

“DON'T BE UNFRUITFUL”

TITUS 3:12-15

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INTRODUCTION

I ask you a question to begin: Are you a fruitful Christian; including Gal. 5:22, soul winning, but also the “fruit” described here in this text?

YOU MUST NOT BE UNFRUITFUL IN THE WORK OF GOD.

- I. TAKE CARE OF GOD'S WORK (12)
 - A. Paul asks Titus to come to him—but not without leaving someone to take care of God's work.
 - B. God's servants
 1. Artemas—we know nothing else about him, except his name after a Greek goddess; since Tychicus was later sent to Ephesus (II T. 4:12), maybe he is the one Paul left in Crete.
 2. Tychicus—traveling companion of Paul in Acts 20:4 from Asia (Ephesus?); carrier of Paul's letters to Ephesus, Colossae, and Philemon (Eph. 6:21 etc.); a faithful servant and beloved brother.
 3. They must have been strong and trustworthy leaders.
- II. SPEND TIME WITH THE MAN OF GOD (12)
 - A. Make every effort—“take pains, be zealous and eager.” Don't miss the opportunity.
 - B. He can learn much from Paul; he can also encourage and comfort Paul and assist him in his multitudinous labors.
 - C. Nicopolis—“victory city” named by Augustus after defeating Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BC; on the Greek coast of the Adriatic Sea.
 - A good winter resort.
 - A good launching point for evangelistic ministries in the area (cf. II Tim.4:10—Titus sent back later to minister again)
 - A good place from which to embark to Spain in the spring.
 - D. Paul's determined conclusion: “I have decided.”
- III. HELP GOD'S SERVANTS ON THEIR WAY (13)
 - A. The Identity of God's Servants
 1. Zenas
 - He is a “lawyer”—most likely Jewish acc. to the consistent NT usage and his association with Apollos—a powerful Jewish/Christian preacher
 - He could possibly help in Crete to settle some of the legal disputes Titus dealt with.
 2. Apollos
 - Well known from Acts 18:25-28; 19:1; and Paul's writings in I & II Corinthians.
 - Aquila and Priscilla had corrected his defective theology in Ephesus, and then he had gone on to Corinth.
 - He was a powerful preacher/disputer and won a strong following in Corinth.
 - The Corinthians formed cliques that Paul had to rebuke them for; Apollos was not at all supportive of such cliques.
 - B. The Ministry of God's Servants
 1. Carrying Paul's letter to Titus.
 2. Proceeding forward in evangelistic efforts.
 - C. Helping God's Servants on their way
 1. Hospitality

2. Supplies
3. Sending them forth with love, prayers, and financial help so that “nothing is lacking.”
4. Help must be “**with diligence**”—energy and enthusiasm—not grudgingly!

IV. ENGAGE IN GOOD DEEDS TO MEET PRESSING NEEDS (14)

- Titus must not be the only one to help “missionaries” and Christian ministers.
 - “Our *people*” must do so as well—note the affectionate use of “OUR” by itself.
- A. Let God’s People **Learn**—**continually learn and practice; become experienced at this work.**
 - B. God’s people must **busy themselves** in God’s work—same idea and verb in v. 8!
 - C. God’s people must perform **good works**—a continual emphasis in the Pastoral Epistles!
 - D. These works involve meeting pressing needs.
 - Scripture makes clear that one must work hard so as not to need support, and so that he may help and support others and meet their needs: see I Thes. 4:9-12; Acts 20:34-Paul’s example; Phil. 2:25; 4:16—example of Macedonians; II Thes. 3:10-11—those who don’t properly work should not eat!
 - Rom. 12:13—contribute to the needs of the saints.
 - Eph. 4:28—labor with hands, doing what is good, share with him who has need.

V. DO NOT BE UNFRUITFUL

- A. Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).
- B. Christ-like character and behavior and soul-winning—John 15:2, 8.
- C. Good works—especially kind deeds, benevolence, giving to meet the needs of others—Col. 1:10
 - Otherwise, “you will be good for nothing”! [says one translation here]
 - Grace is the root of the tree of salvation, but noble deeds are the fruit of the tree (Eph. 2:10).
 - Such would develop godly character in Christians, and also help spread the Gospel.

VI. GREET ONE ANOTHER

- A. Those who are with Paul greet Titus and the believers in Crete.
- B. Titus must greet the Christians there for Paul and his companions.
 - Greeting should be natural and genuine; Christians should genuinely love one another!
 - Christians share a common “faith” in Christ—they all hold to **The Faith**.
 - Believers love one another and God’s servants and preachers! They **continually have genuine affection for one another**.

VII. RELY ON GOD’S GRACE

- None of this is possible without the Grace of God!
- Grace must “be with **you ALL**.”
- Note, that Titus must have read this letter to the congregation.
- Instead of using the usual Greek and Roman form of greeting with *carin* meaning “rejoice” “greetings” at the end of letters, Paul as always uses *carij*—“grace”—the root of salvation that makes fruit possible.

CONCLUSION

Don’t be a fruitless Christian!

Take care of God’s work; spend time with men of God; help God’s servants on their way; engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs; greet one another; rely on God’s grace.

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