

Titus Chapter 3- John Karmelich

1. Welcome to my final lesson on this short little letter. Chapter 3 can be summed up with the idea that these verses focus on Christian behavior as we interact with nonbelievers. I can pretty much summarize the key points of these verses in a few thoughts: God calls us to be His witnesses to a lost and dying world. The only reason we're not like nonbelievers has nothing to do with being a better person than someone else. As the old saying goes, we were picked because we were picked so deal with it. That never means we're to have a "holier than thou" attitude as Christians, but see others as we were at one time or we might have been. To quote another famous saying, "There by the grace of God, go I". All I'm saying is God wants us to be a good witness to the world because that's what He's called us to do, period.
2. OK John, you've beaten that fact over our heads a lot lately. What's unique here? Illustrations on how we're to act. Behavior characteristics that God desires of us. Reminders of how we're called to act differently and the power God gives us to live, as He desires. Like the last two chapters, we get a lot of information packed into essentially a handful of verses. Remember why this letter was written in the first place: It was for Titus, to go from one house church to another on the island of Crete, which is about 120 miles by 35 miles in size. This wasn't a permanent assignment for Titus but a specific job to do for an unspecified, but fixed time period. The point for you and me is this part of the letter gives us some good advice on how God expects us to act when we interact with nonbelievers. It's not a checklist of, "You're about to have dinner with your unbelieving friend or family member, so hit them over the head with your bible and recite them these verses!" Instead, the key issue isn't so much what we say but our attitude about how we interact with others. That is why we should study the verses of this chapter carefully.
3. Let me begin about our attitude about politics. There's an old saying that one never discusses the topics of religion or politics in mixed company. I admit when I talk to others about Christianity, I look for openings. Maybe even a simple question to see where people are at. I admit some have a better knack for this than others. Still some of the greatest apologists I know of, never go looking for opportunities but mainly just deal with situations as they come. For those of you not reading this when I send it, it happens to be an election year or as I've heard it called, "the silly season". I would like you to consider that when Paul wrote this letter, Nero was the emperor, and let's just say he wasn't kind to Christians. My point is if Paul warns us in the opening versus of this letter not to speak evil of political dignitaries, how does that affect what we say about those in politics we don't agree with? My closest friend and I who don't disagree on much are both campaigning for different candidates. All I'm saying is if we can "agree to disagree agreeably", I think all of us as witnesses for Jesus can watch what we say about candidates for offices or elected officials who we may disagree with.
 - a) The short version on Christianity and government laws is we're only to disobey when it's a violation of what God calls us to do. To use a biblical example, the leaders of the Jewish religion ordered the disciples not to preach on Jesus. That's when Peter said, "we should obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29). There are always more controversial ideas such as protecting spies of your home country or what to do about abortion issues. My point is as a general rule of thumb, we as Christians are called to not only pray for and obey those in charge of our government (especially the one's we can't stand) but also to not speak any evil of them. That's the challenge. Remember the big issue: It is not about not rocking the boat, but about always being a good witness for Jesus in all areas of life, and that includes dealing with those in political offices.
 - b) Then Paul reminds Titus and us that we too are essentially no better as people as the ones who are not saved. The only difference between "then and us" is God's grace has given to us. Why did God pick us? No idea. We just accept it and be a good witness for Him.

- c) There's a classic question that fits in well here: How do we know for sure we're saved? If we accept Jesus as God and believe He died for every sin we ever committed or will do in the future and finally accept Him as being in charge of our lives, then we're saved whether we feel any different or not. There's a famous illustration of a person who's asked to walk into a room he (or she's) never been in before. Inside the room is a big welcome sign as the person has been expected. My point is God knows who'll "enter His room" but we haven't any idea who'll be in that room. That's why we're called to be a witness to all people, since we don't know who's going to be saved.
 - d) OK John, you're preaching to the choir again. We know all of this. It never hurts to remind us of this because it's real easy to get into a "holier than thou" mode and to be honest, it is one of the most annoying ways to act and everyone around us knows it.
 - e) Realize that the main body of this letter focuses on "us" and not Titus. The key issue isn't so much what Titus was told to do, but how we as believers are supposed to act. We get the important reminder that we at one time in our life we're no better than nonbelievers in that the life of a nonbeliever lacks the important eternal purpose of living. Paul mentions that nonbelievers go after all sorts of things, which in the long run don't make a difference that lasts for eternity. The point isn't that we're better people than nonbelievers, but we've got a purpose for living that nonbelievers don't understand or think it's a waste of life for us to mainly use our lives to glorify God.
 - f) After that reminder of who we are as Christians, Paul also gives us a reminder to avoid an issue that's a waste of our time. Paul's not talking about our hobbies or interests, but about arguing over religious issues that again don't make a difference in the long run. There are people who like to argue just for the sake of arguing. Some people just want to make their case for some pet issue and don't really care if you agree with them or not. The issue is if a person wanted to be part of our Christian fellowship, but we quickly learn that if we don't do it "their way", they're really not interested in being a part of our group. It's the old, "My way or the highway debate", and Paul wants us to avoid dealing with people like that. It may help to realize that what God desires of us is an attitude of humility as we deal with others and keep our focus upon Jesus. All I'm saying is if there's one person in our group who's only interested in their life and their issues or someone who just wants to argue on issues that don't matter, such people are to be shunned, not because we don't care to help all, but because such people are more interested in being divisive than they are in helping a church grow and trust in Jesus for their lives.
 - g) The letter ends with some greetings to people Paul knew in Crete and hopefully would be helpful to Titus in his ministry. The ending also mentions others that Titus probably knew who were with Paul when he sent this letter. I don't expect you to remember these names listed at the end of the book. However, the fact that a bunch of names are listed shows us that Paul cares for the lives of those who are together working to make a difference in the work of the Gospel just as we should care for people who also work to make a difference for Jesus in the world around us.
 - h) Bottom line time, doing good works does not get us "more saved". However, how we use our lives as believers is evidence to the world around us that we are saved. If we're using our lives to make a difference for Jesus, not only is that the greatest use of the time He has given us, but it helps us to draw closer to Him as we work individually and collectively as a witness for God in all that we do. With that said, it's now time for the details.
4. Chapter 3, Verse 1: Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,² to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.
- a) Remember that we're in the middle of a letter, and there were no chapter breaks when this was first written. It's a good spot to insert that chapter break, because Paul changes topics at this point. Chapter 2 focused on our relationship with other believers.

- b) Here in Chapter 3 Paul shifts the issue to our relationship with nonbelievers. It may help to keep that in mind as we study Chapter 3. Again, the key issue isn't "them, but us". It's not so much about how nonbelievers act, but about how we should act as we deal with an individual or group that's not a believer.
- c) It may help to remember that when Paul wrote this letter, there was no New Testament. A group of 1st Century Christians most of which were probably not Jewish, didn't have a lot of background study material. One way we Christians are "spoiled" today is we have tons of information at our fingertips. They didn't know how Christians were supposed to live in general, let alone around each other. They couldn't google Christianity and read up on things. They didn't even have individual bibles they could study. Christianity was spread by word of mouth and I suspect Paul's letters were copied and studied as people needed a set of guidelines as if to ask, "OK we all believe in Jesus, now what? What do we do next? How do we live now that we believe this stuff?" That's not only the issue here, but that is why I write these lessons.
- d) With the focus on "what do we do now", the specific issue of "Chapter 3" is how do we act in our interaction with nonbelievers? That question leads us back to these first two verses. The first people Paul thinks of is the "leaders". Not the church leaders, but those who lead in government. Paul avoids the whole issue of whether or not the Roman Empire is a bad or good thing, but simply states in effect, "These people are our government leaders at the moment, so let's deal with that fact." As I said in the introduction, if you think the leaders of our government are corrupt, realize that Nero was the Roman Emperor when Paul did write this letter, and Nero persecuted the Christian church. All I'm saying is if Paul found something positive to say about his government leaders so can we!
- e) Speaking of that positive comment, Paul reminds us here that we are to respect those who are our government leaders not because they're "good people", but just because they're in charge and we have to respect that fact. Let's face it, if we are going to be good witnesses to nonbelievers, wouldn't that start with the idea of obeying our government laws so that our neighbors think of us as being respectable? Of course I believe we should vote when we can and fight in legal ways laws that violate our Christian principals. The point is not any specific issue, but our general attitude about respecting the law of the land. If we are thought of as not respecting our government, why would anyone take us seriously if we tell them about things that really matter for all eternity? That's the issue here. Even if we strongly disagree with something that our government is doing, why would anyone treat us with respect if we have that reputation of constantly fighting what is? That's why Paul avoided dealing with the issues about living under the Roman Government as I like to say Paul had "bigger fish to fry".
- f) I admit I'm fascinated by the phrase "slander no one". If you read all of Paul's letters, he'll spend a lot of time condemning false teachers and telling us to avoid such people. In fact we'll get a little of that later in this message. So when Paul says, slander no one to start off this letter, it must be read in context. The issue isn't false teachers or nonbelievers, but the people who are in charge as our leaders, whether we like them or not. I admit that I'll get too slanderous of politicians I don't agree with, and I spend a lot of time disagreeing with their views on things. If I happen to know their personal lives are a mess too, I'll bring up that issue as well. All I'm saying is I'm convicted by that phrase, as I'm realizing what I'm saying about politicians can and does affect my witness for Jesus as I could be talking to a person who likes or agrees with that politician. It's back to the old saying that we should never discuss politics or religion in mixed company. As I implied in my introduction, I'm always looking for openings where I can share my faith, but I'm also very aware that what I can say can be offensive. I also know there are rules about talking about such issues in a work place. The point is to choose our timing carefully and if we can remember the rule to "slander no one" about politics we're a better witness for Jesus.

- g) That leads to the final phrase of Verse 2. It says we should show true humility towards all men. (The word "men" includes women too!). Again, think about why God made people in the first place. What's in it for Him? If God's perfect by definition and He doesn't need anything, why did He bother with us? Because if it is part of His nature to be loving then He would want something to express that love upon. That's why He made us. He wants us to accept that He exists, and because He can tolerate no sin whatsoever, He had to pay the price Himself for our sins as that's the only way to reconcile a just God with one who loves us as perfectly and as intently as He hates sin. All I'm saying here is that if we have that basic understanding of who God is and why He created us in the first place, what He desires of believers is that we use our lives as a witness for Him so others can enjoy what it is He intends us to enjoy for all eternity, a close and personal relationship with Him.
- i) The point I'm getting at is to understand why we should show humility to all men and women! Because the greatest way to show people that we care about them as well as their salvation is by putting their interests as priority over our own. That is why we should act humbly toward all people. Of course there has to be balance or else we'd never accomplish anything. If we can learn to think in terms of showing a healthy sense of humility in our dealing with our leaders, let alone those around us, that's the way God desires we live as to be a good witness for Him.
- ii) Now that I've beaten that point to death, time for the next verse.
5. Verse 3: At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.
- a) Remember that the key issue here is how Christians should interact as we deal with those who are not believers. Paul is lecturing us here as if to say, "Remember how you used to act when you were younger? Who are you to criticize the behavior of nonbelievers when you were no better before you believed?" Even if we were saved as a child, I can logically assume most of us can look back at moments in our lives when to put it mildly, we were not the best witnesses for Jesus. Part of the challenge of growing in our faith in God is we realize as we get older ways we realize we weren't the best witnesses for Him as we lived let alone how we lived before we believed. This is the classic illustration of not seeing the people around us as having faults, but as seeing them as needing Jesus as a central focus of one's life in order to deal with life's issues.
- b) As I love to state, believing in Jesus as God does not magically make all our problems go away. What it does do is give us perspective about what's important in life and what will only last at the most for this lifetime. Yes God wants to help us deal with whatever we do have to deal with, but it's not like every problem we have in life will instantly go away as trust in Jesus for our eternal salvation.
- c) With that point made, we should be able to look at nonbelievers and realize we would not be any different from them if we never accepted Jesus. I'm not saying we'd all be a bunch of murderers and thieves if we we're not Christians. I'm sure all of us know of people who we'd consider upright and moral people even though they're not Christians. The problem is none of us are ever good enough for God based on how we live. Of course we shouldn't have a "Holier than though" attitude as that only turns people off to what we have to say.
- d) What I'm getting at here is all these negative traits that Paul talks about in Verse 3 should not be a reason to hate others, but to see them as someone who needs the greatest purpose to live as well as we should. Try to think of someone we can't stand based on how they've acted around us. The issue is do we "want them dead" or do we want them to have a God centered life? Of course people are not perfect and we shouldn't ever expect people to be exactly like us. Yes we're to hate what God hates, which are evil acts, but at the same time we're to care for others, not because they're good people, but because that's how we make a difference for Him in the world around us? Does that mean I want to empty all prisons? Of course not, there is forgiveness and there is fair punishment for what people do!

- e) Let me try to think of a simple example: If someone cuts us off in traffic, do we desire to kill them or pray for them? I admit my favorite thing to do when someone cuts me off in traffic is wave hello to them. It's silly but better than getting angry. The way I think of it is people expect you to be angry when you treat them badly. If you can smile, or go do a silly thing, hopefully they'll think, this guy or gal isn't like everyone else, despite how I've hurt them. In a strange way, that ties back to this verse. The idea is essentially here's how people normally act, but here's how God expects us to act as believers. Of course He isn't expecting perfection. My point is people should realize there's something different about us. They may not put "two and two together" about our Christian life, but as we draw on His power, we're not like everyone else!
- f) OK, what about our friends who are really nice people but not Christians? God does give some people the mental strength to handle situations better than others. Remember what is the issue here: Evidence of our faith in Jesus. We're not saved by our faith, but if we do act differently, that's evidence to others around us that something is different about us.
 - i) That all sounds well and good, but what about my bad habits? How do I still be a good witness for Jesus when I just messed up? Apologize. If possible, tell the one you hurt that you made a mistake. Ask God to help you with that weakness. Like I said, no one is perfect. I'm also reminded of an expression that goes, "You cannot out nice a Mormon". What that means is as a general rule of thumb, Mormons are the nicest bunch of people you'd ever want to meet. It doesn't mean we agree with their philosophy about God. My point is just being nice isn't all there is to being a witness for Jesus. Yes being a good person is a nice start and we should rely upon God's help for being a better person, but there are also wonderful people out there who belong to a different religion or none whatsoever.
 - ii) In summary, having better lifestyle habits than nonbelievers is a good start. It's not all there is to being a witness for Jesus, but as a rule of thumb it will make us stand out from the crowd when we don't act like the "world" acts in situations.
 - iii) Speaking of Christian behavior, time to get back to the verses.
- 6. Verse 4: But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.
 - a) Speaking of our relationship with God and our good deeds, I present Verse 4 and the first half of Verse 5. To paraphrase these sentences, the key point is God didn't pick us because we were something special, He just picked us because He did, so accept it. Remember my talk about nice people who are not Christians? As of the moment, they may be wonderful people but they're still not saved. So is that fair of God?
 - i) First, who are we to make the rules!
 - ii) Second, God's standard is perfection. That way we know what is His standard.
 - iii) Third that's why we can only be saved by being perfectly forgiven, and being nice may make you a good person, but Christianity is blunt when it teaches we're only saved by our complete trust in what Jesus did for us on the cross and not based on any work.
 - iv) So why do nice people have to suffer forever? To use a better example, if someone committed murder, wouldn't say a 1,000 years in hell be a fair punishment? That's why the issue isn't how much we've sinned, it's whether or not we've accepted His free gift of salvation. Trying to prove our worth to God is an insult to Him as He's offering us the greatest "get out of jail free card" of all time!
 - v) As for the naïve or babies who die, I trust in a fair God to judge all those things in a fair manner. It's what people do that scares me. I just figure if God is perfect, He will perfectly work out who will and who won't be with Him forever.
 - b) That leads to the other key word here: Mercy. God picks some of us to be with Him for an eternity due to His mercy. So what does that mean and why should I care?

- i) First let me get into the classic debate about whether we knew if we were saved or not. The way I view it is: A perfect God knows all things and therefore He's aware of who He'll choose to be with Him for eternity. From our not knowing all things perspective, it was strictly our choice to chose to follow Jesus and we didn't know until we made that decision if we would be saved or not. I assume most of us who read this agree with that statement or something similar to it.
 - ii) My question again is how does His mercy come into play here and why care? For us to understand His mercy is to understand something about God's nature. If we have mercy, that means we forgive someone of something they are guilty of doing wrong. The point being that not only was God Himself willing to pay the price for our sins, but He was willing to have mercy on us for the sins we've commit before, during and after the time we accepted Jesus into our lives. All I want you to grasp is the idea that His mercy is part of His salvation plan.
7. Verse 5 (cont.): He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.
- a) Time for one of Paul's world famous run-on sentences. This one covers 2.5 verses.
 - b) Speaking of "time", time for another tough question. If we were saved by our trust in the fact Jesus is God, paid for our sins and is in charge of our life, how are we saved by what Paul calls (translated) "washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit". How does that fit in with the basic gospel message? Let's take it one phrase at a time.
 - c) Let's start with "washing of rebirth". As tempting as it is to talk about baptism, that is not Paul's point here. It's a colorful way of the Christian cliché "born again". It's the idea that our new life in Jesus began when we first accepted His payment for our sins. What if we can't remember the exact moment? That's ok, God knows we're saved. I remember what a Christian rock band sang many years ago, "You used to have one birthday, now you've got two!" (I believe the song rhymes with "Happy Birthday to you", but you probably got that.) The point is from God's perspective our new life began when we accepted Jesus!
 - i) So why the emphasis on "washing"? It's a word picture to show that not only are we a "new creature" once we're born again, but washed clean of all sins we'll ever commit in our lifetimes. Like I've said in the past, it's not a license to sin, because we want to be a good witness for Jesus. I also like to say, I'm free to sin all I want. The question is how much do I want to? To paraphrase another famous movie line: God may have forgiven you of all your sins, but the State of Mississippi may have a different attitude! (From "O Brother, Where Art Thou").
 - d) Now that I've made that point clearly, let's move on to "renewal by the Holy Spirit"? That question effectively asks, "What role does the Spirit of God play in our new life?" That's a great question and let me see if I can summarize a lot of theology in one paragraph. The role of the Spirit of God is to draw us closer to Him. He convicts us of our sins. He helps us to pray when we're not sure what to pray for. He leads nonbelievers to Jesus. He takes up residence in us to draw us closer to God. As I once heard Rick Warren teach, when we first give our lives to Jesus, the Spirit of God takes up residence in us, kind of like an army establishing a beachhead to plan their next attack. The Spirit never violates our free will, but will convict us of sin and remind us when we're doing something not pleasing to God in the first place.
 - i) That cute little talk leads me back to the phrase, "renewal by the Holy Spirit". All that means is the Spirit of God plays a role in our new life as a Christian as He will take up residence within us. So how I do know God's spirit is there? Do you want to please God? Do you care about your relationship with Him? Just the fact you're willing to read a bible study is a pretty good indication that the God's Spirit is part of our new nature.

- ii) Next, while I'm in the "Holy Spirit" neighborhood, let me tackle the issue of why the Holy Spirit is a separate entity and not just "God's spirit". I could start by just saying, "The bible says so", but that answer never satisfies me. The way I think of all of this is I figure God the Father is everywhere and in all places at all times. My view of Jesus is He's fully God and fully man and interceding for us in heaven not only as God, but as our "High Priest" between God the Father and us. Just as Jesus did say the Spirit of God is like the wind (that is, we never know who'll be saved), so the Spirit takes up residence within us. Just as God is "three in one", I also hold the view that in a sense all three hold residence in us, but I think of the Holy Spirit as the one whose working in us, to guide us to live as God desires.
- iii) OK enough heavy theology for one verse. All of that was Verse 5. Let's all take a big breath and see what Verse 6 has in store for us.
- e) Verse 6 again, "whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior".
 - i) Well good thing I just give a dissertation on the role of Holy Spirit, as He's also the main topic of Verse 6.
 - ii) First question, who's the "he" at the start of this verse? Without having to go back to Verse 4 or 5, we can figure it out by process of elimination. Jesus and the Spirit are being discussed here so the "he" has to be God the Father, as no one else would be considered qualified to pouring the spirit of God on us.
 - iii) Of course I could get all technical on you about how God actually pours the Spirit on us, but there's a more important question: What does it mean? Glad you asked.
 - iv) The short version is the Holy Spirit is sufficient to help us through all our spiritual needs. Let me put it this way: Does God answer all our questions about Him on Day 1 of our salvation? Of course not, we grow in our knowledge of Him. When I think of the job of the Spirit within me, I think of Him guiding me and helping me as I grow closer to God. There's a classic way to test the Holy Spirit I'd like you to try: Is there a bible question that's bugging you? Pray over it. Ask God to help in understanding what He meant by a certain bible passage. You'll be amazed as you watch the Spirit work over time to guide you to help you. You may get help from asking an expert the question or just hearing something on the radio. My point is if we're seriously seeking God with a biblical based question, I'm positive the Holy Spirit works to draw us closer to Him.
 - v) OK what about classical debate questions such as how should we be baptized? I'm not here to solve that debate and neither is God. I'm referring to issues when we're confused about a biblical passage or concept and we desire His guidance.
 - vi) I'm positive when I get to heaven, there will be "debatable" issues I was right about and others I was wrong. Therefore I try to avoid such debates, which by the way is an issue coming up later in the lesson.
 - vii) All I'm trying to point out through Verse 6 is the Spirit working within the life of a believer is sufficient to guide us through all our spiritual needs.
- f) Now that I've confused you enough on Verse 6, let's move on to Verse 7: "so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."
 - i) The good news is this one is much easier. Let me explain:
 - ii) When I think of "Justified", I think of "Just as" as in "Just as if I've never sinned".
 - iii) The point here is the idea that we're saved by God's grace and nothing else.
 - iv) The big mistake all Christians make at times is we start doing good deeds and we start thinking, "God must really be impressed with me right now". What we forget is we're saved only by grace, and we don't add to that by what we do.
 - v) I like Billy Graham's illustration: Faith and works is like breathing. If we naturally breath in faith we just "naturally" (for lack of a better word) want to breath out our good works. That's sort of the idea here.

- g) The key philosophical point here is that we're saved by grace alone and we cannot add to that by what we do. OK we're all Christians reading this, why emphasize it here?
 - i) The last verse focused on the fact that the Holy Spirit's is part of the believer's life. To emphasize God's grace here is to remind us that it's not "us" doing the work it's God's intent for us to make a difference for Him by doing those works. It's here to remind us it's "God working in us, not anything we can ever brag about."
 - ii) OK John one more time, what about my non-believing friend who also does lots of good works? How do you explain that? Some people do good works for the sake of their ego. Others think they're impressing God by what they do. I'm not saying only Christians can do good works. I'm saying Christianity helps us to understand how God wants us to be motivated to good works and realize the works He wants us to do (make a difference for Him) should be done by using His power to do so.
 - iii) So how do I know what is God's will? Prayer helps, but often He guides us by the age-old method of trial and error. If we want to do "x" for God, and our method is not working, we alter that method at the same time using the gifts He's given us as we learn how best to make a difference for Him.
 - iv) For example, this ministry started and alters a little by trial and error. That's how I figure out what God wants me to do and how best to do it. OK then Verse 8.
- 8. Verse 8: This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.
 - a) Speaking of doing good works, I present Verse 8 to you. The way to view this verse is to keep in mind whether we like it or not, we are now witnesses for Jesus. Every so often I'll remind us of the idea that if we were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict us? Paul's sort of making the same point here. What Paul's effectively telling us is if we claim to put our trust in Jesus, act like it!
 - b) OK, most of us know that. Why say it here? Remember this concept in context of what is being taught in this chapter: How we're to be a witness to nonbelievers or how we should be behaving in the world we live in. In Paul day, they were living in a society that trusted in all sorts of false gods. Remember that the Roman/Greek culture was very religious but they trusted in dozens if not hundreds of gods for protection. One reason that the Romans resented the Jewish culture was their belief in only one God yet they tolerated it as long as the Israelites obeyed Rome and paid their taxes. My point is that the way Christianity did spread was not only by people sharing the good news of Jesus with others, but also lived in a way that was distinctly different from the Roman/Greek culture.
 - i) In other words we win people with our conduct, but we also must be willing to go share the good news of Jesus. Earlier in the lesson I stated the line, "You can't out-nice a Mormon". What I meant by that is one can't lead people to Jesus just by us being a nice person. We should do good works as a witness for Jesus, but when the time presents itself, we should be willing to give the answer when people will effectively ask us, "Why aren't you acting like everyone else?"
 - c) What popped in my head here is a story in the book of Acts, about the city of Ephesus, as the Christian church spread there, sales of statues to the local god of that city were coming to a stop. The leaders of that city were angry and thinking, "If we don't bring Christianity to a stop our main tourist attraction of this city will end". (This is from Acts Chapter 20.) My point is a lot of people may be curious about Jesus until it affects their wallet or their way of life. That's why Ephesus was in an uproar over Christianity. My question to you and me is our lifestyle different enough or are we as a community of believers making an uproar to the point where people are wondering, "What are we going to do about all those Christians over there?" If you think that doesn't occur in the United States, think of all the effort to allow abortion on demand, or eliminate references to Jesus in public schools.

- d) All I'm saying, is when we do good works because of our faith in Jesus and we make the effort to stand up for Him, "resistance will come". I'm not saying all Christians have to go get involved in every particular issue, but all of us have to be willing to be a witness stand up for our faith in Jesus no matter the cost. Of course we have to have wisdom as to what we say and to whom we say it. But my point and I believe Paul's point here is simply that if we believe in Jesus, we should act like it when we interact with the world.
 - e) As I also said earlier in the lesson, it doesn't mean we have to be perfect, but it does mean, we make the effort to use the gifts God's given us to make a difference for Him, and have a willing heart to make that difference. As the old saying goes, "If you don't know what to do, do something and get involved where you can and when you can."
 - f) OK, enough guilt for Verse 8. Verse 9 gives us more advice on dealing with nonbelievers: Verse 9: But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.¹⁰ Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.¹¹ You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.
- 9.
- a) My loose translation: "Don't waste your ammunition". Paul's concern here is still about us being a good witness for Jesus. What he's warning against here is not wasting our time in places that don't make a difference for Him.
 - i) An illustration or two might help here. Some people like to argue. Some want to argue to a point and feel like they've been heard on their view. I've met my share of Christians who just want to argue about some issue and don't care what are any counterarguments. Examples include the future of the modern nation of Israel or whether Christians are capable of losing their salvation. Me, I'm simply positive God has a plan and my job is to be a part of His plan. I've gotten to a point in life where I'm bored with famous debatable issues. I figure I only have a limited time to live this life and I want to use it for His glory and it's waste of my time to debate over issues that won't affect my view on such issues.
 - ii) That's Paul's point too. I could give you specifics about the Jewish customs of that time period, but I think one gets the idea based on my last paragraph.
 - iii) Let me put it this way: Of course we need to learn what the bible states on issues. The point here is not on learning. The point is about avoiding debate for the sake of debate in the first place. We don't grow as believers from such debates.
 - b) Notice in Verse 10 that we are to have nothing to do with such people. I get e-mails from people who want to argue about some point. I have to admit, I'm tempted at times to just agree with them just to "take the wind out of their sails". What Paul is saying is when we encounter such people we're to shun them as such debate doesn't help us grow in faith in Jesus nor is it helpful to the person making the argument. I'm reminded of the expression "If I want your opinion, I'll give it you!" It refers to those who just want to argue and don't really care what you have to say in response. That's the type of people we're to avoid as it occurs. I'm also reminded of the fact that people don't care what we have to say until they know that we care. We have to develop the wisdom to learn the difference between those who are interested in growing in their faith as opposed to those who just want to debate. That is Paul's point in one thought.
 - c) Let me state Verse 11 for a moment: It reads, "You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned."
 - i) Remember that the underlying point here is that we as Christians are to avoid any debate that isn't "fruitful". Does that mean we shouldn't witness to that person? I don't think that's the point. I think by shunning such a person at the time when he or she is debating is the time we shun them. If another time comes up where you or I can be a good witness to them we can and should. It's like the classic issue of separating the sinner from the sin.

- ii) My point is we can only help someone who wants help. Intervention in a situation where one doesn't want help doesn't work. If someone cares about us they maybe willing to listen, but to actually change one's way requires a person to think about life differently. Many years ago someone near me quit smoking. He said it was the hardest thing he ever did. My point is simply that nobody does something unless they first desire to change in the first place.
 - iii) That leads me back to Verse 11. In that verse Paul is condemning the person who's only interested in debate just to express their opinion. Like I said, it's the kind of a person who's effectively thinking, "If I want your opinion, I'll give it to you!" That is the type of behavior Paul's condemning here. Our job as Christians is simply to learn to recognize it, shun it and if a person is really interested in growing in their faith and not just stating their opinion, then we can talk to them.
 - d) Now the good news: We made it through Paul's little lecture on being a good witness to a non-believer. The key points are effectively respect those are in charge, because they're in charge and we must accept that fact. Then Paul reminds us that the only key difference in the lives of believers versus nonbelievers is that God picked us and we would not be any different from nonbelievers except for that fact. Since we can't tell who's saved and who's not saved, God called us to use our lives to be a witness for Him to all people. At the same time Paul wants to remind us to "not waste our bullets" on those who are not interested in either becoming a believer or growing in their faith. As the old expression goes, "timing is everything". For those who are not interested that God wants to be the center of their life, I simply silently pray that their hearts be open to God's truth and realize that my job is not to convert people, but simply be a good witness for Jesus as much as can whenever I can. That's a pretty good summary of how Christian's should interact with nonbelievers in one paragraph.
 - e) The rest of the lesson is an "epilogue". It's Paul's greetings to those who are also involved in the process of witnessing to the world around him. There are a few things worth noting in these verses besides the fact Paul had friends and fellow co-workers in the Gospel. Let us take a quick look at this epilogue and see what's worth gleaning for us.
10. Verse 12: As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there.
- a) In Verse 12, we learn a little of the who, what, when and where of this letter. I suspect the men named Artemas and Tychicus are to relieve Titus as an overseer (think of the guy in charge of the church leaders). It's proof that Titus's job here wasn't permanent. Paul will ask one of these two men to relieve Titus so he could join Paul at Nicopolis.
 - b) If you read the book of Acts carefully, there is never any reference to "Nicopolis". That's the name of a number of ancient cities in the Greek world. It's name refers to the fact the city's been conquered and "Nico" (like the English word "Nike") means victory. Because there's never any record of Paul being there during any of his missionary trips, scholars place this letter after Paul was in Rome in Acts 28, but before the time he was taken back there as prisoner as described in 2nd Timothy.
 - c) There is not much spiritual significant to get out of this part of the letter other than simply to say it's ok to make plans and even change them. Paul asked Titus to work in Crete and here we realize it was only for a specific (unknown to us) time frame. It teaches us that it's ok to make plans but of course, God can always change them.
11. Verse 13: Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need.
- a) Zenas is the only lawyer mentioned in the bible. Some joke is he may be the only lawyer in heaven. I happen to know a few wonderful Christian lawyers, so I won't go there.
 - b) I can't resist sharing one lawyer joke I heard: "If your banker and your lawyer are in the middle of the road, who do you run over? The banker as it's business before pleasure!"

- c) My father was a banker and didn't appreciate the joke. It was told by someone who did work as a real estate developer, which is why he thought lowly of both professions. That has nothing to do with this study, but I wanted to work that joke in.
 - d) There was a man named Apollos mentioned a lot in the early chapters of Acts. Therefore, bible scholars suspect it's the same guy who years later was still working himself to make a difference for Jesus. Bottom line, these two guys were being sent from Paul to help out in the ministry work and Titus was asked to help them with their needs. If nothing else it is another reminder that we Christians are supposed to work together as a team to make a difference for Jesus. It also shows us that Titus's mission wasn't just to go from one house church to the other instructing them how to act, but to be helpful in general to others who are trying to make a difference for Jesus in what they were called to do.
 - e) Speaking of working together, check out Verse 14:
12. Verse 14: Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.
- a) What Paul is essentially saying here is as a final comment is when Titus travels from one home church to another remind the people to devote themselves to "doing good". It's so easy for each of us to get entangled in the daily needs of our own lives, that all of us need regular reminders of what life should be all about: Making a difference for Jesus as we go offer ourselves as help to others.
 - b) The key point Paul's making in closing is essentially, teach people not to waste their life in pursuits of things that won't matter for eternity. Yes we all have to do what's necessary as part of life. Of course we have to provide for ourselves and do our chores. Paul's point is life should be more than that. Yes we have to do what's necessary, but we'll still have time over and above that. In other words, don't waste the most valuable asset we own, the time God gives us. One should look back at their lives and realize that we've used it to make a difference for God no matter how long we get to live in this world. That's what he means by the idea of a "productive" life.
 - c) OK John, that all sounds wonderful, how do I start? What specifically do I do in order to make that difference? What I love to ask people is, "If money was not an issue, what is it you'd like to do all day? What do you enjoy doing? What is you think you're good at or others will say you're good at? Then you should find a way to combine what you enjoy doing in a way that can make a difference for God in your life." That's how we use our lives to make a difference for Jesus.
 - d) What if that's not possible right now? What if I'm really sick or stuck in a situation that I can't change? Pray our way through it. Be a witness to God in the situation we are in as we use that situation for His glory. God may want you to just be a witness in the situation you're in right now. God loves to test us. It's like thinking, "Before I can get you to where you want to be, first let's see how you do in this present situation". As we mature and go work to what we desire to accomplish, God works with us on our level so we can make a difference for Him. Bottom line, work towards your goals of what you enjoy doing. If we are willing to commit our lives to make a difference for Him, He'll lead us down the path He desires us to go in life. That's how we make a difference for Him.
 - e) That would be a wonderful way to end the lesson, but Paul has one more verse for us:
13. Verse 15: Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.
- a) This is Paul saying, "I'm not in this alone. My fellow Christian workers who are with me in the city of Nicopolis (where Paul was working a that moment)."
 - b) Paul like all people care about those who love him. What I believe Paul meant is as Titus goes from one house church to another he may tell them who Paul is, if they don't know. Not to brag about Paul, but just for others to know that someone else cares for them and that person is Paul.

- c) The letter ends with the phrase "Grace be with you all." As most of us know by now, the idea of grace is to get a blessing we don't deserve. I doubt Paul said this as a "throw away" line to end his letter. Paul was truly concerned with Christians that they learn to live with His grace as part of their lives. Living under God's grace does not mean we can be lazy or just sit there and expect God to bless us. It means as long as we're trusting in Him, He will lead us down a path that will make a difference for Him. God's grace doesn't mean life is always going to go well. It means He will bless us just because He wants to and if we are willing to use our life for His glory, we'll be blessed for living that way beyond anything we can imagine. On that joyful note, it's a good time to end in prayer.
 - d) Oh, and before I start that prayer. since this is my last lesson on this little book, as I always do, I put a biography of my sources on the next page. Thanks for reading and I pray that God blessed your life as you live under His grace to make a difference for Him.
14. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, like Paul said, help us to trust in Your grace. Help us and guide us as we use the most valuable thing you've given us, our time, to make a difference for You. Where ever You've called us to serve and for however long You've called us to be a witness for You, may we use that time to glorify You. Bless us this day, not because we deserve it, but just because it is Your desire to bless us. May today be a great day as we use it for Your glory. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

Supplement: Bibliography

"If I have seen further, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants." (Isaac Newton)

Without prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all these commentaries are useless. My prayer as I prepare these lessons was for God to show me the things He wanted me to learn, and second, the lessons He wanted me to pass on in my writings. I have quoted many sources throughout these lessons. If any of these writers appeal to you, I invite you to read or listen to them further via the places listed below. I have also quoted other sources not listed, and those names are usually listed in the lessons. These other authors were usually quoted from the materials listed below and taken from those sources.

First and foremost, the greatest commentary on the bible is the bible itself. Here are the bible versions I use in preparation of my lessons. I mostly quote The New International Version (NIV), Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society; The New King James Version (NKJV), Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.; The King James Version (KJV) (no copyright on that version); the English Standard Version. (ESV). The copyright information for the ESV is in point #7 below. The Living Bible (TLB) Copyright © 1971, 1986 by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189; "The Message" copyright © 1993 by Eugene H. Peterson. All rights reserved. All the bible text used in these lessons (except the ESV) is taken from Parsons Software: Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 1999, Parsons Technology, Inc., all rights reserved and from Zondervan Reference Software (32-bit edition) Version 2.6, Copyright © 1989-1998 The Zondervan Corporation.

Here are the commentaries I have referenced over these lessons. The specific commentaries on Titus are listed first, and then bible-wide commentaries. They're listed in alphabetical order by author. References to audio commentary means the information was gathered via the Internet in MP3® Format, unless otherwise stated:

1. Commentary on Titus by Jon Courson. It is in book form from Harvest House Publishing. It is also available in MP3® format at <http://www.joncourson.com/>.
2. Commentary on Titus by Bob Davis. They are available for free in MP3® format at <http://northcountrychapel.com/studies/>.
3. Commentary on Titus by David Guzik. It is available for free in audio and text format. The web address is http://www.enduringword.com/library_commentaries.htm Mr. Davis quotes a lot of famous authors from the 19th and 20th Century on these books and I've used some of those quotes.
4. Commentary on Titus by Chuck Missler, available at K-House Ministries 1-800-KHOUSE1. The web address is <http://www.khouse.org>.
5. Commentary on Titus by John MacArthur. They are available for free in MP3® format at <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons> and then click on those particular books.
6. The English Standard Version Study Bible; Copyright (2005-2009) The Standard Bible Society. The version itself is copyrighted 2008 by Crossway Bibles, a publication of "Good News Publishers".
7. The Expositor's Bible Encyclopedia, Zondervan Publications, (via CD-ROM 1998 release). This is a multi-volume encyclopedia with notes on every bible verse. It is available through Zondervan. Paperback books are published on individual Bible books from this same source. The actual text that is copied and pasted is taken from this source.
8. The Life Application Bible, Zondervan Publishing: www.zondervanbibles.com/0310919770.htm.
9. The MacArthur Study Bible with commentary by John MacArthur Nelson Bibles (1997) ISBN: 0849912229.
10. I also refer sometimes to J.P. Moreland apologetic ministry which is at www.jpmoreland.com and Greg Koukl's apologetic ministry, which is Stand to Reason at www.str.org. Finally I make references to a Jewish talk show host and Old Testament scholar named Dennis Prager. See dennisprager.com
11. My apology if I have quoted someone else and I have forgotten to include them here.