 'There is nothing else to preach.'"

Intellectual arguments at once ensued. Several claimed, ‘There are many other things to preach in terms of our obligations, relationships, and personal character.’ Yet, what we should understand as we see the organization of this pastoral epistle is that all of these matters find their proper context and motivation in our understanding of grace.” [Bryan Chappell, in *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, Preaching the Word series, R. Kent Hughes, ed. (Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway, 2000), 365.]

Why won't people commit? When we think about gospel fruitfulness and developing a community of believers who are devoted to good works, we inevitably run up against the problem of lack of commitment from church members. In *The Trellis and the Vine*, Colin Marshall and Tony Payne suggest a number of cultural, theological and historical factors that contribute to the spread and virulence of this lack of commitment:

- **Professionalism of the ministry**, often expressed by a desire for control and centralization by the pastor and/or elders, can choke off active ministry among members.
- **A clericalized view of the ministry** plays into the hands of some to just let the hired hands, the ordained staff, get on with the ministry.
- **Niche ministry**, such as youth or children's or educational ministry, can create structures that act as a disincentive for people to take ownership and get involved.
- **Spiritual immaturity** keeps people from wanting to spend and be spent for the kingdom.
- **Not spending time with the right people**, but rather concentrating on immediate needs and crises, can prevent pastors from investing in the lives of possible and potential leaders.
- **Having the right people in the wrong places** is a problem. Many of the people who could be fruitful and effective in ministry are up to their ears in committee work. Perhaps they need to get out of these structures—or the structures need to be dismantled.
- **Lack of motivation and understanding of ministry** is a huge problem as well.

For Parents with Young Children

Monday: *Vacant, as study guide was not posted until Tuesday morning.*

Tuesday: Read Titus 3:14. Explain to your children that God wants us to be devoted to good works and to help people when they need something. Ask them to think of times when they or your family or our church has done that for people. Perhaps you can point out responses of which they are unaware. Also, ask your children if they can think of people or situations where they can be obedient to in this way.

Wednesday: Read Titus 3:12-15. Ask your children if they think Paul knew and loved a lot of people. Make a list of fellow Christians who are dear to your family. Pray for them every night this week. Remember that Wednesday Night Connection will not meet during the summer months. Talk and pray about how your family can use Wednesday evenings to connect with other families in our church and/or with non-believers. **Catechism Clubs begin tomorrow from 3-4 pm. Call Misty Lacey if you don't where your children are supposed to be.**

Thursday: Ask your children about how things went at Catechism Club. Be sure to review what they learned today.

Friday: Spend some time singing favorite psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Pray for FPC—that we would be faithful and fruitful in our WORSHIP, our TEACHING, our NURTURE, and our REACHING.

Saturday: Read a Bible story to your children, or have them read one to you if they are old enough. Pray that Phillip and Grant will have boldness in preaching the Word of God tomorrow. Also, pray for the Sunday School teachers and for the musicians and choir members who serve us each Sunday.

Sunday: Before you leave for church, explain to your children that their ministry at church is to welcome new children, help their Sunday School teacher, serve others, and worship God in the service. After church, discuss with your children what they learned and what you learned.