

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES



Grace for the World: Titus 2

T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Pastoral Epistles: Grace for the World: Titus 2
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Titus 2: Introduction

Why is it so important that local churches be ordered just so, with elders and shepherds watching over, equipping, and guarding the flock of the Lord?

So that the Church can fulfill its calling as the channel of God's saving grace to the world. In churches that have a proper order, every member has something to offer as an agent of grace. Every member must be equipped to serve as salt, light, and leaven in their own niche in society and culture. Grace impacts the world where the people of God live and move and have their being.

We are a people redeemed for good works, that we might be zealous in doing them. When the *order* of our churches is what it should be, the grace of God will flow through us to the world.

And the key to all this working as it should is pastors who are rooted in and bear the fruit of sound doctrine.

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T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Sound Doctrine

Pray Psalm 4.1, 2.

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness!
You have relieved me in *my* distress;
Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

Read Titus 2.1, 15

Prepare.

1. On what does Paul charge Titus to concentrate? Why?
2. Note the verbs Paul uses with this charge.

Meditate.

Maintaining orderliness and health in a congregation is the responsibility of those who lead, beginning with the pastor and the elders. While, as we have seen, the elders are to guard the flock of God against false teaching, ministering even in the “house churches” to care for the saints, the pastor’s duty is to teach what accords with sound doctrine.

In Ephesians 4.11 Paul refers to the pastor of the local church as “pastor/teacher.” The two duties go hand in hand. Pastors shepherd their flocks, build their churches, and equip the people for their own ministries by teaching sound doctrine, exhorting the people to receive and obey the teaching of God’s Word, and rebuking them when they fail to do so. There are those today who want to downplay the importance of doctrine and the need for confronting the people of God in their sins. Paul, however, was not among them. He insisted that Titus do his work of teaching, and that no one be allowed to disregard what he had to say.

We note that this chapter takes the form of an *inclusio*, beginning and ending at the same place. This structural component is designed to emphasize the apostle’s call to Titus to teach sound doctrine. It’s not as though teaching is one of many duties a pastor must fulfill; teaching is the pastor’s primary duty. Indeed, since the shepherds of God’s churches have only the tools of prayer, teaching, and personal example by which to do their work (Acts 6.4; 1 Pet. 5.1-3), it is important that all their ministry in the church be carried out by one or another of these means. The sound teaching of the pastor is essential to equip the elders to do their work of guarding, instructing, and caring for the flock. The pastor equips the elders and feeds the flock on the solid food of God’s Word; the elders then, nourished by the Word, help the congregation to digest the Word by their “hands-on” ministries of looking well to know the state of God’s flock (Prov. 27.23; Acts 20.28).

But it all begins with the pastor, and with sound doctrine.

Reflect.

1. Why do you suppose people today don’t have much taste for doctrine?
2. Explain each of the verbs Paul attaches to Titus’ ministry of sound doctrine?
3. What does it mean for a pastor or shepherd to minister sound doctrine “with all authority”?

He gives the appellation of sound doctrine to that which may instruct men to godliness; for all trifles vanish away, when that which is solid is taught. When he enjoins him to speak those things which agree with "sound doctrine," it is as if he had said, that Titus must be continually employed in this preaching; for to mention these things once or twice would not be enough. And

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Paul does not speak of the discourse of a single day; but so long as Titus shall hold the office of pastor, he wishes him to be employed in teaching this doctrine. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Titus 2*

Help me to love sound doctrine, Lord, and to seek more of it from Your Word, so that I...

Pray Psalm 4.1-3.

For what works of glory has God set you apart today? Consecrate yourself to them as you pray these verses.

Sing Psalm 4.1-3.

Psalm 4.1-3 (*Picardy: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent*)

Answer when I call, Lord Jesus, God of all my righteousness!

Bend Your holy ear, relieve us from all terror, all distress!

Lord, receive our prayer, release us; send Your grace to save and bless!

Wicked men reproach and scorn us, loving what is vile and vain.

God with grace will shield and adorn us through the Savior's blood and pain.

Jesus, You have bought and borne us; hear our cries for help again.

2 Older Men and Women

Pray Psalm 4.3.

But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly;
The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

Read Titus 2.2-5.

Prepare.

1. What was to be the primary focus of Titus' teaching to the men and women of the churches?
2. What should be the outcome of such teaching?

Meditate.

The members of the congregation have important roles to play in helping to ensure that the church grows, matures, and remains “in order” (1:5). Paul begins with the older men, showing that he expected men to take a prominent role in building the church. He sets forth six goals for which to strive in equipping older men – typically, heads of households – to fulfill their callings in the local church. They must be “sober”. That is, their outlook or mindset must be temperate, serious, and not given to frivolity or flippancy. Seeking the Kingdom of God is serious business, and pastors and elders must work with the men of their churches to help make sure they understand and embrace this.

Serious-minded men will demonstrate a seriousness of character – they will be “reverent”. Such men are not easily led astray by passions and temptations (“temperate”). Because they are fed sound doctrine and not permitted to regard it lightly (1, 15), they are “sound in the faith” – they know what they believe and hold to it firmly. Soundness in faith issues in sincere love and patience. Pastors who take such goals for their men, and pursue them through sound teaching, are more likely to have such men available to help in the work of building the church.

Paul indicates goals for older women to strive for in taking their proper place in the church. These largely mirror the goals held out for the older men, although they are stated somewhat differently and more pointedly (perhaps taking into consideration local conditions).

Older women are to be deeply spiritual, circumspect in behavior, and active in teaching younger woman – daughters and single women – how they must fulfill their callings. The teaching older women are to give to younger women must focus on goals that will prepare them for responsible womanhood: self-control, purity, how to take proper care of a home, to be kind, and to be submissive to their husbands. We must not read in this any requirement that women *only* work at home (cf. Prov. 31). The idea of submitting to husbands such as are described in verse 2, and as Paul taught in Ephesians 5.25-33, would neither be problematic nor a heinous obligation. Women can grow to realize their full inherent beauty when they submit to men who are sound in the Word and who love them as Christ loves the Church.

In a time when churches seem frenzied to attract young people, we need to remember that older men and women are the backbone of the local church. The more diligent and faithful pastors are in equipping and discipling older men and women, the more people there will be to help younger folks find their way in the Kingdom.

Reflect.

1. The focus of Titus' instruction is to be on the development of spiritual and moral character, first of all.

Why?

2. What outcomes did Paul envision from this teaching?

3. The word “reverent” is a goal for both men and women. What does it mean to be “reverent”?

The women are, like the older men, to be honest, sober, chaste, strong in faith and charity and patience. They are also to bear themselves in a way proper for their sex, to maintain a holy manner in bodily movements, facial expressions, words, silence, and whatever tends to the dignity of a holy decorum. Jerome (347-420), Commentary on Titus

Thank You, Lord, for the older men and women in our church. Today I pray that I may encourage some of them by...

Pray Psalm 4.1-3.

Give thanks to the Lord for the many ways He has relieved you. Seek mercy and grace to help you throughout this day for all the work He has given you to do.

Sing Psalm 4.1-3.

Psalm 4.1-3 (*Picardy: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent*)

Answer when I call, Lord Jesus, God of all my righteousness!

Bend Your holy ear, relieve us from all terror, all distress!

Lord, receive our prayer, release us; send Your grace to save and bless!

Wicked men reproach and scorn us, loving what is vile and vain.

God with grace will shield and adorn us through the Savior's blood and pain.

Jesus, You have bought and borne us; hear our cries for help again.

3 A Goal for Younger Men

Pray Psalm 4.6.

There are many who say,

“Who will show us any good?”

LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

Read Titus 2.6.

Prepare.

1. What does Paul expect of young men in the churches?
2. Why should Titus “exhort” rather than simply “teach” them?

Meditate.

It seems strange that this one goal should be set forth for younger men. However, it is most appropriate.

We do not need to dwell on the tendency of younger men to be led about by whims and passions, and to engage in all manner of activities which bring sorrow to their parents and shame to the Name of Christ. For young men to think right and clearly (Greek: σωφρονεῖν, *sophronein*), so that they would be aware of the temptations that come to their eyes, ears, mouths, and bodies, would be excellent discipline to prepare them for responsible adulthood. Titus must *exhort* or *encourage* them in this, which carries a much stronger and more personal meaning than merely *teach*.

Paul knew young men well, and he knew what pastors must focus on in helping them to escape the lusts of youth and enter adulthood ready to serve the Lord (Ps. 119.9-16). Every believer must discipline his or her body, so that it is effectively dead to sin and alive to righteousness. That challenge can be greater for younger men; thus, they must be encouraged to work at it with greater focus and intensity while they are young. We’re not helping young men become older disciple-makers if all we do is attract them to church with the promise of good times and the prospect of meeting some Christian women.

It is instructive to see how Paul thinks about the teaching and learning goals for different ages and types of people in the churches. Every church member has different challenges and a different calling; thus, each church member needs to be instructed in the Word according to the unique circumstances and opportunities of his or her life setting.

When Paul thought about instruction, he concentrated on outcomes; too often our work of Christian education concentrates on content, making sure that we communicate ideas, precepts, insights, and so forth, in as interesting and perhaps entertaining a manner as possible, but without much regard for how these are processed into the life. In churches where pastors teach sound doctrine, exhorting and rebuking as needed, where elders shepherd the flock diligently, and where men and women take up their own discipling responsibilities in their proper settings, real, measurable discipleship outcomes will be in evidence.

Reflect.

1. Why is being “sober-minded” so important for younger men?
2. What’s the difference between *exhorting* or *encouraging* someone and merely *teaching* them?

3. What challenges or obstacles do young men face in seeking to become clear-thinkers for Christ?

*He merely enjoins that young men be instructed to be temperate; for temperance, as Plato shows, cures the whole understanding of man. It is as if he had said, "Let them be well regulated and obedient to reason." John Calvin (1506-1564), *Commentary on Titus 2**

I pray for the young men in our church, Lord, that they might be clear-minded and serious about Jesus. Help me to exhort encourage them by...

Pray Psalm 4.6, 7.

Intercede with the Lord for the young men in your church, that He might show them His goodness, and they might grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Sing Psalm 4.6, 7.

Psalm 4.6, 7 (*Picardy: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent*)

Wicked men may scorn and try us, casting doubt upon Your grace.

Send Your Spirit, Lord, don't deny us till we see Your glorious face.

You Who sent Your Son to buy us, fill our hearts with joy and grace.

4 Teaching by Example

Pray Psalm 4.2, 3.

How long, O you sons of men,
Will you turn my glory to shame?
How long will you love worthlessness
And seek falsehood?

Selab

But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly;
The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

Read Titus 2.7, 8.

Prepare.

1. What kind of example should Titus set for his flock?
2. Why is it so important that he set such an example?

Meditate.

Paul doesn't want to get too far away from the responsibility of the pastor for helping the congregation entrusted to him achieve and sustain the good order that characterizes a healthy, growing church.

The mention here of “good works” – the second now (1.16) – is another foreshadowing of the major emphasis to be insisted on at the end of this chapter and in chapter 3. Churches are to be distinguished as communities given to good works, and achieving this objective begins with those who preach and teach. Personal example is one of three tools a pastor has for equipping his flock, as we have seen. He must model the good works for which he is equipping his congregation; his teaching must be solid, dignified, and sound. Such teaching requires careful and diligent preparation on the part of pastors, whose congregations must not begrudge them the time it takes to make proper preparation for teaching and preaching (2 Tim. 2.15). Pastors must be careful in all their teaching that they not leave themselves vulnerable to unjust criticism, either by their course of life, the content of their teaching, or the manner in which they deliver their instruction.

Paul might have put this word of instruction at verse 1. However, it seemed wiser to him to inject it in the middle of his teaching about the duties of church members. Thus he provides a kind of structural reinforcement in the middle of this chapter to emphasize what he says at the beginning and the end.

Jesus said that no learner would surpass the teaching or example of his teacher (Jn. 13.16). Those who teach must be more diligent in preparation and in their own learning, as the Lord scrutinizes them more carefully, and regards them with greater accountability (Jms. 3.1). In the churches, which are the epicenters of Kingdom expansion, and of the outworking of God's plan to redeem and restore the world, it would be impossible to overestimate the importance that pastors and teachers must give to their own labors and lives.

Reflect.

1. What “pattern” does the pastor establish for the members of the congregation?
2. How would you describe the relationship between a pastor's example and his teaching?
3. How did Paul describe the impact of a good example and sound teaching on those who oppose the Gospel?

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There are two things, conscience and reputation; conscience for yourself, reputation for your neighbor. Those who, being clear in their consciences, neglect their reputations, are being cruel; especially if they find themselves in this position. The apostle writes about this to his disciple: "Showing yourself to all around you as an example of good works." Augustine (354-430), Sermons 355.1

Lord, to whom can I be an example of Christ today? Give me grace for each opportunity, so that I...

Pray Psalm 4.1-3.

Pray that the Lord might allow you to increase in Christ-likeness today, and that He will give you grace to resist temptation and persevere in obeying Him.

Sing Psalm 4.1-3.

Psalm 4.1-3 (*Picardy: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent*)

Answer when I call, Lord Jesus, God of all my righteousness!

Bend Your holy ear, relieve us from all terror, all distress!

Lord, receive our prayer, release us; send Your grace to save and bless!

Wicked men reproach and scorn us, loving what is vile and vain.

God with grace will shield and adorn us through the Savior's blood and pain.

Jesus, You have bought and borne us; hear our cries for help again.

5 Goals for the Lowliest

Pray Psalm 4:6-8.

*There are many who say,
“Who will show us any good?”
LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.
You have put gladness in my heart,
More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.
I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;
For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.*

Read Titus 2:9, 10.

Prepare.

1. How do everyday people “adorn the doctrine of God”?
2. Why should bondservants – or slaves or employees – behave as Paul prescribes?

Meditate.

The Gospel of the Kingdom affects every level of society and every area of life. No one who has entered the Kingdom by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ must expect his or her life to remain the same.

Even slaves, the lowest rung on the Roman social ladder, were to pursue certain concrete expressions of their Christian convictions and Kingdom calling. The word “slaves” could also mean simply “servants” of various kinds; however, it did not exclude those who were owned by others, and thus had no legal standing in the empire.

Even such as these should work hard to allow their faith in Christ to come to expression in good works, which are the adornments of sound teaching. All believers are “slaves” of Jesus Christ, and thus must strive to relate to those around them in the same manner as house servants to their masters. Thus we show our faith by good works toward those whom God has been pleased to place in our lives, serving them with the love of Christ, which is the outworking of the sound teaching we receive at various levels and in various settings in the church.

In this brief chapter we get a glimpse at the melding and unifying power of the Gospel. Noble men and women, silly youths, budding young ladies, and even slaves occupied this household of faith together. The Church presents a microcosm of the redemptive and restorative power of the Gospel, and the reality of the Kingdom of God. But in order to realize this high calling, churches must take seriously the apostolic instruction concerning how they may achieve and sustain the kind of “good order” that allows them to fulfill their callings. We may not pick and choose how we are to build the church. If we want our churches to be what Paul envisioned and Jesus seeks, then we shall have to follow the instructions and guidelines of those first master builders (1 Cor. 3:10) and not assume that we are free to do whatever we think will work for whatever purposes we may choose to embrace.

Jesus is building His Church, and we build faithfully with Him when we follow the counsel and example of the apostles.

Reflect.

1. Why is it a thing so wonderful that even the lowliest people are regarded as being able to adorn the doctrine of God?

2. In what sense are all believers bondservants of Jesus Christ? How does this obligate us?
3. It can be a challenge to live this way – for example, at work. How can believers help one another to maintain this God-honoring, servant-like demeanor, even in the face of difficult people?

*For if you serve your master with good will, yet the occasion of this service proceeds from your fear of God, and he who with so great fear renders him service, shall receive the greater reward. For if he restrains not his hand or his unruly tongue, how shall the Gentile admire the doctrine that is among us? But if they see their slave, who has been taught the philosophy of Christ, displaying more self-command than their own philosophers and serving with all meekness and good will, he will in every way admire the power of the gospel. John Chrysostom (344-407), *Homilies on Titus 4**

Give me grace for this day, Lord, that I may serve You by serving others as I...

Pray Psalm 4.6-8.

What challenges are you facing today? Where do you need grace to be humble, faithful, and loving? Bring these to the Lord in prayer, letting these verses guide you.

Sing Psalm 4.6-8.

Psalm 4.6-8 (*Picardy: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent*)

Wicked men may scorn and try us, casting doubt upon Your grace.
Send Your Spirit, Lord, don't deny us till we see Your glorious face.
You Who sent Your Son to buy us, fill our hearts with joy and grace.

Safely in Your peace, let us lie, Lord; keep us in Your love and care.
Rooted in Your strong and wise Word, may we know Your comfort there.
Guard and keep us till we die, Lord; go before us everywhere.

6 Transforming Grace

Pray Psalm 4.5.

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
And put your trust in the LORD.

Read Titus 2.11-14.

Prepare.

1. According to Paul, what is the purpose of God's grace?
2. How does the reality of grace come to expression in the world?

Meditate.

What is the Gospel? Is it just the message of forgiveness and eternal life?

No; the Gospel announces a new era – that of the Kingdom – and a new King, Who is pursuing a new agenda by calling out a people for His own possession and forming them into His Body, the Church. Grace has come among men, and grace changes everything for all who receive it. Under the power of grace, we turn away from ungodliness and worldly passions; and we gain self-control, and strive to live “righteously and godly in the present age.” Under the grace of our Lord Jesus, we orient our lives toward His blessed return, always preparing and making ourselves ready for His sudden appearing; and under grace we show the love of Christ to the sinful world in lives of good works, which we do zealously.

Churches are forges for “new creations” (2 Cor. 5.17) who are God’s workmanship unto good works in every area of life, according to the Law of God (“from every lawless deed”; Eph. 2.10; Rom. 7.12). No church can be considered serious about the Lord’s Kingdom business that does not devote itself to this kind of equipping, ministry, and presence in its community.

In these verses we see Paul pointing toward the consummation of all things. The work of redemption and restoration – the proper work of churches – always takes place along a path and toward a horizon. We must always be preparing ourselves and encouraging one another for the glory of the Lord – glory here and now, and glory on the day of Christ’s return. Each church and each believer will have a somewhat different path in life; however, we are guided on those paths by sound instruction, the example of godly leaders, and the requirements of our individual callings in service to the people around us.

The horizon toward which we move, however, is the same for every believer and every church. We travel toward the City to Come, and we must prepare ourselves and our churches to meet the Lord when He returns, with our lamps lit, our lives and churches in good order, and us busy about the good works He has appointed us in His Law.

Reflect.

1. What is grace? What are the effects of grace?
2. What does it mean to “look for” the return of the Lord? Why is this important?
3. Why has God redeemed us as His people? What does it mean to be *zealous* for good works?

He gave himself for us that he might make a periousion people (for thus is the term in Greek for “peculiar”) and that he might

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make them the emulator of good works. Jerome (347-420), *Commentary on Titus*

How will You use me today, O Lord? Make me zealous for good works, and fearless against every foe, so that I...

Pray Psalm 4.4-7.

Look to the Lord for the grace you will need this day, that you might overcome every obstacle, rise above every trial, and show His grace and love to the world.

Sing Psalm 4.4-7.

Psalm 4.4-7 (*Picardy: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent*)

Let your anger flare, yet sin not; meditate, be still, and rest.

Turn your heart to God, begin not trusting in your righteousness.

Praise the Savior, all from sin bought; trust in Him to save and bless.

Wicked men may scorn and try us, casting doubt upon Your grace;

Send Your Spirit, Lord, don't deny us till we see Your glorious face.

You Who sent Your Son to buy us, fill our hearts with joy and grace.

7 Order in the Churches, Grace to the World

Pray Psalm 4.1-3.

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness!

You have relieved me in *my* distress;

Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

How long, O you sons of men,

Will you turn my glory to shame?

How long will you love worthlessness

And seek falsehood?

Selah

But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly;

The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

Review Titus 2.

Prepare.

1. Is discipleship something only for a few believers? Based on this chapter, what would Paul say?
2. What should we expect when God's grace is flowing freely and abundantly to and through His churches?

Meditate.

Paul began this brief epistle insisting that churches need to be put in proper order. They need elders who will shepherd each member of the flock, teaching, leading, discipling, and guarding against false teaching. Only churches that are in proper order can serve as channels of grace to the grace-starved world.

Every member of the church – young, old, men, women, simple, sophisticated, lowly, or lofty – needs to be taught and discipled. This is what elders are supposed to do, bringing the proper teaching and nurture to every believer, so that every believer can be fitted by the Word of God for good works (2 Tim. 3.15-17).

Churches are to be epicenters of grace to their communities. They are signs to the community that a new era and a new realm have arrived, where righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit are the order of the day. And churches are the outposts from which that Kingdom advances into the souls, culture, and social life of the surrounding community.

This occurs when God's people, equipped and zealous because of God's grace, make good works their daily calling and agenda. God has redeemed us and set us in His household so that we might show His goodness to the world. Thus many will come to know that God is good and loving and generous, and that life in His Son can make all things new in those who believe.

Reflect.

1. What does it mean to say that local churches are signs and outposts of the Kingdom of God? Is this true of your church? Explain.
2. How should the shepherds of a local church equip church members to be zealous for good works?
3. How can believers help one another to look forward to the coming of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ? Why is this so important?

The faithful who are holy and good may be few in comparison with the larger number of the wicked, but ... "many shall come

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from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” God shows to himself “a numerous people, zealous for good works.” ... Even when sometimes darkened and, as it were, clouded over by a great number of scandals ... still this people shines forth in her strongest members. Augustine (354-430), Letters 93.9.30

Shine forth in me today, O Lord, as I go out into my Personal Mission Field to...

Pray Psalm 4.1-8.

Life in the world is not always easy. Believers can expect opposition, mocking, and indifference. That might make us angry, but we must not sin by failing to love our neighbors. We are called to show them the goodness of God. Seek the Lord’s gladness, and pray that His Spirit will bring forth God’s grace through you today.

Sing Psalm 4.1-8.

Psalm 4.1-8 (*Picardy: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent*)

Answer when I call, Lord Jesus, God of all my righteousness!

Bend Your holy ear, relieve us from all terror, all distress!

Lord, receive our prayer, release us; send Your grace to save and bless!

Wicked men reproach and scorn us, loving what is vile and vain.

God with grace will shield and adorn us through the Savior’s blood and pain.

Jesus, You have bought and borne us; hear our cries for help again.

Let your anger flare, yet sin not; meditate, be still, and rest.

Turn your heart to God, begin not trusting in your righteousness.

Praise the Savior, all from sin bought; trust in Him to save and bless.

Wicked men may scorn and try us, casting doubt upon Your grace;

Send Your Spirit, Lord, don’t deny us till we see Your glorious face.

You Who sent Your Son to buy us, fill our hearts with joy and grace.

Safely in Your peace, let us lie, Lord; keep us in Your love and care.

Rooted in Your strong and wise Word, may we know Your comfort there.

Guard and keep us till we die, Lord; go before us everywhere.

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Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Every church member must be equipped for good works. Why? What does this require?
2. What does it mean to be *zealous* for good works? How can believers sustain that zeal?
3. What does it mean to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things”? Give some examples.
4. Paul was emphatic that Titus should teach these things to the people of Crete. How do you see that? Should we expect our shepherds to be equally emphatic? Explain.
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from Titus 2? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

For prayer:

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Thank you.