

Daily Bible Study

“Christian Citizens”

Titus 3:1-2

January 12 – January 18, 2014

MONDAY – As we continue on in our study of **Titus**, we come now to **chapter 3** and take for our text, **Titus 3:1-2** as we look at what we are calling *“Christian Citizens”*. Although we come to a new chapter, the apostle’s concern remains the same as it has been. He is teaching believers in the attempt of promoting Godly living. If you remember, he has focused his teaching on various groups of people inside the church such as older men, older women, younger men, younger women, etc... He has taught them and us concerning how our conduct should be toward one another. Now, he shifts his focus to how believers of all ages and group distinctions should conduct themselves and behave as public citizens in this world. He gives us direction which leads to and concerns growth in The Holy Spirit, Christlikeness, and sanctification in public life. It is important that we as believers live out in the world in a way that brings credibility and validation to the message of the gospel that we say we believe and that has changed our lives. Read **Titus 3:1-2**: *“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”*

Suggestion for Prayer: God, teach me this week from Sacred Scripture how to live and act as a public citizen out in this world.

TUESDAY – **Titus 3:1a**: *“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities...”* This verse is obviously linked in thought to the end of **chapter 2** and **verse 15** where in both places present active imperative commands are used. He is saying in the verb tense used, keep on reminding them Titus. This is a very important command and also a difficult thing for Titus and all who would attempt to truly lead God’s people. People need to be constantly reminded which points also to the importance of being in the assembly when the doors are open and to submit yourself to the teaching of the Word. People in the church hear the truth, say they affirm the truth, yet walk out the doors and fail to live out the truth. “Amens” on Lord’s Days should lead to actions throughout the week. It is very discouraging to teach God’s truth and point people to the way they should respond to it to have them apparently “know better” and not be changed or change their behavior after receiving it. So we see here that Titus needed to be encouraged to keep on and we need to learn from these lessons as well to not grieve the Holy Spirit by negligent and disobedient behavior of that we’ve been reminded, to pray for, listen and encourage our leaders, and to live out the things we say we believe. Titus is here to

Specifically *Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities*. *To be subject* is a military term meaning “to obey, to submit to the orders or directives of someone, to put yourself under authority.” It was used for the military chain of command and it is used concerning wives in **Titus 2:5** and Christian slaves in **Titus 2:9**. It is also used of all Christians in **Ephesians 5:20** as it is basically an attitude of life for Christians in all areas. Here though Titus is to instruct the people to be submissive *to rulers and authorities*. These two terms, *exousia* and *archē*, have a wide range of meaning in the Mediterranean world but they often and in this context obviously refer to civil authority. If you remember, there was once a proud king of Babylon called Nebuchadnezzar who had to learn a lesson from God that, *“The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes”* (**Daniel 4:32**). It is God who puts people or “parties” in positions of authority. The Apostle gives similar teaching in **Romans 13** where he says, *“There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God”*. So we are taught here the truth and commanded to obey the lesson that God has put the rulers in power and we are to be in subjection to them. We will learn what that looks like tomorrow.

Suggestion for Prayer: God, help me be reminded that You have put all rulers in place. Teach me to be submissive and pray for them and to therefore glorify and obey You.

WEDNESDAY – **Titus 3:1b**: *“...to obey, to be ready for every good work,”* As the text continues we learn how we live in subjection to the God ordained rulers and authorities. Being subject to governing authorities involves being *obedient* to them. The Cretans history would inform us were a rowdy independent bunch that needed to hear such a command. It reminds me of another rowdy, independent bunch which also needs to hear these commands; they are called Americans. The island of Crete was in the hands of the Romans, and the Cretans apparently were very restless under their yoke. So the truth previously taught is repeated to them, as Titus is to *remind* them of it. They wanted freedom from Roman rule, but for the time being God had placed them under it. Their duty was to submit and do what the authorities told them and fulfill their obligations. We are to do the same. Recognize the Sovereign hand of God in the appointment of those who govern us, and be obedient to them. We need to be law-abiding citizens although we may be unhappy with certain government actions and may pray that in his mercy God will one day give us better leaders. But for purposes possibly known only to God, He has placed them over us and it is our duty as Christians to live in conformity with their laws. Now we address the question which always comes up when approaching this topic; “How far does our submission go? Must we *always* do what the rulers and authorities say or is there a legitimate place for civil disobedience? Scripture does indicate there are limits to a ruler’s authority and when those limits are passed, it is right to disobey. For some Biblical examples; In **Exodus 1** we learn that when the Israelites were growing in number in Egypt, Pharaoh became afraid of their growing power. So he commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill every new-born baby boy. We read

that “*The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt told them; they let the boys live*” (**Exodus 1:17**). We also have the examples in the book of Daniel where in **chapter 3**, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego choose to be thrown into a fiery furnace rather than worship the golden image that their king had commanded them to worship. And in **chapter 6**, Daniel, at the risk of his life, defied the king’s decree that for thirty days no one should pray to anyone other than him. Finally, in the New Testament we have the refusal of the apostles to stop preaching about Jesus when ordered to do so by the Jewish authorities. This principle which applies to all incidents is stated for us in **Acts 5:29**: “*We must obey God rather than men.*” It does sometimes happen that the will of an earthly ruler conflicts with the command of God and when that happens, it is *God* whom we are to obey. His authority is supreme. Furthermore we are to *be ready for every good work*. As John Stott has written, “*It is not enough for Christians to be law-abiding (so far as our consciences permit us); we are to be public-spirited as well*”. He is saying we are to be ready to what is good. It is our duty as citizens to do what we can to assist in times of need, disaster, war or when called upon. Also in caring for the environment is a way Christians can do good. Apart from these specific instances, it is probably our general duty as citizens to which Scripture here calls us. *To be ready for every good work* should characterize us Christian neighbors, friends, family members, fellow workers, colleagues, Christian brothers, etc... We should in all kinds of practical ways show we are genuinely concerned for people, having their best interests at heart and be desirous and willing to be of help to them.

Suggestion for Prayer: *God, help me be obedient and submissive to my rulers. Give me wisdom on how that looks in my everyday life. Also help me be ready to do what is good at every opportunity You bring before me. And may I not merely be ready, but actually DO good.*

THURSDAY – Titus 3:2a: “*to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle,*” According to the beginning of this **verse 2**, Titus is to remind the believers *to speak evil of no one*. William Hendriksen translates this “revile” and says that “Insulting and abusive language is surely out of place for anyone, certainly for believers.” This God breathed, Apostolic instruction could not be clearer. No such abusing and insulting language is to be heard on our lips. We may feel it is necessary or deserved to criticize a certain politician, or a fellow believer, or a colleague at work, or a family member but we better heed this command and live before God by being very careful how we express it. Criticism may indeed be justified but God makes it clear that we are to avoid the kind of language that is condemned here. Knowing what to say or not to say and how to say it requires wisdom and a walking with God in The Holy Spirit. Our great example in this respect is Jesus, “*who, when he was reviled, did not revile in return*” (**1 Peter 2:23**). Paul wrote in **Romans 12:14**, “*Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse*”. People may be insulting and abusive in their language toward us and toward others but our language toward them and others is to be altogether different. By God’s grace may we also have courage not to give listening ear to evil speaking and have wisdom on how to

communicate in difficult situations. We also are told to be *peaceable, gentle*. The word Paul uses for *peaceable* can be translated “not contentious, or not quarrelsome”. It speaks to there being a lack of conflict and contention. The KJV gets the point across as it reads, “*to be no brawlers*”. Don’t be violent and resort to fighting when things are difficult. Have self control in the workplace, the home, the church meeting, the highway, etc... Furthermore, we are to be *gentle*. We are to be gracious, forbearing, peace making. A believer is to be anxious to heal rather than to deepen wounds; to preserve peace rather than to destroy it. This “fruit of the Spirit” is the one we are up to in our Wednesday evening teaching studies and it can also be defined as “considerate”. We are to be considerate of others. We could stop there for a while as Christian people can often be the most inconsiderate people going. The reason is we often live for self and not others and see our “needs” and agendas as priority. One real simple and practical way we can be considerate to God Himself is to be faithful to be in attendance when He speaks to us through His Word (**Hebrews 10:25**).

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, help me not be abusive and evil in the way I speak about others. Help me to follow the example of Jesus and speak edifying words. Teach me to not be quick to want to fight and instead be peaceable and considerate of others, especially You.*

FRIDAY – Titus 3:2b: “*showing all humility to all men*”. The instruction here on how to live as Christian citizens in the world concludes with the exhortation that we are to live, *showing all humility to all men*. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “*Blessed are the meek...*” (**Matthew 5:5**). It is the same word that is used here. We are to show all *meekness*. Other translations expand the meaning of this word and translate it as follow: *courtesy* ESV; *meekness* KJV; *consideration* NASB; *gentle* NIV; *humility* NKJV; *true humility* NLT. All of these words help to express what is being said here. In our relationships with others we are to be gentle, humble, considerate, and courteous—not arrogant, abrasive, domineering, and proud. The last two words are very important as they define “who” we are to be meek toward. They are *all men*. In **Colossians 3:12** we are taught that *meekness* is something required of us in our relationships within the church and here the reference is broadened to include everyone. It is not just among our fellow Christian that this grace is to be displayed. There is to be a gentleness, humility, and courteousness about our manner whomever we are with. These two verses show us that God is very concerned about the witness of Christians in the world. We saw this point made in **chapter 2, verses 5, 8, and 10**. It is this concern that is again in view here. Beloved, please hear this in closing from David Campbell. “It is not enough for Christians to *say* the right things—telling others about Jesus and his love. Our lives are of critical importance, too. People need to see a consistency between the salvation that we profess to have received and the way we live in the world. And in these reminders to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be ready to do whatever is good etc., we have clear pointers as to the direction in which we must go...”

Suggestion for Prayer: *God, for the sake of Your glory, help me show humility to all men.*