

Titus 1:8 Money and Anger

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[0 : 00] For the rest of us, if you would, we've been in the book of Titus. So if you have a Bible, open up to the book of Titus.

We haven't gotten very far, but that's okay. If you don't mind, I like to take my time sometimes on things. But as I try to find it here in the Scriptures, Titus is right after 1 and 2 Timothy, if you're looking for it.

It's a small book, so it's easy to miss. Only three chapters. But just a quick review. Titus is a book written from Paul to Titus, Paul the Apostle to Titus.

And Titus is a Greek. That was one of the big things that was part of his story. Titus was a Greek who was part of Paul's ministry team.

And there was this whole event that happened where the Jews, some of the Christian Jews, were telling the Gentiles that they needed to be circumcised. And there was a whole conflict that arose.

[1 : 08] And a council that happened in Acts 15. And Paul brought Titus with him. And ultimately, the decision was made, Okay, Paul, we agree with you that as far as your ministry to the Gentiles, there is no need for the Gentiles who are coming to faith in Jesus for them to circumcise or keep the law.

There's no need for them to do that. And they made that agreement. And so Titus was kind of a test case when it came to that whole issue. So that's a little bit of background on who Titus was.

But this is a letter that Paul is writing to Titus to set the church in order. He left him in an island called Crete. And evidently, there are many cities in Crete at that time.

And there had been some kind of evangelistic ministry going on there in Crete. And many Christians, many people came to faith. And now it's time to set things in order. We need to establish churches. And this is God's idea, right?

The church is God's idea to have church, churches, local churches, many local churches, as a place for Christians to grow, to build community, to love and serve one another in different ways.

[2 : 23] And so he's giving instruction on some of the nitty-gritty details about that. We've been in verse 5 through 9 here talking about elders and setting elders in a church. Elders are just leaders. elders and what their qualifications are or should be and how the qualifications of an elder aren't really...

There isn't a different standard for elders and for just the rest of the congregation. There is the same standard. But for an elder, you need to be faithfully living the Christian life.

And so we can take heed to all these qualifications. These are things that we should all be paying attention to in our lives. Let's see. Where do we stop?

For a bishop... This is verse 7. For a bishop must be blameless... And I'll just read to the end of this section. A bishop must be blameless as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine.

I think that's where he left off last week. Not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable. A lover of what is good. Sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled.

[3 : 26] Holding fast the faithful word, as has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. So we finish there.

There's a whole laundry list here, right? A lot of detail. And we can get into, expand each one a little bit or a lot. We spent quite a bit of time talking about the whole given to alcohol or given to wine.

But the next thing that he mentions here, after wine, let me see if I can find it. Not given to wine, not violent. Not violent.

And so, this is, I think, typically something, and he's talking to elders who would be men. And men can be given to violence.

Is that true? You know, there's this whole, especially among young men who do not have, who grew up without fathers, violence is so, so common, isn't it?

[4 : 25] You see this whole thing, culture of gang violence that happens in inner cities. And it's an opportunity for young men to kind of display their strength, sometimes in acts of bravado or just raw violence.

And there will be these scenarios where someone has to prove their mettle, if you will, to join the gang. And they have to do something to show how tough they are.

And usually, it's some kind of criminal act of violence. God created men to be strong, to be warriors, really.

And so, in that sense, when we talk about violence here, it could be easy, right, to go too far and say, well, men shouldn't express violence ever.

And that certainly isn't the case. Sometimes, violence is appropriate. And we just had some of the veterans in our congregation stand up.

[5 : 40] People trained in violence, in the art of war, to defend our nation. And there are times, whether this is part of your job as a soldier or as a police officer, or something of that sort, in which it is your duty to use violence as a way to protect the innocent.

And that is proper. Of course, that's not what Paul is talking about here. He's talking about someone who uses violence in an inappropriate way. And, you know, you kind of see this kind of tough guy attitude where somebody's always, it seems like they're always ready to brawl with somebody.

They're always looking for a fight. That's the kind of thing that Paul is looking at here. The thing that is especially horrific is those who target the weak.

It's one thing, right, to find somebody your own size or your own strength to pick a fight with. That's one thing. And obviously, that is wrong, too.

And it's not something becoming any Christian, much less an elder or a leader in a church. But today, you see so much of people targeting the weak with violence.

[6 : 54] All of this abortion violence is just one example where big people, adults, target little innocent baby boys and girls in the womb who are completely defenseless through horrific acts of violence.

And that is what abortion is, is an act of violence. But you see in the news, right, in the last couple of years especially, where people who are older, senior citizens, have been attacked by, you know, these stronger young men.

And it's just incredibly insane. But even in the home, right, there's so much of an issue where sometimes husbands, husbands, fathers, will use some kind of acts of violence, even within their home, among the weak in their home.

And that obviously is completely inappropriate for any Christian household, but obviously especially for those who are leading the church. And you might say, well, you know, I only hit my wife a couple times a year when she gets real, you know, nasty.

Is that okay? Never. You know, I only hit my kids when they get really out of sorts. Never. Violence is never appropriate in those types of situations.

[8 : 25] And so those who are not able, and I remember, this is a family member of mine, this is years ago when I was a youngster. I remember visiting a home of a family member, and these were relatives that were about my same age, a little bit older, and I can't remember if it was a door or a wall.

There was a hole in the wall. And I said, what happened? He says, oh, my dad got real mad. And he punched a hole in the wall.

Now, he didn't hit any person, but that right there is an example of what Paul is talking about. Just because you decided to hit a wall, that shows that you do not have control over your own emotions.

And that is an act of violence, right? And that kind of thing will frighten somebody, won't it? And we see that sometimes as well, and I think that is a part of this as well.

Well, I didn't hit anybody. I just threatened them with my words. Or I just, you know, punched a hole in the wall to show them, you know, how angry I was. So violence is not becoming, to any Christian, should that kind of, those kinds of acts of violence.

[9 : 42] You know, we look in the Bible, you know, we talked about soldiers and police and how sometimes it's appropriate. We look at the father Abraham, right? The father of the Jews, Abraham.

And his nephew was Lot, right? Was captured, kidnapped. And what did Abraham do? He said, oh, well, that's too bad.

No, he gathered up his own household of servants, and they grabbed weapons of war, and they went, and they got him back. And they used violence to do so. Sometimes violence is necessary, even among Christians.

The next thing talked about, not violence, not greedy for money. You know, some people are just obsessed with money. And, you know, sometimes I think we think that, oh, it's all the rich people, right?

It's people who are really wealthy. They're the ones that are greedy for money. But I have found in my observance in life that that is actually not very true.

[10:45] When I look at people who have less and people who have more, I see greediness basically equally among both. You have people who struggle financially who are constantly obsessed with making money.

And sometimes it's through foolish means, maybe playing the lottery every week. Now, playing the lottery, you know, those kinds of things, games of chance, aren't necessarily sinful.

But it certainly is, could be at least a foolish thing to do, right, with the resources that you have. And many people have actually, through that greediness for money, used gambling as a way to really upset their family finances.

Some people have lost everything through gambling, which is, gambling can be a form of greediness for money. Another way that this can manifest is, sometimes people are willing to just kind of overlook things when it comes to their businesses.

Or maybe cheat just a little bit. You know, cheat whether it's a business partner or a client or something like that, in order to win some kind of a sale or something like that.

[12:09] And so, somebody whose priority is money over the welfare of others, that is an indication of greed. You know, one of the things that sometimes they'll make movies about, right, is you have con artists.

And con artists are definitely greedy for money, right? And they will con you. And what does con stand for? Anybody know? It's... Caleb knows.

Confidence. Con is short for confidence. And so, it's short for a confidence man. Somebody who builds up your confidence to try to deceive you, to take something valuable from you. But there's a saying about con men, or about what they do.

And what is it? That you can't con an honest man. Has anybody ever heard that? You can't con an honest man. So, I have noticed in my life that there are certain people, they don't have a lot of resource, they don't have a lot of money.

They don't necessarily go out and cheat on a regular basis, as far as I could tell. But they are constantly being scammed by everything. They're getting caught up in every scam.

[13:23] And that, to me, is an example of just being obsessed with money. You're easily deceived because you're looking for, what?

A free lunch or, you know, something for nothing. And that kind of thing. What is God's means for us to build wealth? And is wealth a bad thing?

It's not. Wealth is a good thing. The Bible teaches in the Proverbs that it's a good man that leaves an inheritance to his children's children. Building wealth, honestly, is a good thing.

But what is God's means for us to build wealth? To work. Work, right? To use our hands and our minds to work. And what is work?

Is it just digging a hole in our backyard? No, work is serving other people. So if you have a job in which you're serving other people, you can build wealth.

[14:22] And that is appropriate. Some people do a really, really good job of serving lots and lots of people. And those people tend to build up a lot of wealth.

And that is appropriate. And that is good. Sometimes that can cause jealousy, right? And it doesn't, it's not always the case that people who work harder or smarter, there's a little bit of, I think, chance sometimes involved.

And some people are in the right place at the right time. But in general, people who work hard and serve others tend to become more wealthy. And those who work, don't work hard and don't spend their lives serving others tend to make less.

And both can be greedy, but should not be. So we're going to move on to verse 8 here. He says, Notice how there's this little pivot point here.

He was talking about before all the things that you should not do as an elder. And now he's saying, So in King James, we might say, Well, you have the shout-nots, and then you have the shouts.

[15 : 39] Right? You shall do this. Before he was saying, you shall not do these things. And here are the shalls. These are the things that you should do. Somebody who is a believer or especially a leader in the church should be hospitable.

Hospitable. What does hospitable mean? Well, in the original language here, this, the Greek word actually literally means a lover of strangers. A lover of strangers.

Somebody who's willing to open up their home to strangers, or not necessarily strangers, but maybe people you know, right?

You can be hospitable with strangers and people who are not strangers. Being hospitable is kind of hard work. If you've ever opened up your home to somebody, you kind of have to prepare your home, right?

You have to make sure all the toys are picked up if you have little ones. You have to make sure that there's enough food for everybody if you're providing a meal. And being hospitable is something that requires a certain amount of intentionality.

[16 : 48] It's not something that necessarily always just happens spontaneously. You have to be purposeful. You have to kind of set up your life, right? In such a way so that you can host people.

And so it's easy for us to say, well, I can't have anybody over because of this, this, or that, right? And there are plenty of excuses.

But we ought to be thinking about how can I set my life up in such a way so that I can be a hospitable type of person.

If you are the kind of person where you're just always on the go, you're never home. Now, there are seasons of life. For example, for our family, when we had little ones, you know, we had three kids, five and under, there was not a lot of hospitality going on in our home.

We were just trying to figure out how to survive a lot of times, right? And so there are seasons of life that play in. Sometimes, you know, you're off working, you know, in a different town or all kinds of things, right?

[17 : 59] So these are generalities. There are obviously exceptions to where these things, you're not going to be necessarily as hospitable. But you can actually be hospitable even without a home, right? You can be hospitable in other ways, in other venues.

One of the things that hospitality does is that it helps us to build close relationships with people. You know, we meet here on Sundays, and we sing together, and we have a little bit of banter, right, before service or between Sunday school and the church service, and we've got some cookies back there or other baked goods that we can eat and munch on while we talk and hang out and do those things.

But there's a fairly limited amount that we can do to build real relationships in those times. But the best way for us to build relationships as the body of Christ is to open up our homes to one another. To say, hey, Joe, why don't you come over next weekend, and we'll have a meal together. Or, you know, something like that. And so being intentional about finding opportunities to find people in our life, especially among the church, the body of Christ, to open up our homes, and that helps build relationships.

It's easy to make excuses. Sometimes, especially for women, that's like, I've got too much, the house is too messy, we can't have anybody over. And for men, it's things like, well, I've got a football game, you know, three football games I need to watch on Saturday or whatever, right?

[19 : 42] So, and it is kind of, you know, it's so much easier. You know, our home is our castle, especially for us guys, you know, and we like to just kind of relax and hang out, and I don't have to worry about, you know, all these things that come with having people over.

But that's not how we should be. That's not how we should act as Christians. We should be willing to constantly be relational with others, and that includes being hospitable. Hospitality.

Next, he talks about somebody who is a lover of the good. A lover of what is good. Now, that seems very general, but this is somebody who loves good things.

And it's usually easier to, you know, you can kind of notice that with some people. They like things that are good, that are pure, that are holy. The kinds of things that maybe they watch, put before

their eyes, are things that are good, not things that are ugly or sinful.

I remember a story that Jamie told me. She was a missionary in Indonesia, and there was a team of them missionaries. There was probably a dozen of them.

[21 : 01] They were having some kind of a movie night or something like that. And if I remember correctly, the movie was, it was some kind of representation of the Knights of the Round Table, King Arthur or something like that.

And I don't know specifically. But one of the men there said, well, I'm not going to watch that with everybody else. And he said, this is the storyline.

If you're familiar with that storyline, there's a love story. Right? If you're familiar with that. And you have the king and his wife, is it Guinevere? Is that her name? And she falls in love with Lancelot. Am I getting this right? Right? And there's a whole love story. And is that presented as a horrific act of adultery? Or is it kind of represented in somewhat of a sympathetic light?

It seems that there's a sympathetic light there, right? Oh, you can't just help falling in love with this man who is not my husband. And so, you know, this man said, I don't want to be entertained by something like that.

[22 : 10] It's not just adultery, but it's something that's, it's an adultery put in somewhat of a positive light. I know people who, they love to watch horror films. And man, I guess they get, you know, they've gotten really bad.

I remember as a kid watching a horror film and I was not allowed to. I was disobedient to my parents. And I had nightmares for a long time. But another example of, are you a lover of things that are good or things that are, tend to be, to be ugly.

We just had Halloween and I've noticed that some people in their yards, you know, some people, they get really, they really decorate their yard for Christmas, right?

And they have like an activity scene and all this light show and it's wonderful. All that is good, right? Light is good. And then during, especially during Halloween, you go to some houses and it's full of like death and, you know, blood and gore.

And those things are inappropriate for, for a Christian to celebrate or in some kind of way, you know, put those things on display.

[23 : 27] We don't love death. We don't love evil. We don't love gore. We love things that are good. The next word that he uses is sober-minded.

Somebody who is sober-minded. In the Greek, this is a word that literally means of a sound mind. And there are lots of, there are a couple of ways this is translated.

In fact, I found it interesting that in the book of Titus alone, this word, the same Greek word, which means sound mind is actually translated, at least in the King James, in three different English words.

It's translated sober. I'm reading the New King James. It says sober-minded, which I think is a little bit better because it's not necessarily talking about alcohol. But the King James here says sober. A little bit later when Paul is talking about men, he says, he uses the same word and the King James translates it temperate. Temperate.

[24 : 32] And then later on, when he's talking about women, how women should behave, it's translated, the exact same word is translated discreet. So, that's interesting. I don't know why the King James translators would use three different words and I guess there's some overlap and similarity, but there is some differences between those words.

Sober-minded, sound, of a sound mind, temperate, discreet. Also, another word used here in the ESV is self-controlled. I think several translations use that, self-controlled.

But I think sober-minded, it seems to me, is the best. Having a sober mind, your mind is serious about things. You take your responsibilities seriously.

One of the things I think about is, you know, sometimes we can have just an attitude of always, everything is, we're just joking all the time about everything.

And some people have a really great sense of humor and don't take themselves too seriously and I think it's a mistake for us all to take ourselves too seriously. If you know what I mean, just to use a phrase, some of us can, we can take ourselves too seriously and we can be too serious.

[25 : 45] On the other end of the spectrum, some people can be too unserious, right? Everything's a joke, you know, there's, everything is just treated with levity and so we ought to find the balance there.

But sober minded, our minds are clear and we're constantly considering how we ought to do things in a way that is wise and prudent.

Then he uses the word just and just is a word that just means righteous. Somebody who is just, somebody who is upright and also somebody not who is upright but somebody who is willing to uphold justice like a judge would.

And so if you are the kind of person who might be in a scenario where you are judging over someone and that could be a parent or it could be the leaders of a church or it could be a judge as we call it in the civil sphere that you're the kind of person who is going to make sure that justice is done.

not just that you live justly but that you make sure that as far as your area of responsibility that you are upholding justice. That if there's something going on as a parent between two children that you don't just ignore the guilty party but that you address things as they ought to be addressed.

[27 : 11] That's one of the ways that parents can, what's the term that the scriptures use, Paul uses, you can cause difficulty with your kids.

There's a word that I'm looking for. Exasperate, that's a word. Yeah, there's another word too but exasperate your children where there's one kid that's being a bully and you know there's two kids that come crying and you just say whatever, just figure it out.

But you don't actually address the bullying. The next word he uses is holy. Somebody who is holy. A holy is a word that we use, it's even used in our culture. Is the word holy in our worldly culture a word that's used positively? I'm seeing a few shaking heads.

No, if you're one of those holy people, right, we don't like you. but holy is a positive term. God likes holy people.

[28 : 18] It makes me think, if you've ever read the history of the Wesley brothers, you have John and Charles Wesley and they went to, I believe it was Oxford and they started this club.

They were obsessed with trying to please the Lord. I think it was later on that they actually realized that they needed to put their trust in Jesus Christ instead of in their own holiness or good works. But they were obsessed with pleasing the Lord and so they would read good books and the scriptures and it wasn't just them two, but I think they had a few people that they would meet with on a regular basis.

And eventually that group got a name and it didn't come from them, but it got called the Holy Club. The Holy Club. And that was not them calling them their own group, that was outsiders who thought they were being just a little bit overboard, you know, and trying to please the Lord with your lives. And so this was a Holy Club and it was used in a derogatory manner. We have a group of Christians back a few hundred years ago called the Puritans. Again, these were people who were trying to please the Lord with their lives.

[29 : 42] And yes, is there a lot of legalism? Yeah, but people who are trying to please the Lord and they got labeled as the Puritans, the people who are pure. We'll use the phrase somebody who is holier than thou.

And that can be a real thing, somebody who has a lot of pride. But one of the things that I've noticed today in the last 20 years or so, is there is, even among Christians, an attack against something called purity culture.

Has anybody else noticed this? So back maybe, oh boy, 20 years ago or so, there was a book called I Kissed Dating Goodbye.

Does anybody remember that? I see a few nods. And it was a book about how when you date, that you should not just date just for the fun of it, but it should be intentional and you should have boundaries between the boy and the girl.

Boundaries. You should not get involved in sexual morality and these types of things. And maybe you should consider getting your parents involved. people who want to talk about people. And that book has gotten so much kickback, blowback over the years as starting something called purity culture.

[31 : 08] And so many people, even Christians today, will look back at that and say this purity culture is nonsense. It's harmful even.

And they give a few reasons why. And sure, with anything, right, there can be, with any kind of movement or book or teaching, there can be extremes that are maybe inappropriate.

But is it bad to have a purity culture? Obviously not. No. God wants us to be pure in all of our life and especially right among young people who are trying to find a match, trying to find a spouse. Purity is one of those things at the top of God's list. But the word holy itself, what does it mean? Literally. It means set apart.

Holy just means set apart. And so the word holy is used throughout the Bible and it does not always mean somebody who is pure. Sometimes it's just talking about actually taking something and setting it apart over here.

[32 : 16] So you have the holy showbread in the temple or the tabernacle, right? And the holy showbread was not free of sin or something like that, right?

It was just a special bread that was different from all the other bread you might eat, right? And so especially things in the tabernacle was you have things that are special.

They're different. They're different from the rest of the things that are like it. And that is how God wants us to live. He wants us to be different.

You have Christian people and then you have people who are in the world. And Christian people ought to live and act differently from the people that are out in the world.

We ought to be different. to use more of a modern phrase, sometimes we talk about being counter-cultural. And counter-cultural is a way that we ought to live.

[33 : 15] You have the ways of the world, the way that the world does things, but the Bible teaches many times, not always, but many times there's a very different way that we ought to live as Christians.

We shouldn't just follow the world and everything. Now, does that mean that we can't wear baseball caps because the world does?

Or blue jeans because the world wears blue jeans? No, that's not the case. But there are certain, especially when it comes to behaviors and how we live our life, there's ways in which Christians especially ought to live uniquely, differently, from the way that the world does.

So that's holy. The next word he uses here as far as an elder or a leader in the church, and again, this applies to us all, somebody who is self-controlled.

Another translation uses the term discipline. And this reminds me, I think really this is more of a general application to when he talked about anger, he says slow to anger or not quick-tempered.

[34 : 25] We ought to be able to control our emotions of anger. we can't control them completely. If we have something that happens to us that might make us angry, that emotion a lot of times comes quickly.

We shouldn't allow that emotion to control us. In the same way that we shouldn't do that with anger, we really shouldn't do that with any emotion that comes into our life.

All of our passions or desires ought to be governed by our minds. We ought to be governing when it comes to our emotions, when it comes to all the things in our lives.

So, somebody, for example, who does not have, and again, using this word, disciplined, I think is a good word. We are disciplined in our lives. We don't just eat.

You know, I think about kids, like, right, when kids are little, and they're willing to eat anything that tastes good, right? And so, we have to teach them, well, you have to use discipline, you have to eat healthy things, and you can have treats sometimes, right?

[35 : 38] But you don't treat the treat, you don't use the treat, right, as your main course. It's what you eat. And so, that's an example of discipline. Another example is with money, right?

We ought to be disciplined with our money. So, again, one of the things we teach young people is when you earn, you get a paycheck, you mow somebody's lawn, and you get 20 bucks, and immediately you spend it all on candy, or something cool.

But you have to be disciplined in your life to, well, we need to set aside a little bit for the future, build up savings, those kinds of things. So, that's what I think Paul is talking about here with this self controlled or discipline.

And then he says this in verse 9, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

So, he transitions a little bit here from talking about behavior to really talking about as a leader in a church, you need to hold fast to God's word and make sure that in the church, in the area of your responsibility, that it's not just you holding fast and living your own personal Christian life in a way that's pleasing to God, but that you also lift up the word of God in the church and make sure that

others are doing the same as far as you're able.

[37 : 14] So, holding fast to the word of God as you have been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, sound just means healthy, healthy doctrine, both to exhort and to convict those who contradict.

Exhortation is just encouragement. And so, that's what we're doing today. Here is God's word, we're presenting it, and I am encouraging everyone here to follow God's word and explaining it in a little bit more detail.

And then, it uses the word convict. And really, that's, I think the word convince is maybe a better term to use, at least in this context.

To exhort, to encourage, and convince. Sometimes people need to be convinced, whether there's confusion or disagreement in some kind of way, so that if you are somebody who is teaching the scriptures, you need to have the ability to be persuasive.

Not just to say, well, this is what the Bible says, take it or leave it. And if you leave it, well, phooey on you. Right? That's not appropriate. If you are, and I see this all the time, especially in this online, does anybody ever get involved in online debates?

[38 : 35] Just me, okay. And some, you know, sometimes those can be fruitless, but not always.

In fact, I have found a tremendous, sometimes a tremendous value in just presenting the truth.

Sometimes people have never heard that position or whatever it might be. But so many times you see, well, you disagree with me, and well, if you had any brains, you would just believe me.

And is that an appropriate way for us to try to persuade people? No. We ought to give reasons. And sometimes, and I'll tell you, it is maddening.

Especially in our day, in the culture in which we live, we are digressing. Sometimes, you know, people use the word progressive about our culture. I'm a progressive. But is that what our culture is doing? Is it progressing?

No, it is digressing. Right? We have lost some very basic wisdom. And so, sometimes it's maddening to try to explain or persuade somebody when it comes to fundamental issues of human life.

[39 : 45] The difference between men and women, for example. But, and I, you know, there are people out there who, in the culture, in the broader culture, who are defending these things.

And some, you know, outside of the Bible, which I think you can do, there's a certain degree into which we can defend certain truths without the scriptures. You know, God's creation declares so many things.

How things ought to be just creation itself. But then those who are also defending from scripture.

And it seems like, do we really need to be defending these things?

But we do. Some people just don't know. Some people don't care. They could care less what the Bible says. They could care less what creation tells them. Their life is just committed to rebellion, especially against God.

But we ought to be able, as Christian believers, and especially if you're a leader in a church, to be persuasive, to be able to defend what you believe, what the Bible teaches.

[40 : 47] So be able to both exhort, so encourage, and convict or convince those who contradict. Sometimes, it's not just convince those who are teachable, teachable, right?

Sometimes you have to convince or encourage those who are not very teachable at all. And that can take courage. When somebody is being very animated or aggressive in their contradiction. courage, but as a leader, you ought to have courage. And not just the leader of a church, but if you're the leader of anything, whether it be a family or in government, and we see that today. Some people, and we really love that, don't we? when somebody has the courage to speak the truth, that really means something to us. One of the things that I think about with this whole requirement or with God's expectation here, when it comes to making sure that the truth is taught, and that some who contradict, are there disagreements among Christians when it comes to doctrine or theology?

A few. There's a few, right? A few disagreements. And so, we have dozens and dozens of denominations, right, that prove that out. And so, how ought we, as believers, to handle those disagreements?

[42 : 27] And I think that, for me, is the most difficult thing to try to figure out. Because the disagreements can be large and they can be small, but it's really up to us to figure out whether

that's the case.

Is this a small, minor disagreement in which we can just agree to disagree? Or is this a major thing in which we have to say, no, we are not going to allow you to teach that in this church?

That is not appropriate, and you can't do that here. And so, there are many things in which I think it is very clear that that is the case.

Somebody comes in and starts teaching, they invite people over to their home and they say, you know, some people say that Jesus is God, but that's not really the case.

Jesus isn't God, now he is a special creation, but he's not God himself. That is a case where there is no tolerance in any kind of local body.

[43 : 41] But other things, you know, and I didn't write anything down, but there are things that might be less so. Last week we had talked about not given to wine, right?

And so, some came to me afterwards and said, well, I don't think that Christians should drink wine at all. And I appreciate that so much, and done in a way that is in kind of Christian love.

And so, those kinds of disagreements, I think, are fine. And we can have those kinds of disagreements.

So, for me, trying to figure out what those things are, sometimes is difficult, but we ought to try to build the wisdom that we need. So that we can know how to address when there are disagreements.

Sometimes I see discernment ministries. There are ministries out there. Their whole ministry is to discern all the bad ministries. And so many times that just goes into just accusing everybody of everything.

[44 : 54] And that certainly is not healthy. But then you have some churches where it's like, come one, come all, whatever you believe. There's a universalist Unitarian church in Yellow Springs where if you go there, then you don't have to believe in God, you don't have to believe in Jesus, you can believe whatever you want.

That's just a very extreme example. And you have things in between. And I think we need to try to find that right middle ground. And he says this, for there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision.

So insubordinate, insubordinate to the word of God. And this is our standard, right, for what ought to be taught is what is in the scriptures. What do the scriptures say? What do they teach? Some people who are deceivers, they intentionally try to deceive.

Some people, it's not intentional. They think they have the truth. But still, is that okay? As long as somebody believes what they're saying is true, does that mean that they should be allowed to just promote that?

No, not at all. There's a saying, let's see if I can get this right, because this just came into my mind, where it goes something like this, as long as do what you think is right.

[46 : 17] Have you ever heard that? You should just do what you think is right. That's a common phrase. Has anybody ever heard that? Yeah. Lots of that. You should do what you think is right.

And so, that's what a lot of people do. In fact, that's what almost everybody does. Everybody does what they think is right. Some people will defend it with, you know, their whole strength, all their strength and heart and soul.

people. But that's not our standard as Christians. As Christians, we ought to figure out what is right and what is true, and we should teach and do those things.

We don't just get to decide and make up our own minds about what is right and what is true. We have an obligation, a duty, to go to the scriptures especially, find out what God has said, what is true, what is good, to live that way.

Don't do what we think is right, do what is right, regardless of what we think. And we do need to renew our minds and find what the truth is.

[47 : 27] He mentions especially those of the circumcision. So Paul had a lot of issues with the circumcision. Those who were teaching that you have to keep the law, whether it's to find salvation or just to be a better Christian or whatever it might be, you have to do these things.

You have to follow these Jewish rituals which are in the Bible, by the way, which were taught to the Jews, which the Jews did, but Paul said, no, God's doing a new thing.

There's a new thing happening here in which these traditions, these laws, are no longer applicable. Circumcision being the primary, one that came up.

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not for the sake of dishonest gain. It's not just that they should be ignored, but he's saying you need to stop their mouths, stop them from speaking the things that they're doing, because they subvert whole households.

households. It's not that you might think, well, as long as they're not doing any harm, they can believe this or that, but people, just like sin, is like leaven.

[48 : 52] The Bible describes sin as like leaven, and it's the same thing with false doctrine or lies like this. It's like leaven, and it tends to spread, unless you do something to stop it.

And then he says, for the sake of dishonest gain, and, you know, sometimes we think of, mostly we think of dishonest gain as related to money, and so are there cases in which people deceive people in church settings in order to make money?

That's never happened, right? So, you know, it's the famous kind of televangelist type of scenario, right? If you send me, that seed of faith, God will give you, you know, you can get what, a harvest, or whatever from it.

So, just send that to me, and God will give you a harvest. And so, that's a false teaching that actually has some kind of roots in the Bible there.

We won't get into that, but you can actually point to verses that kind of seem to maybe say something like that, but then use that as an opportunity for you to gain wealth.

[50 : 10] But another example is sometimes the gain is just social acceptance, and I see this a lot today in churches. If I avoid teaching on sexual immorality in church, I can actually grow a pretty big church.

I might even be able to get a mega church going if I just avoid teaching about sexual immorality, adultery, and fornication, and pornography, and all those kinds of things.

And so, the gain is social acceptance from the world. And it's not like I'm going to say that those things are good. I'm just going to not really talk about them, or maybe just talk about them a little bit, maybe in a Sunday school class that nobody goes to.

And that's not appropriate. We need to raise the standard that God has given us and teach it all abroad, the full counsel of God's word. And it is true that you can gain social acceptance from the world, or from Christians who are less inclined to give heed to God's word by failing to teach certain things or maybe teaching some things that are not quite right.

We ought not to do that. Wow. you know what, for the sake, hey Keith, could you get a mic ready?

[51 : 54] I'm going to finish up with this and then we'll take some questions. We actually see this kind of thing, this perverting the word of God for social acceptance from a man in the Bible, a man who we all revere as a good Christian man, somebody that Jesus loved.

Open up your Bibles to Galatians 2. There's this account in the book of Galatians where Paul talks about the time that he had to rebuke Peter.

Peter was one of, if not Jesus' most favorite apostle. It seems, right? Peter, James, and John. And it seems Peter was at the top of that small list.

He was, it seems, Jesus' favorite. And Paul tells this story, he said, I had to rebuke Peter to his face because he was to be blamed.

Galatians 2 verse 11, Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed. For before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles.

[53 : 21] And when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. He withdrew himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who had social influence.

And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, if you being a Jew live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law no flesh will be justified.

Peter, and it wasn't, did he preach a sermon about how you have to be justified by works? He didn't do that. He just did something that caused confusion.

He did something that caused confusion to his Gentile converts. And because of that, Peter took him on to his face. It was something that was that important.

[54 : 44] And when it comes to our justification, how we are justified, that is one of those things that is of high importance. And so even somebody like Peter could be caught up, right, in this thing of fearing man and avoiding certain things or making things appear a certain way or avoiding eating with certain people.

And these things ought not to be. And so if this can happen in Peter's life, could this happen in our lives as Christians, as grace Christians, as evangelical Christians?

Because it's easy to talk about how other people do this. But we should always be thinking, well, what about me? Amen? All right, we'll finish up there. I ran out of time, but we'll take five minutes at least if there are any other thoughts or commentary questions that might have come up.

Joe? Just a comment. That attribute of doing what is good, you kind of went over it quicker than some of the other items.

But I just wanted to say that Paul did not go over them twice in chapter 2 following he says the same thing, do what is good, and three times in chapter 3 he says do what is good.

[56 : 15] So we've been taught that repetition means it's important, it's meaningful, so there is six times there that that is used. Thank you, Joe.

doing what is good, believing what is good, thinking on good things, Paul says elsewhere, right? Thinking on good things or dwelling on good things.

Anyone else? good things that■?

een word, Twice. All right, let's close in a word of prayer. Father, lots of great information here.

Father, got lots of challenging things as well, and we just ask that you would work in us as your word has power to form us as we are willing, that you would open up our hearts to always be willing to understand what you're saying with all these things and to have a willing heart to submit ourselves to you.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.