

**AUGUST 11, 2019**

## **LIVING WITH INTEGRITY**

### **Titus 2:1-15**

Integrity. We speak this word often and live for its expression in our lives daily. But what is it? It is often described as doing what is right when others are not looking. This is true, but only speaks actions, which, themselves can be deceptive. Integrity means wholeness and or completeness. It means every aspect of my life is consistent with what I believe to be true and absolute. Christian integrity is living a life, the whole of it, where Christ is reflected and at the center. Whether at work, church or at home, we must always be the essence of godliness and have as our central motivation the glory of the Lord in and through our momentary witness. Where the false is always present (false teachers and teaching) believers must always reflect the dignity of God and the prevailing power of truth. Paul highlights three aspects of Christian integrity.

#### **IT IS REFLECTED IN OUR SPEECH (2:1)**

Paul ends his words to Titus about the false teachers in verse 16 saying that they (because of their teaching and lifestyle), are *unfit for any good work* (Titus 1:16). Their defiling teaching produces the only fruit it can produce, defiled living. Titus is the spiritual leader in Crete and because of this his life must be worthy of imitation and consistent with the truth, the gospel. Therefore, Paul begins this verse with a command contrasting Titus' life and action with those of the false teachers. He says *But you are to proclaim things consistent with sound doctrine* (Titus 2:1). He must teach doctrine that is *sound*; teaching that brings heals and stability to the souls of those he leads. A principle we can derive from this is that correct doctrine leads to godly living, while false doctrine leads to false living. This does not mean that simply *knowing* truth miraculously makes one godly, but that right doctrine is the central and essential foundation to a life that truly honors the Lord. When we find that believer's lives and/or affections are out of step with the gospel, telling them to try harder or to simply do better is not the solution. Instead, we must teach and call them to trust afresh, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### **IN IT REFLECTED IN OUR ACTIONS (2:2-10)**

Paul addresses three groups of people: Older men (Titus 2:2), older women, (Titus 2:3) and bondservants, (Titus 2:9) each with respect to their character in the home. If sound doctrine produces godly living then it must be evident in the lives of those who profess to know it and believe it. Nowhere is integrity truly seen than in the home in the dynamic of roles and relationships. This is true in the whole of the Bible and is clearly true in the context of this letter. Paul has already told us that the chief place of attack for the false teachers is the home; *they are upsetting whole families...* (Titus 1:11). It is no wonder that the family is always under attack and marriage is at the center of it. Gender confusion is a problem in the church, but also and perhaps more so, is the confusion of the God ordained purpose for each role in the family (Titus 2:1-10). Inherent within this passage is not only the character of believers, but the distinct roles each is to have in order to promote godliness. It must be stated that any teaching that subverts the roles in the home or promotes same gender unions are both false teachings and in opposition to gospel integrity.

#### **IT IS EMPOWERED BY THE GOSPEL (Titus 2:11-14)**

The challenge to live for the Lord is increased when we labor in a society that contends against the truth. But we must never forget that we are where we are in Christ by grace alone and that the same salvation we have received is available for all people (Titus 2:11). If any is to live a life of honor to the Lord it will

only come about through grace. The grace that saves the sinner is also the grace that sanctifies the saint. This is a powerful statement for the Christian who is struggling with living for the Lord in one or a few areas of their life. It is not effort alone that brings forth a life of righteousness and holiness. It is dependence of the enabling and empowering grace of God in the presence of the Spirit of God within us. False teaching is dangerous because it does not deny Jesus, it dethrones Him and places self-effort and mere motivation at the center. Paul says that the grace of God (present because of work of Christ and available to all) *trains us* (Titus 2:12). Grace not only erases our sin but empowers our righteous living by continually pointing our passions to the coming of glory of Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). Therefore, individuals who are truly saved by grace will evidence its empowerment in our lives (See 1 Corinthians 15:10 and James 2:14-26). This reality of the power of grace to save and sanctify must remain central in our affections, not simply because of the hope it provides for us who believe but also the hope it gives for those who, though previously influenced by false teaching, may repent and believe the gospel.