

Titus 3

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 22 November 2010 10:42

Amongst many Christians there is a 'doormat' mentality, at least theoretically. These pastors and others say we must do whatever authorities tell us, and subject ourselves willingly to defamation, assault and even murder. They say we may not speak out, answer back, defend ourselves, or in any way harm others. Apart from being unrealistic, it is also hypocritical... the same pastors and others who think this way have no problem beating up their wives, speaking harshly to and about 'members', and doing whatever they wish in response to others. Does this one remedy 'fit all'? Or do we need discretion and discernment instead of blind obedience to what might be a man-made totem?

Is the principle right, even if sinful Christians deny them? We will see what scripture actually says, and will find that the lame-duck approach to our lives by men with limp handshakes, has no true understanding of scripture. Personally, I have little time for pastors and teachers who make a virtue of having no backbone – they must stand firm at all costs and be a model to follow, not a bulk to hide behind.

Verses 1&2

1.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2.

To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

This chapter begins with "Put them in mind". Thus, Paul is referring to what he said previously, about how Christians of all ages should behave, with no excuses for sin. I say this as a sinner like the rest of my brethren, knowing that I, too, can, and do, fall at times.

Now comes teaching that few understand and most misuse and misinterpret (because their 'interpretation' is private and not borne out by God). Christians must be "subject to principalities and powers". In this text these are the ordinary rulers of our lives on earth. We must "obey magistrates", the legal powers.

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What is missing from this text, but is present in other parts of scripture, is the plain fact that rulers and magistrates must act responsibly and in godly fashion. We are under no charge to obey rulers and magistrates who demand that we disobey God. Indeed, if they do so, we are duty-bound to disobey the ruler or magistrate! This kind of talk immediately causes many to distance themselves from 'people like me', who they see as lacking in godliness. In reality I am God-fearing, and this is why I would rather be dismissive of rulers than to disobey God.

This earth is not our continual abode; it is only a place we pass through on the way to Heaven. The rulers of this world **MUST** obey God, and not devise their own fables and spiritually-illegal demands. As most rulers are of this kind, unsaved, we can expect that their demands are illegal in God's eyes, and do injustice to His people. But, we are not obliged to accept them or to follow them.

So many Christians, in an effort to obey what they *think* this text is telling them, live in an ungodly fashion, doing and accepting what is sinful, because this is demanded by ungodly rulers and magistrates. Others hide away from society in an effort to live godly lives, but this is nothing less than cowardice and a refusal to face the facts. Yet, though cowards themselves, they loathe Christians who make a stand against this pervasive ungodliness in rulers and the law!

The reason we have such ungodly rulers and magistrates is that we have not lived by God's word. Simple as that. They are a punishment, a thorn in our side, until we turn back to God. I do not just mean those who are saved, but even those who are not... *everyone* is bound to live according to God's general justice and demands. This they do when they have godly laws and are not promiscuously evil.

We are to look at the mess we have invited on ourselves and repent, without exception. It is what 2 Chronicles 7:4 tells us. If there are only a very small number of believers in a country, and they **ALL** repent as one and seek God's forgiveness, He will answer, and their prayers will alter the course of the country's history and fortunes.

If our rulers and magistrates do not contravene God's law, we may obey them. But, if they disregard God and demand that we live as they do, and act against God's law, we must resist and disobey. Do not believe me? What if the law said we **MUST** kill someone who does not

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obey the law? Would you kill them (as Muslims wish to do with Christians, for example)? No, of course not. This is because God forbids murder. Yet this did not stop Nazis killing Jews! It is what happens when men blindly obey rulers and despots.

What if the law demands (as it does) that we accept homosexuality and that we MUST give them a room in our Christian guest-house? Would you obey because it is the law? No, we may not (though many would, out of fear), because it is an evil, a wickedness condemned by God as an abomination. In no way can any Christian allow an abomination under their own roof! So, they must disobey the law, as some have. And what if a Christian ministry is forced to employ an openly unrepentant homosexual? It must refuse and go against the law! Can you see that? If not, do you truly understand your obligations to God? And that human laws are subservient to God's laws?

In rejecting the human law or rule, we must still live by God's command. We must respond with dignity and firmness, showing God's grace at all times, even if attacked. We can even do this if attacked physically in the street. Ask any Christian police officer, soldier, or psychiatric nurse!

The word, to be "subject", has a military meaning – to give in, to concede, to cooperate. It also means to assume responsibility (for obeying). No Christian can do this if what they concede is spiritual authority to unsaved men, and if what they cooperate with is sin. For myself, I can readily obey authorities, even if I disagree with what they demand. That is my Christian duty. But, if they demand that I agree to, or follow, sinful actions and speech, I refuse to do so, with a good conscience towards God and man. I hope this clears up popular misconceptions about this text.

We must also be "ready to every good work". That is, we must always be ready to do what is good. 'Good' is defined as anything good in itself, useful, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, excellent, honourable. For this reason I will not give to most charities, because they do not comply with this definition given in scripture.

It is also why I will not give to help people in countries that hate God and His people – at the moment, these tend to be Islamic. Many emotional ploys are used to get Christians to give, but really we have no excuse, when God says we may NOT give help to such people.

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We can, as individuals, give help to individuals we have personal details about, on an *ad hoc* basis, but may not give generally and indiscriminately to the whole country and *all*

its people, given its hostility and evil towards God and Christians. Do not be duped by pictures of starving children... these are used with abandon by cynical advertising executives to wring money out of the gullible! I know this will not be popular with those who

are

gullible, but so be it.

If we are called upon to help and show concern, we can do so with good conscience. This can be almost anything, and I see no objection to it as a general principle and command. Just remember that we may not help haters of God, His Gospel, and His people, even if it involves children.

Christians must “speak evil of no man”. Once again, many Christians misuse and misinterpret this text, thinking we may not criticise anything or anyone. As I have said elsewhere, this is nonsense, for we criticise in our hearts and heads anyway, even when we outwardly proclaim we do not! This text does NOT preclude us being critical. It only stops us “speaking evil”.

This is the same word in Greek as for denouncing God – blasphemy or blasphemio. Only in this case it refers to speaking disdainfully, or railing at, someone other than God. Or, to speak ‘evil’ of them. In modern terms it refers to telling slanderous lies and being abusive, both of which are antagonistic to Christian personality and behaviour. Whilst we cannot tell lies, even about an enemy, we must be ready to speak out against calumny, wickedness and evil in others, with a care to do so properly, without sin.

As with most things Christian, we should all learn to pre-empt what situations can arise and how we will respond. The emphasis should be on responding rather than reacting, which is usually ‘knee-jerk’ and perhaps wrong. Thus, we must train our minds and hearts in how we should live.

When we are faced with evil, or with any ordinary situation, we must remain calm, rational and steady. We live in an age of unrestrained emotions and ideas, and so we come across ‘road rage’, violence in the streets, open pornography, and general abuse towards women and children. It would be very easy to hit out physically in some circumstances. But, like soldiers, we must train our minds to act properly, without being led by emotion or any random thought. We must not fight others because we feel offended. And we must not invite violence from others by

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words and actions designed to provoke.

Rather, Christians must be 'invincible' (another meaning for the word *amachos*). In the Greek it simply means not to brawl, which is an undisciplined attack on others. We must stand aloof and be godly, so that God is not defamed. As a student nurse I remember when a more experienced nurse told me that if I lost my temper in an argument I would lose my argument. I never forgot that advice and trained myself to respond in a measured way to others. It does NOT mean we cannot defend ourselves, either verbally or physically. There may indeed be times when we must literally 'take it on the chin' from an attacker, but this will probably be a rare occasion.

The following advice will come as a shock to those who misuse the texts...

'Turning the other cheek' refers specifically to being attacked for our faith, not for anything else. Therefore, if I fight back when I (or someone else) am attacked in the street, this is acceptable and the manly thing to do. It is not brawling, but self-defence. Only those who have never been thus attacked can justify being beaten to pulp, or even killed, for no good reason! What I say next comes from being involved in many bitter violent actions instigated by wicked men, sometimes many acting together. My unrealistic reactions stopped at the time I was almost killed because of my foolish reliance on passivity.

It does not mean we must always hit out or fight back when attacked. In the past, when I was 'professionally' supposed to protect myself, I was so trained that I always presented a calm exterior, even if my heart was coming into my throat with fear! I would firstly attempt to talk-down the attacker, even if he had already injured me. I would keep talking and reasoning until the attack stopped.

But, if the attack was extreme and violent, and the attacker showed no sign of stopping; or I knew the attacker was a known killer, I would immediately defend myself without hesitation, stopping the attacker with any means at my disposal. This usually meant taking the person to the ground with a body-shuddering 'thump'. Those who were in the profession can testify to then using certain holds whilst the attacker was winded, that would literally temporarily disable him (sometimes making him unconscious briefly), so that he could be restrained by drugs, or until others arrived.

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The times when I had to literally fight for my life were very few, because I always attempted a passive method first, then a defensive one; I only resorted to 'fight' methods if I knew the other methods were either useless or more likely to get me injured or killed. This is not an exaggeration: those I speak of were convicted murderers and insane violent men. I 'knew the score' and acted accordingly; mostly I could talk my way out of situations, but I had to be ready to use objective force.

I do not usually talk in detail about this kind of situation, but it is useful so that others do not hamper themselves with a wrong notion of what to do in a similar situation. I find it distasteful to do so, yet it is necessary. In the above I relate what can best be described as enforced violence as part of my job, in which I was well trained. Most are not, so they need help.

The notes are given as a realistic description, and I have no problem about doing so, nor do I feel I have been 'unchristian'. Rather, I have been realistic and genuine. No man or woman should subject themselves willingly to violence! Indeed, if they did, I would question their motives and their Biblical understanding.

The text also means not to be contentious. Though some think I am too ready to oppose things and people, I am not. Each situation requires its own approach, and that must always start with peace and a willingness to be tolerant. However, today, few such situations exist, as more and more people are geared towards wicked speech and action. These require a response from genuine believers.

So, when I come across what is an increasingly sinful people, I have to be ready to denounce what they say and do, and act properly. Obviously, if I oppose, then I also contend. But, I only do so if the person is against God and His word. I can tolerate attacks on myself, but not on God and what He says.

We are called to make this stand. Being 'contentious' refers to those who are always angry without reason and always ready to start a fight or a 'slanging-match'. Ever come across someone who is always angry? They make you feel like you are walking on egg-shells? This is what the verse refers to, not to ordinary opposition to sin, by Christians who want to honour the Lord peacefully.

Verses 3-8

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1.

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

2.

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

3.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

4.

Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

5.

That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

6.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

Paul now admits to what Christians were like as unsaved people – foolish, disobedient, deceived, etc. We will take these things in the order they are presented:

Notice how the unsaved (and untaught Christians) are easily deceived and made fools of. If a man is unsaved he does not know what the truth is or how to discern it. Because of this, unscrupulous people can deceive him quite easily, and we see this happening particularly in the realm of politics. Without salvation a man will be disobedient to employers, police, government –

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anybody. This is because he has no genuine reason to follow morality and ethics, including his own.

He will, then, serve “divers lusts and pleasures”. A so-called comedian came on TV before I could turn it off. In his ‘fun packed’ stage act he referred to several sexual evils and used bad language freely. The worst part is that the audience, men and women, thought it was hilarious. To me it was worse than infantile and of gutter quality... but this is what today’s TV audiences prefer. They have been sexualised for the past fifty years, so even the ‘joke’ about an homosexual liaison was laughed at. The fact that it was filth made no difference. That TV will put on this kind of foul ‘entertainment’ is a shame in itself, and grossly, filthily immoral.

And this is the kind of environment your own children and grandchildren are growing up in, and getting used to. From a young age, they are already very aware of the foulest things on this earth, merely from playground chat! And, soon, from being groomed by homosexual speakers to accept their vile sin.

Unsaved people not only watch, hear, and enjoy these foul things, but they ‘serve’ them as slaves. Then they wonder why their minds are filled with foreboding, depression and suicide, and why their lives go so badly wrong!

Linked to this sexualisation and filth is the opportunity to be malicious and envious. ‘Malice’ is to be wicked, unashamed to do anything unlawful (though, today, governments actually legislate in favour of these wicked activities). It is a desire to injure – and more people are getting to enjoy hurting not just others, but themselves. Even computer viruses are part of this evil. Malice includes wreaking havoc and trouble for the fun of it.

The same malicious sinful people also like to be envious. The word means to look on in longing when others enjoy something nice happening to them. If some get richer by hard work, others will be envious and will attack them, rob them, and otherwise be nasty towards them. No Christian should be of this type, jealous of what others have.

Obviously, if we are jealous of what others have, it can also lead to sheer hatred for those people, and this hatred will spread to all other things we observe and have contact with; it is a hatred that is deep-seated, and so it will spread to others like you who also have relatively

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nothing. Do you detest it when others seem to have everything and you have nothing? If you do, repent.

But, says Paul, God kindly and lovingly sent His Son to earth to change us (verse 4). The “Saviour toward man appeared” and dealt with it. Those of us who are saved are now new creations, so we must act as such.

Christ did not save us because we were already made righteous by our good works, or by our choices: He saved us by His mercy and grace. This was firstly done by “the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Arminians must note that! It begins with regeneration, not by our choice to be saved! This is also known as the ‘new birth’ or being ‘born again’. It is rightly called renewal or recreation, because it is the start of salvation.

Though salvation generally comes after regeneration, it is included in it – no man who is regenerated can ever be lost, but must *always* be saved. Regeneration is the spiritual key, because the Holy Spirit enters the human being and communes with his spirit, completely changing the person. All the filth of humanity is washed away. And Jesus Christ bestowed this upon the elect abundantly.

When we were regenerated we were justified by grace (faith is secondary to this activity – we are not saved just by faith, but by faith through grace), and so have an inheritance of life in Heaven, as a free gift.

Paul affirms the statement, saying it can be trusted. He calls on all who are saved to tell others who are saved of its truth, so they will continue in Christian good works. Such acts are beneficial to all men and are good in themselves. Do not think, however, that we must just go out daily and do good for all and sundry, just for the sake of it (something many Christians do, even when they do not wish to)! No, we must only do good where, and when, the Holy Spirit says we should. Otherwise our good works are as nothing, because they are not of His will.

Do you know, I watch ‘Christians’ ALWAYS stopping to speak to a particular beggar in the street. They spend time on their knees before them, trying to be friendly and offering help, food and money (against the law). They would not dream of doing the same for a hungry, poverty-stricken family living decently! They feel it is their duty to pretend (which is what it really

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is) to care for the beggar. I note they do not approach others, who are openly the worse for alcohol!

Yet, that beggar is likely to be on the street by choice, through drug or alcohol dependency, or simply because he does not wish to work, or because he hates authority! (Read police statistics and advice). The man I refer to is young, able to work, and healthy. He must obviously have money, otherwise he could not afford to just sit there day in, day out, in clothes that are good, feeding a dog, and buying tobacco or 'weed', when 'help' agencies are awash with help and money. Even when a Christian is prompted by God to offer help to someone, He does not expect us to continually harangue that person with offers! If it is rejected, we must walk away, just as should happen with the Gospel. Many Christians are just too unreal!

Verses 9-11

1.

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

2.

A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

3.

Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Paul now warns Titus, and thus all Christians, to behave responsibly. Examples he gives include: avoiding foolish questions. This is something I have to face every day in my ministry as unbelieving or heretical people contact me with useless statements and queries, based on their unbelief. People can ask me as many questions as they wish, but I have a limited patience (sometimes zero, depending on the attitude of the questioner) for foolishness.

The questions usually under this heading are those that cause controversy for the sake of it. Or, they are questions designed to spark useless debate, sometimes hidden behind seemingly good queries... answer that one useless query and many more will follow, with no result,

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because the questioner only wishes to argue!

I usually dismiss these out of hand, because, as the word 'foolish' says, the questioner is impious and godless. There is no true reason for his questions – he just wants to 'score points' or fight against God's word. Relishing watching the Christian squirm. Those who continually do this and oppose what is true *must* be shunned and disregarded. We should certainly not engage in fruitless, continual disputes about meanings, because the questioner does not really want to hear the truth – only an affirmation of his or her own false beliefs.

The kind of questions Paul originally referred to were by Jews, some of them apparently saved. This is indicated in his reference to "genealogies", a record of lineage, much prized by Jews for centuries and used against those who could not prove their ancestry. However, Paul was possibly also referring to Gnostic false genealogies, about Christ and His birth, etc. Some of these heresies were already in the churches, hence Paul's warning.

There were also "contentions" – strife and bickering about teachings, and "strivings about the law" by saved Jews, who wanted Gentiles to follow their own form of Judaistic Christianity concerning the Jewish laws: this is why Paul had to rebuke Peter at one time. Similar quarrels arise in our modern times, led by theologians and uninformed Christians, who diversify from genuine Christian beliefs, showing disdain and superiority against those who will not accept their 'take' on truth.

As Paul says, all these diversions from truth are wasteful – they are unprofitable and vain – empty words with no worth. We can say this about every such diversion from God's word. Usually they are sustained not by the straightforward reading of scripture, but by extensive and complex workings of the text, or simply by emotional appeals or downright error. There are many of these movements, but one of the most prolific is Dispensationalism. Another is charismaticism.

Paul is very strict when it comes to heretics, because just one can destroy the unity of a genuine church. Such a person may be rebuked only twice. After that he must be cast out of fellowship and shunned until, and if, he repents. What is "an heretick"? He is someone who tries to split a church using false doctrinal teachings. Even in Paul's day there were many of these. They have not diminished over the centuries. One of the biggest today has been around since the time of Calvin – Arminianism. Those who truly believe in it are indeed heretics and should not be allowed to take root in any local church. (See relevant articles by us).

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This may seem harsh, but Paul says that such a person is not innocent, but is “subverted”. As such he sins and is condemned by his own words. To be subverted is to be ‘turned inside out’, to become perverse and corrupt. Thus, he condemns his own self by his own words. God says that the man who teaches another gospel is anathema, so we cannot ever become the friend of heretics.

Verses 12-15

1.

When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

2.

Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

3.

And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

4.

All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Paul now comes to the end of his letter to Titus. In time, he would send another Christian teacher to Crete, so that Titus could travel to Nicopolis, where Paul wanted to stay for the winter. Nicopolis (‘city of victory’) might have been in Macedonia, but as several cities had this same name, we cannot fully tell which one it was. The two men who might be sent were Artemas and Tychicus. Artemas (‘gift of Artemis’) was Paul’s friend. Tychitus (‘fateful’) was also a friend, from Asia, joining Paul on some of his travels.

Paul asked Titus to bring with him two men: “Zenas the Lawyer” and Apollos. Zenas was also

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the name given to mythical Jupiter. Zenas taught Jewish law, but became a Christian. Apollos is better known as another apostle (see my article on who was/is an apostle) and a great preacher, a former Jew from Alexandria. Titus was to make sure their journey was paid for and fully supported. They and others must “learn to maintain good works” so that whatever was necessary was provided.

Paul finishes by saying that those Christians who were already with him sent their Christian love and greetings, and that Titus should greet and show phileo – Christian love for those approved of by their same faith – who greet them in faith. We cannot show this phileo to anyone else – it is reserved only for the saved. Amen – so be it.

Then, Titus is said to have been ordained first bishop of the church at Crete. That is, he was the first pastor of the first Cretian church, overseeing the ordaining of other pastors in other cities. This note about Titus’ office was placed in the text by translators of the KJV as an aid to understanding who he was. It does not in any way add to, or subtract from, the given letter.

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