

Titus

Titus 1:9 - "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." There are numerous prescribed attributes for a Bishop in this passage. He must first hold firm to what he has been taught, showing both determination and knowledge. Some mistakenly believe the latter is enough. Bible college can furnish a man with facts, but it cannot endow him with courage to stand. This can only come as a result of character development above and beyond textual understanding. He should also be capable of using his education for both exhortation and Biblical defense. In this we more typically see an emphasis on the former. While mastering discipleship is a worthy endeavor for Pastoral ministry, one must also be ready to meet critical attack on the Bible. I point out these distinctions for the sake of often neglect. A Biblically learned man, able to encourage believers in teaching is a fine person indeed, but a Bishop must also have toughness, and sharp apologetics skills to succeed. Let's praise God for pastors who have both, and pray the next crop chosen will too.

Titus 2:4-5 - "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Some aged women make it a policy to teach in both word and lifestyle. They do this out of concern for the younger generation, and in the process fulfill a Biblical mandate. Two ideas that may have been better observed when these older women grew up go too often ignored today. Wives who are keepers at home and obedient to their husband are both hard to find and increasing disrespected in society. Still, the word of God has not changed with the feminist movement. Bible teachers who avoid the direct address of these concepts do their students great harm. Some perform textual acrobatics in an attempt to explain away God's obvious meaning. The finest young, Christian women of our day are faithful to these commands, and some equally fine older women have been their example. Do not fear or avoid passages that conflict with worldly thought; "that the word of God be not blasphemed".

Titus 3:9-11 - "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." These are verses we must remind ourselves about often. As ministers of Jesus Christ, we should understand core doctrines and have at least a conceptual understanding of how to navigate complicated aspects of our faith. In doing this, we must remember not to be weighed down by foolish struggles concerning opinion, preference, or the letter of the law. These encounters profit nothing, and succeed only in magnifying ourselves. Still, there are those both in, and around the church that teach doctrine that is clearly false. These would seek to pervert the gospel and deceive many, out of their own lust. God has given us tools from His word to identify and reject these liars. We must not confuse legalistic wrangling with Biblical confrontation of evil. These duties are interdependent, and equally important; that is why they are found within the same passage.

Titus 3:14 - "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." The wording of this verse has always intrigued me. It seems to be a typical encouragement to good works for those within the context, yet it adds the interesting term "for necessary uses". This gives us the idea that our good works are indispensable in the advance of God's Great Commission. They become important when those around us observe them, deducing that we have acted as a result of our commitment to Christ. I wonder how often we have refused to act upon God's prompting to do something good. Perhaps at these moments we have not recognized the importance of practical, daily activities in accomplishing spiritual goals. Next time we consider resisting God's call, we should remember this verse, and the indispensable usefulness of good works. How will the world know the character of our Savior if we fail to display it in our own lives?