

Motivation for Godly Living and Christian Conduct

Titus 2:11-15

Titus 2:11-15 - *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. ¹⁵ Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”*

Background Notes

As you know, the apostle Paul assigned Titus to remain on the island of Crete to help build up the churches there. His responsibilities included appointing church elders, or spiritual overseers (1:5). He also was responsible to refute and rebuke the false teachers who were infiltrating the Cretan churches (1:13). And there were many false teachers on the island of Crete (1:10).

In the first part of Titus 2 the apostle gave instructions for godly living. Titus was to teach these godly character traits to the different categories of Christians in Crete. There were exhortations for the older men and women, the younger women and men, and for the Christian slaves.

These instructions were particularly given in view of the loose lifestyle of the native Cretans - and these instructions certainly apply to believers today, in view of the culture in which we live. The exhortations to the Christian slaves can certainly be applied today to Christian employees.

The primary thrust of Titus 2:11-14 is our motivation for godly living and Christian conduct. In these verses, truth is taught that should stimulate all believers to follow through on these exhortations. This body of truth should motivate us to **be what we believe**. These motivating factors will be our doctrinal points.

In verse 15 Paul told Titus that he was to *“speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”* The Greek word that’s used for “despise” here is means “despise” in the sense of evading or getting around you. Don’t let the false teachers ignore you, escape you, get around you, or go over your head!

Titus was to rebuke the false teachers with all authority, and that is good advice for spiritual leaders today. If people need to be rebuked, don’t let them get around you. Deal with the situation! A few years ago I had to rebuke a Christian brother who was very disruptive at a Bible study that we held in our home. This young man did everything possible to escape me

and get around me. I had to plan out how to confront him and rebuke him. This is not the pleasant side of spiritual leadership, I can assure you, but it must be done for the spiritual health of the believers and the local church.

Doctrinal Points

1. The grace of God should motivate the believer to live a more godly life.

Verses 11-12: *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”*

What’s the “grace of God?” The grace of God is God’s unmerited favor toward us. I’m sure you’ve all heard the acrostic for Grace: G-R-A-C-E -- God’s Riches at Christ’s Expense. Think of it! We deserve *nothing* from God - but He has *given us everything –at His expense!* Our salvation is a free gift to us from our loving God. The grace of God should motivate the believer to live a more godly life.

“...the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared...” The coming of Christ and the proclamation of the gospel are particularly in view here. The grace of God was certainly seen in the Old Testament, but it has appeared visibly with the incarnation of the Son of God and the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. John 1:17 says, *“Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”*

What does it mean that the grace of God has appeared *“to all men”*? Some translations even say: *“the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.”* How can this be? *“All men”* have not heard the gospel. Some people have never heard of the grace of God in Christ.

The point is not that everyone is saved, or that everyone has heard the gospel. The meaning here is that the grace of God in Christ is **sufficient for the salvation of all mankind**. That’s the thought that the apostle wanted to convey. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, He died for the sins of the world. The payment for sin is unlimited in scope. It is sufficient for the salvation of everyone. God’s amazing love and grace should motivate us to spread the gospel to those who have not heard.

In addition, this truth should motivate us to more godly living. That is the particular point the apostle was making in verse 12: *“teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”*

“Just say No!” That’s how we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. In fact, the NIV translates this phrase like this: *“It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passion.”* The word “deny” is in the Greek tense that means *“say no once and for all!”* Establish your position! Be clear that you intend to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.

It's like going on a diet. Until you decide to say "no" once and for all to unwholesome foods, candy, and sugary drinks, you'll never make it. Why? Because vulnerable moments will inevitably come, and you will not be able to withstand the temptation!

Have you said "no" once and for all to ungodliness and worldly lusts? What about your conversation and language? What about your leisure activities? What about certain magazines or books you're reading? What about certain behaviors or habits? Think of the love and grace of God in Christ that has been lavished upon you! The grace of God should motivate believers to live more godly lives.

2. The second coming of Christ should motivate the believer to live a more godly life.

Verse 13: *"Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."* Notice that the **deity of the Lord Jesus Christ** is taught in this verse: **"our great God and Savior Jesus Christ"!**

What is the "blessed hope" and the "glorious appearing"? It's the second coming of Jesus Christ. It's the return of the Lord. The first coming of Christ is mentioned in verse 11, and the second coming of Christ is mentioned in verse 13. In view of the second coming of Christ, each of us should be motivated to live a more godly life.

Some commentaries apply both of these phrases to the Rapture of the Church. Other commentaries apply the phrase "blessed hope" to the Rapture, and the phrase "glorious appearing" to the return of the Lord Jesus to this earth to set up His millennial kingdom. In this passage I believe the apostle Paul was thinking in general of the second coming of the Lord. His purpose here was not to teach the fine points of eschatology! His purpose was to motivate Christians to live a more godly life in view of the fact that our Lord Jesus is coming back!

How many of you are excited about the Lord's return? Most hands went up. How many thought of the Lord's return today? Not many hands. Here's the challenge: Think about the Lord's return **every day**. When you get up in the morning, say to yourself, "Maybe the Lord will return today!" I guarantee that if you say that to yourself every morning, you will be motivated toward living a more Christ-like lifestyle all day long! The second coming of Christ should motivate the believer to live a more godly life.

3. The sacrifice of Christ should motivate the believer to live a more godly life.

Verse 14: *"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."*

He gave Himself for us! The Lord Jesus **voluntarily gave Himself** as our substitute. He didn't just give money or time. No. He gave **Himself** - to die for us. What an example! Remembering that amazing fact should motivate us to live a life that will please Him.

His purpose in giving Himself was to “redeem us from the slave market of sin.” Think how this comment would hit home to the Christians of the 1st century! It would have been a motivating factor for the Christian slaves in the congregation – and for all who had an understanding of the degradation of human slavery under the worst of conditions.

This thought should motivate us as well. All of us once were slaves to sin. Redeeming us from that slavery required a great cost - the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of Christ should motivate the believer to live a more godly life.

Verse 14 says that we are now **His own special people!** The Lord wanted a special group of people that He could call His own – and that’s us! He chose us, and we’re His special treasure - what great love! What a stimulus to godly living! The sacrifice of Christ should motivate the believer to live a more godly life.

Practical Application

“Be what you believe” - even in the “little” things.

When we talk about living a more godly life, we generally think of the big picture: I’ve got to be more involved in Christian service. I’ve got to be more “zealous of good works.” The “big” things are important, but godly living in small areas of everyday life is important, too. Verse 12: “...*we should live soberly, righteously, and godly...*” - in the big areas, and in the small areas, too.

“In this present age.” That means right now! Now – even when everybody else in our society and our culture are doing just the opposite! Are we faithfully living godly lives when it comes to the “little” things?

Here’s an illustration. In the Chicago area there are a number of toll roads where the honor system is used to pay tolls on the ramps. An entrance toll or exit toll is required, but no one is there to collect it. Many times the driver ahead of me has simply blown through the booth without paying the designated toll. Those drivers would never even consider robbing a bank - but to them, not paying that toll is “just a little thing.”

Would you ever do that as a Christian? You would never steal in a “big” area, but what about not paying that “little” toll, when no one’s looking, and there are no cameras or police cars around? But remember - God has a camera! He asks us to live faithful and godly lives in this present age – in *every* area of our lives.

Be what you believe – even in the “little” things!