

Group Study Outline

Titus 2 Theme Sentence

Grace trains Christians to live godly lives, as good adverts for the gospel.

Launch Question

How do non-Christians in the world around us expect Christians to behave?
Are they right to think this? Why or why not?

READ TITUS 2

Summarise the story so far in Titus. (Why does chapter 2 start with "But as for you..."? Who is Titus meant to be different to?)
What does it mean to "teach what accords with sound doctrine"? (cf 1:1)

11-14 tells us what this "sound doctrine" is. What is "the grace of God"?

What does God's grace do?

What are we redeemed from?

How are we redeemed?

Why are we redeemed?

What does grace train us to do (and not do)?

How do you think this training happens in practise?

What are the two 'appearings'?

What does life look like for the Christian living between these two appearances?

Why are 11-14 here? (What is the "For" there for in 11? What would it mean if we only had the instructions from 1-10 without this truth?)

Summarise these verses in your own words.

How is this different from how we might sometimes think about God's grace?

Which different groups does Titus need to address in 1-10?

What should Titus tell each group? (*Maybe write these on a big sheet of paper.*)

Are there any common themes that you can spot across the groups? Where are the groups quite distinct?

What difference would this make... in your family? with your friends? at work?

Would this behaviour stand out from the crowd? How?

From your experience, what will non-Christians make of this?

From the passage, what does Paul say the impact will be? (5, 8, 10) How is this an encouragement to be godly?

Why do you think Titus needs to be told not to let anyone disregard him? (15)

How are other Christians involved in our growth in godliness?

Are we intentionally seeking out role models and trainers?

Are we intentionally seeking to be the example and train others?

How could we grow in that? How might Connect Group help?

Summary & application

Based on what we've seen in this passage, why is godliness so important?

Which group (or groups) do you belong to?

What qualities do you feel convicted you need to grow in?

What truth from 11-14 do you need to remember to train you?

How might others help with that?

PRAY

Titus 2



Grace and godliness are friends

Faith versus works. Religion versus relationship. Often it's easy to speak as if the free grace of the gospel is incompatible with an emphasis on Christians doing good. We don't want to be legalists after all! But we worry that if we over-emphasise grace then people won't change.

The Bible, however, doesn't seem to think these are in the slightest bit incompatible. In fact, in our passage, Paul says that the very same grace which saves us, also trains us for godliness. Far from leading to chaotically sinful lives, grace brings people back under God's control. Grace disciplines us, like a tutor, saving us as we are, but not leaving us as we are.

Reaching out to 'evil beasts'

Chapter one paints a tricky portrait of Titus' job. He's been left in Crete to put godly leaders in place in newly planted churches. The culture around was famous for its sinfulness and false teachers were letting people off the hook with some cheap religion. Titus had to put together a team of grace-changed men to teach the truth, instruct in godliness, and shut up the liars.

In chapter two, godliness is described in detail for various groups within the church. Some of it seems like common sense goodness. Some of it is as challenging today as it would have been on that crazy island back then. In all cases, the motivation for this godliness is to make the gospel look good. After all, it's only by grace that we are saved and trained, and we long for outsiders to find grace for themselves. Just as grace leads us to godliness, so our godliness can lead others to grace.

Martin Luther put it like this, "Because the heathen cannot see our faith, so they ought to see our works, then hear our doctrine, then be converted." It happened for us and we should pray and work hard so it happens for others.

[NB]

Titus 2 Theme Sentence

Grace trains Christians to live godly lives, as good adverts for the gospel.

Application

- Understand that grace is meant to lead to godliness, not more sin.
- Live godly lives right now while we wait for glory. Do this so outsiders might find the gospel attractive.
- Mark Twain said, "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand." This isn't rocket science to comprehend, but it is tough to obey. When leading, give plenty of time to working through the specifics of the difference grace should make for us and the people in our group.
- But do emphasise grace! We are not saved by our godliness but by Jesus.

Commentary

1 Starting with “But as for you...” shows that Titus’ ministry should contrast with that of the false teachers in chapter 1. They teach a form of religion which leads to excusing sin and they are upsetting whole families in the process (1:11). Whereas the fruit of Titus’ teaching will be to put families back together again in the right order!

1:1 spoke about “the truth, which accords with godliness.” Here, Paul speaks of “what accords with sound doctrine”, and then goes on to define godliness. We mustn’t simply teach what is true, we must also teach the godly lifestyle which goes with it.

Paul then goes through various types of people, looking at specific areas of temptation for those ages and stages, showing that, although there are big areas of overlap, godliness looks different for different groups. This behaviour will stand out in a culture so at odds with God.

2 The word for “older men” is very similar to “elders” in 1:5. The qualities are similar as church leaders should be chosen from within this pool of mature Christians. There should be a growing dignity. To be “sound” or “healthy” is key; in faith (that is the truth of the faith), in love (not growing cold over time), and in steadfastness (neither giving up early nor becoming stubborn). Self-control comes up here, the first of four mentions of that quality. Godliness is a life under control.

3-5 “Older” is a relative term and more about life experience than a particular age, although in those days you could be “older” from about 30. Biblically it’s a good thing to be older! It’s something to aspire to.

Godliness for older ladies will look like reverence or appropriateness in behaviour, steering clear of malicious gossip, and being careful of how much they’re drinking. They also have a teaching role. In chapter one, the overall leadership of the church is a job for men, but here the older women are given the responsibility to teach younger women. (Note that the young women are the only group not addressed directly.)

The method is to “teach what is good”, which must mean solid gospel truth and the lifestyle to match. The goal is godliness with a homeward focus. Love for husbands and children is important – not just duty but love! Self-control is required again! To be pure is most likely referring to sexual purity and faithfulness. To be kind shows the importance for the manner in which these responsibilities are carried out; younger women mustn’t allow the frustrations of their role to spill out in irritability and harshness with their husbands and children... or anyone!

The controversial bits are about being submissive to their husbands and working at home. Sin turns God-given relationships on their heads, with men domineering rather than leading sacrificially, or else deserting their role to lead, provide and protect altogether. For women their role in marriage can be twisted to mean they try to lead their husbands rather than follow his loving headship. A Christian wife should be aiming to let her husband lead her, as the church is led by Christ (Ephesians 5:22-24).

“Working at home” comes from a similar place of getting marital roles back in order. This isn’t saying that women must never work a paid job! But it is stating the primary role of care for the home, which means care for her husband, kids (if she has them), other extended family with them, and the place they live. If she has time and energy to spare after looking to those things, she is free to work outside the home. But the home must come first. There are always circumstances where this is difficult but this is the ideal to aim for.

The reason for this godliness with a homeward focus is the reputation of God’s word (5b). When people don’t see grace being worked through into godliness, they are right to question the goodness and effectiveness of the gospel, which *should* lead to change. In today’s society, some might “revile” the word of God because it *does* encourage this behaviour! But that shouldn’t cause us to abandon this teaching. Once people see it in our lives they will have the opportunity to see how good it is to live a life back in God’s intended order thanks to the word.

6 It’s much simpler for younger men! They just need self-control. In a world which doesn’t push young men to take on responsibility and adulthood, we need to help them to get their lives under God’s control, from battling sin to becoming a husband worthy of submitting to.

7-8 These instructions to Titus could come under the category of ‘younger man’ but have some things which are specific to his role. He is to be an example. His teaching too needs to be serious and true. Again the fact that the world is watching is a spur to godliness. Titus will have enemies, but their criticisms mustn’t stick.

9-10 Slavery in Paul’s day was much like our modern employer-employee relationships. Workers should do what their bosses say and be honest and hard-working; the model employee. Doing this is a good advert for the gospel so that others come and find salvation themselves.

11-12 Here is the reason for all this godliness: God’s grace has appeared. It has appeared in the death of Jesus – He gave Himself graciously for us! And it has appeared in our lives as we’ve heard and believed the gospel (1:2-3; 3:4-6). Grace has come to save all kinds of people.

However, grace doesn’t simply save us, it trains us. To say ‘no’ to our old sinful lives and desires, and to live lives back under the instruction and discipline of God. 1-10 is made possible and motivated by grace.

13-14 We should be godly now while we wait for the second ‘appearing’ of Jesus. He will come again to give us the “eternal life” secured by His death and promised in His gospel. God’s aim in rescuing us was the same as with Old Testament Israel, in that He wanted a holy people for His own possession (cf Exodus 19:4-6; Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Redemption was from “lawlessness” and for “good works”. We should be eager to serve Him!

15 Titus must insist on all this. The death of Jesus for us, the implications of that grace for our godliness, *and* the nitty-gritty details of what godliness looks like in practise. In Crete as today, many won’t like this message but we have to stick to it. Grace trains us for godliness!