

Reminders for the Faithful (Titus 3:1-3)

Intro: The island of Crete was not an easy place to live. Cretans had a reputation for being difficult and unproductive. Paul himself acknowledged the word of a Cretan prophet about his own people:

One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." (Titus 1:12)

Those who became Christians had been taught to adopt a new way of life; but even so, it is easy to fall back into old habits. Hence, Titus was urged to give some "reminders" to the faithful.

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. (Titus 3:1-2)

Remind your people to recognize the power of those who rule and bear authority. They must obey the laws of the state and be prepared to render whatever good service they can. They are not to speak evil of any man, they must not be argumentative but gentle, showing themselves agreeable to everybody. (JB Phillip's Translation)

Proper response to Government

Polybius indicates that the Cretans had a tendency to be seditious.

In [Crete](#) there was the beginning of great troubles set in motion, if one should speak of "a beginning of troubles" in [Crete](#): for owing to the persistency of [civil wars](#) and the acts of savagery practiced against each other, beginning and end are much the same in [Crete](#); and what appears to some people to be an incredible story is a spectacle of everyday occurrence there. (Polybius, Histories 24.4)

The Christian was urged not to display such attitudes.

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities

The terms "rulers and authorities" is sometimes used of spiritual powers; but here the reference is to governmental rulers.

To be subject is to place oneself under their authority.

Obedient to authority

The Greek verb suggests conformity to the regulations of the civil authorities.

God wanted His people to be law-abiding citizens. Such was especially important in a time when Christianity was viewed with suspicion and puzzlement. Rebellious attitudes and laxity in obedience to the law could mark Christianity as hostile to the Roman government or to the local government as well.

Today it is still important for both Christians and churches to respect governmental regulations. The right of civil disobedience in matters of

faith should not be used as justification for disobedience to laws we simply don't like. Governments can surely create hardships on people by demanding time-consuming paperwork, record keeping, licensing, etc. The Christian must resist the tendency to be rebellious and resentful toward such things; but instead show willing compliance with the law of the land, even when being inconvenienced. Our actions and reactions send a message to others.

Proper response to all men

Be ready for every good deed

The idea includes not only willingness but also forethought. Christians must have a mindset to be a participant in good things, rather than a bystander. This is especially true in areas where our involvement or lack of it may send a message to unbelievers about our commitment to principles we uphold.

What message do we send when others who know our profession of faith ask us to give to a worthy cause and we refuse?

What message do we send when others are working diligently to make needed changes in important social areas and we avoid participation at any level?

Obviously we can't be everything to everybody; but we should give careful thought to "how ready" we are to participate in good deeds for others.

Malign no one

The word translates the word from which we get "blaspheme". We usually use the word to speak of improper words toward God or spiritual things; but the word really means to "speak against" something. What we might call "bad mouthing" someone!

Though there is much about non-Christians that may be worthy of criticism, Paul urges Christians to manifest grace and generosity toward outsiders, perhaps especially to outsiders.

Do we want to be seen as critical and condemning or gracious and forgiving? I remember a gentle man who served in the postal service in Lawrenceburg, TN. His name was Teddy Crews. Through the years he earned a reputation of kindness toward all people. At his death, numerous people in the community remarked that they had never heard him say an unkind word to or about anybody!

Be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration

The first word "amoxos" referred to someone who did not fight in a battle. Thus, it meant "uncontentious". The same word appears in the qualifications of an elder ("not a brawler").

In contrast Paul urges disciples to be "epieikeis", that is, moderate, reasonable, or forbearing..

showing every consideration for all men

"to show perfect courtesy to all men" (RSV).

The word “prautes” is usually translated “meek” in the KJV. Our word has connotations of weakness; but in actuality this word suggests a person with great power over their emotions enabling them to refrain from angry words or actions toward others. It is the ability to remain calm in the face of provocation.

What is impressive is the emphasis on totally or completeness.. Showing “all” consideration to “all” men. This is especially important in suggesting the degree to which we should make effort to get along with others and at the same time, the inclusion of even the most difficult cases, including hostile people.

We should all cultivate this kind of courtesy, moderation, and self-control. Sometimes we may reason that the only way to get through to some people is to be rude to them. God would have us show strength without ever being ugly to anyone!

I fear in many life situations we may not be much different from other people where we ought to be really different. We may feel justified in “letting someone have it” as a way of getting satisfaction over a problem in business. Did you ever chew anyone out over the phone? Or angrily present yourself to a store clerk about a matter? We must be careful not to let others “push us over the edge”.

Conclusion: If our homes give us an opportunity to adorn the gospel, so do our day to day associations with the people of this world. This week concentrate on having an impact on the people who see you most often in a social setting. Ask yourself, “What message am I sending by my attitudes, reactions, and involvement?” Hopefully, it will be the one we’ve talked about tonight!