

Helping Our Children Learn To Function As Leaders

**Growing Godly Families Series
Manual 15**

by
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Helping Our Children Learn To Function As Leaders

2 Timothy & Titus

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Growing Godly Families Series

The “Growing Godly Families Series” is the result of weekly topics which were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In these verses, Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God-given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world, people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Success produces rewards until we die, but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.’” 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The Growing Godly Families Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1.

Understanding the Value of a Godly Family

Today, we are beginning a new series of topics to help our physical and spiritual children learn to function as godly leaders. We will see that there is great value for those who grow up in a godly family because they have had the opportunity to see godly examples of leadership. However, for those who have not had physical parents that were Christians, they need spiritual parents who will provide those examples for them. This is one reason why we will greatly expand our ministry as we learn to become spiritual parents to those who have not grown up in godly Christian families.

Timothy had a godly mother and grandmother that provided him much help by their examples. However, his father was a Greek and there is no mention that his father was a follower of the Lord. As a result, Paul became a spiritual father to Timothy. In 2 Timothy 1:1-2 we read, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” In this introduction, we see that Paul called Timothy a beloved son. This was due to the fact that Paul had become a spiritual father to Timothy.

We also see that Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. We have mentioned in other topics that Paul was appointed as an apostle to the Gentiles even though he did not meet one of the qualifications for an apostle. Acts 1:21-22 says, “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” Paul had seen Christ after His resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:8 says, “Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.” However, he had not accompanied Christ throughout His public ministry and so Paul had also told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1:1, “Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother.” God had revealed that it was His will for Paul to be an apostle.

Timothy and all who believe are made alive and promised spiritual life. Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Christ had given Timothy spiritual life. We see that Paul considered Timothy a beloved or much loved son in the Lord. Paul also wanted Timothy to experience the grace, mercy and peace that has been given to us by the Father and by Christ. Here we see that Paul wanted Timothy to experience the grace (the loving-kindness) of God in his life. He also wanted Timothy to experience the mercy (the free salvation and forgiveness of sins through Christ) of God. The desire of Paul was that Timothy would also experience the peace (the inner peace that is the result of a right relationship with God) of God.

Paul went on to write in 2 Timothy 1:3-5, “I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.” Paul could say that as he gave thanks to God he give thanks from a pure conscience. A pure conscience is a conscience that is free from sin or guilt.

We also see that Paul continually prayed for Timothy night and day. Here we see one of our most important ministries for our physical and spiritual children. We need to pray for them

continually. Paul also prayed for the Christians in the various cities continually. 1 Thessalonians 1:2 says, “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.” Here, we see that Paul prayed for the new Christians in every city that he had visited. Colossians 1:3 says, “We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” Since Paul had not visited Colosse, we see that he also prayed for the Christians in cities that he had never personally visited.

Even though Paul knew that he would soon be killed for his faith in Christ, Paul longed to see Timothy one more time before he died. His previous visit with Timothy had probably ended like his last visit to the elders at Ephesus. Acts 20:36-38 says, “And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.” Since Timothy had shed many tears their last time together, it was probably due to the fact that he knew he might not see Paul alive again on this earth. Paul said that it would bring great joy to his life to have the opportunity to see Timothy one more time before he was put to death.

As Paul thanked God for Timothy and his faith, he remembered the spiritual background that the Lord had given to Timothy. First, Paul recognized that Timothy had a genuine faith. The word that is translated “genuine” means a faith that is genuine and has no hypocrisy. This genuine faith had been shared with Timothy by both his grandmother and his mother. 2 Timothy 3:14-15 says, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood (a newborn infant) you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Here, we see that Timothy began to learn the Old Testament Scriptures from the time that he was a very young boy. This is a tremendous example for every Christian parent and shows the importance of helping our children to memorize and meditate on Scripture long before they can even begin to read.

Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” Because Eunice, Lois and Timothy had been studying the Old Testament Scriptures long before Paul and Barnabas first brought the Gospel to their area, they recognized that Christ fulfilled the Old Testament and were quick to place their faith in Christ once they heard the Gospel. We also see that this passage provides a key example for Christian mothers whose husbands have not yet become Christians or who are raising children without a father even being in the home. Mothers and grandmothers have a real ministry as they pray for their children. Then as they teach them the Word of God and show them how to apply the Word of God in their lives by their own example, they will see the Lord work in a great way in the lives of their children and grandchildren.

In 2 Timothy 1:6-7 we read, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” The word that is translated “stir up” has the meaning to cause a fire to flame up or to stir up the mind of a person. Here, we see that Paul is encouraging Timothy to keep using the spiritual gift that he had received. In 1 Timothy 4:14 Paul had written Timothy, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” Paul had probably been a part of the team of elders that had recognized this gift in Timothy and laid his hands on Timothy along with the other elders.

This gift had probably been officially recognized by the elders at the time that Paul asked Timothy to go with him. Acts 16:1-3 says, “Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a

certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.” Since the cities of Derbe, Lystra and Iconium were more than forty miles apart, Timothy had already been doing outreach to other cities. 2 Timothy 4:5 says, “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” Since Paul saw his zeal for outreach, Paul and the other elders recognized that Timothy would be able to equip other saints for evangelism. Paul realized that Timothy needed to rekindle his equipping ministry.

The growing persecution of the early church may have caused Timothy to become fearful and to neglect his equipping gift. As a result, Paul reminded Timothy that God is not the One who gives a spirit of fear. Instead, Paul wanted to remind Timothy of three things the Holy Spirit gives us. First, the Holy Spirit gives us a spirit of power. Christ told the disciples in Luke 24:49, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Then Christ added in Acts 1:8, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The power of the Holy Spirit means that we have that power when we yield to Him and He will give us courage to witness with boldness.

Second, the love of Christ motivates us. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” Third, the Father gives us wisdom to exercise self-control or self-discipline. Like Paul, we want to encourage our physical and spiritual children to serve the Lord in the strength of the Lord and not let Satan cause them to become fearful because they are depending on their own strength. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the value of both their physical and spiritual family.

Learning How to Become a Man of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn the value of a godly family. Children who have godly Christian parents have the opportunity to see godly examples from the time of birth. For those who do not have physical parents that are Christians, they need godly spiritual parents who will provide the love of a nursing mother and the example of a godly father. In order to help physical children who grow up in our home or spiritual children that may be adults at the time they become Christians, we want to provide an example for them to follow.

In 2 Timothy 1:8-9 we read, “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.” Here, we see that Paul asked Timothy not to be ashamed of two things. First, Paul did not want Timothy to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ even though Paul was facing death and knew that Timothy probably would suffer persecution also. This is an encouragement to stand strong in persecution. Second, Paul did not want Timothy to be ashamed because Paul was suffering as a prisoner for Christ because of his faithful commitment to be true to the Lord.

Instead, Paul asked Timothy to continue to share with him the sufferings of Christ for the Gospel. Part of our ministry as Christians is to suffer for Christ. Paul and Barnabas established the churches in Galatia. Acts 14:21-22 says, “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’” As a young Christian, Timothy had heard that there would be much suffering because Satan is in total opposition to the church. Here, we see that many years later Paul encouraged him to continue to share those sufferings.

However, Paul reminded Timothy that they did not share those sufferings in their own strength but in the power of God. 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 says, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.” Here, we see that God works in a powerful way. Paul also explained to Timothy why God saves us and calls us. God does not call any person based on their works. Instead, God saved us and called us according to His own purpose. He did that because of His grace. This choice to save us and call us was made in Christ Jesus before the world was ever created.

Although the purpose of God was complete before the world was ever created, it was not revealed at that time. 2 Timothy 1:10-12 says about this purpose, “But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” God revealed how this purpose would be fulfilled when Christ came to this earth. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Christ defeated death by His resurrection.

Christ also revealed the fact that through faith in Christ we would receive eternal life and immortality (would never die). That is the message of the Gospel that Paul said that he was called to preach to the Gentiles. He was also called to be the apostle to the Gentiles and to be a teacher of the Gentiles. Paul had earlier said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:5-7, “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” Because Paul understood that God had appointed him to this ministry, he was glad to suffer to share that message.

As a result, Paul was not ashamed to be the prisoner of Christ. Paul knew that he had believed in Christ and he was convinced that Christ was able to keep him. The word that is translated “to keep” means “to guard a person or thing so that it remains safe.” Paul had earlier written to the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians 3:3, “But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one.” Here, we see that Paul wanted the Thessalonians and all who would read this book to be convinced that the Lord would keep His promises. Paul knew that his life was secure with the Lord for eternity.

Paul wanted Timothy to have the same peace that he had. That is why 2 Timothy 1:13-14 says, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.” The word that is translated “pattern” is only used one other time in the New Testament. 1 Timothy 1:16 says, “However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” Here, we see that the Lord chose to use the life of Paul as a pattern for all who would receive eternal life. In the same way, Timothy was told to hold the pattern of sound words that Paul had taught him. Titus 2:1 says, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.” Here, we see that “sound words” speaks of the Word of God and the doctrines that are taught in it.

Timothy was told to hold to these doctrines in faith and love in Christ Jesus. “Faith” means that he was “*to know for certain that the Word of God is true.*” “Love” speaks about the way that he taught the Word of God to others. Ephesians 4:15 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—.” In the same way, we want to help our children grow in faith so that they know that the Word of God is true. Then, we want to help them learn to share the Word of God with love.

The word that is translated “which was committed to you” means “*the pure knowledge of the gospel that has been given to you to faithfully pass on to others.*” Since Timothy had traveled for many years with Paul, he had learned from Paul the teaching that had been taught to Paul by the Lord. Paul had told Timothy earlier in 1 Timothy 6:20-21, “O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace *be* with you. Amen.” Here, Paul reminded him again that the message of salvation that is revealed by the Word of God had been committed to him to faithfully pass on to others. As we learn the Word of God, it has also been committed to us to faithfully pass it on to others. Timothy was able to faithfully pass on the Gospel message because the Holy Spirit who lived in Him and lives in us makes it possible for us to guard that message so that it remains safe.

Paul went on to tell Timothy about some of those who had been in Rome with Paul. 2 Timothy 1:15-18 says, “This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought

me out very zealously and found *me*. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me* at Ephesus.” First, Paul spoke about most of the Christians in Rome that had been reached with the Gospel in Ephesus and the surrounding province of Asia. Because of the persecution of Paul and the fact that he soon faced death, the Christians of Asia had turned away from him. The word translated “to turn away from” means “*to desert or leave a person.*” Although the Word of God does not mention Phygellus and Hermogenes any other place, these two people would have been known to Timothy and may have been people who were becoming leaders of others.

In contrast, we see that the entire household of Onesiphorus had been a great help to Paul both in Ephesus and Rome. The word translated “refreshed” means “*to cool off or to refresh one’s spirit.*” Here we see that Onesiphorus was not bothered by the fact that Paul was in prison. As soon as Onesiphorus arrived in the city of Rome, he immediately began to look for Paul. He kept looking and asking questions until he found out where Paul was located. Then, he had been a great encouragement to Paul during the previous few months. Here, we see a great example of love. Onesiphorus did not fear for his own life. Instead, he just wanted to be an encouragement to Paul and did what was necessary in order to provide that encouragement. We also see that Paul wanted the family of Onesiphorus to be encouraged. 2 Timothy 4:19 says, “Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.” Here, we see that Paul wanted Timothy to give a special greeting to the family of Onesiphorus because of the great love that he had shown to Paul and because of the love that his household had shown to Paul when he was in Ephesus.

In these verses, we see that Paul gave Timothy several instructions about how to become a man of God. He was to pass on these instructions to others. We want to pass on these same instructions to our physical and spiritual children. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn how to become men of God.

3.

Learning How to Be a Faithful Servant of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to become men of God. We saw that Paul knew that he only had a few months to live. As a result, he wanted to encourage Timothy to pass on the message of the Word of God that Paul had taught to Timothy. Paul encouraged Timothy to be strong in the Lord even though he would face opposition and persecution. Today, we are going to see what Paul said to Timothy to help him be a faithful servant of God.

Chapter One concluded with Paul telling Timothy about the example that Onesiphorus had demonstrated as a man of God. Now, Paul went on to say in 2 Timothy 2:1-2, “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Here, we see that Paul reminded Timothy again that Timothy was his son in the faith. This is a reminder of the great love that Paul had for Timothy. In 1 Corinthians 4:17 we read, “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” Paul called Timothy his faithful and beloved spiritual son. Paul knew that Timothy would teach the Christians in Corinth about the course of conduct that Paul demonstrated wherever he went.

Here, we see that Paul encouraged his spiritual son Timothy to continue to be strong in the Lord. Paul had earlier written to the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 6:10, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” The word translated “be strong” means “*to receive strength or to increase in strength.*” Paul knew how the Lord had strengthened him when he gave his first defense before the Roman emperor. 2 Timothy 4:17 says, “But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear.” Paul wanted Timothy to know that the Lord would strengthen him so that he could continue to share the message of the Gospel so that additional Gentiles would hear the message.

We also see that Paul wanted Timothy to continue to pass on that message to additional generations. As a result, Paul told Timothy to focus on several generations so that the Gospel would continue to spread. We see four spiritual generations in verse 2: Paul, Timothy, faithful men and others also. Here, we see a real key if we are going to be effective spiritual leaders and equip our children to be effective spiritual leaders. Our goal is not just to lead our physical or spiritual children to Christ. Instead, our goal is to lead our children to Christ and help them grow to spiritual maturity. We also want to show them how to lead others to Christ and then help those Christians grow to maturity and become faithful men. Then, we want to help our children learn to equip those faithful men so that they can lead others to Christ and bring those Christians to maturity also.

Timothy had traveled with Paul for many years and so he knew exactly what Paul taught. In addition, many others had also traveled with Paul through the years. We recognize well-known names like Barnabas, Silas and Luke. However, we are not quite as familiar with names like those in Acts 20:4 which says, “And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.” In fact, a study of the book of Acts and all of the books that Paul wrote will show us that nearly 40 people are named that traveled with Paul at different times.

We see how Paul trained all of these people and many others to share the Gospel. He trained them by taking them with him as he shared the Gospel in various places. Acts 20:20-21 says, "How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Just as Paul took people with him as he traveled to various cities, he also took people from each city that he visited with him and showed them how to share the message of the Gospel from house to house. Here, we see that committing much of what we teach is best done by taking people with us so that they can be shown how to share. Now, Paul encouraged Timothy to teach faithful men in the same way.

Paul knew that Timothy would face opposition. As a result, Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:3-4, "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier." The word that is translated "endure hardship" means "*to be ready to suffer hardship or affliction.*" This word is also used in 2 Timothy 4:5 where we read, "But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." In this verse, the word is translated "endure affliction." As Christians, we are in a spiritual war and so we want to help our children learn to be willing to suffer for the sake of Christ.

We see a second thing about soldiers. They do not get themselves entangled with the affairs of this life because of their desire to please the person who enlisted them. The word that is translated "entangles himself" means "*to get caught or tangled in the things of this world.*" The word that is translated "affairs" means "*business or occupation.*" Paul knew that in order for Timothy to effectively carry out the work to which the Lord had called him he needed to avoid getting highly involved in some other business at the same time.

Instead, Paul encouraged him to make it his goal to please the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:1 says, "Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God." We will be a faithful servant of God and a good soldier and will help our children to become faithful servants of God if we make it our goal to walk in such a way that our lives are pleasing to the Lord.

We are also given two other illustrations of what it means to be a faithful servant of God. In 2 Timothy 2:5-7 we read, "And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things." Here, we see that the first illustration is from the field of athletics. At the time of the writing of the New Testament, the Isthmian Games and the Olympic Games were well known just as the Olympic Games are well-known today. Runners would practice for many months and even years to prepare for these events. 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 says, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*. And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*." We want to practice self-discipline in our lives because we realize that we are competing to win an eternal reward.

However, an athlete had to do more than just run fast if he wanted to win the prize. He also had to learn to compete according to the rules. To help our physical and spiritual children learn to win the prize that God has for them, we want to help them learn to serve the Lord in a way that is pleasing to God. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Here, we see that we have been created for good works. In order to receive the reward that the Lord has for each Christian, we need to help our children learn to do good works in a way that is pleasing to God. 2 Timothy 2:24-25 says, "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all,

able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.” Here, we see that our attitude will usually determine the effectiveness of our ministry.

The next illustration is a farmer. The farmer works hard to prepare and raise his crops. When the harvest time comes, we see that the farmer has the privilege of being the first to enjoy the fruit that comes from his crops. Paul looked forward to the prize that the Lord had for him. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 says, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” We can look forward to the privilege of enjoying the fruit of our ministry as we serve the Lord in a way that pleases Him.

In John 15:4-5 Christ told us that we are not the ones who produce the fruit. Those verses say, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” Here, we see that it is Christ that produces the fruit and our lives will only bear that fruit if we are abiding in Him. Unless we are abiding in Christ, our lives will bear no fruit.

The word translated “consider” means “to perceive with the mind so that we have understanding.” The Lord wants us to have a full understanding of these things so that we do not try to produce fruit through our own efforts. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand how to be a faithful servant of the Lord. That will only happen as our children see our example of dependence on the Lord. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to become faithful servants of God.

Learning How to Follow the Example of Christ

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to become faithful servants of God. We saw that starts as we lead them to Christ and help them grow to spiritual maturity. However, to become faithful servants of Christ we also want to help them do the same with faithful men and then equip those faithful men to do the same with others also. We are going to see in our topic today that we also want to help our children learn to follow the example of Christ.

In our previous topic, Paul gave Timothy several illustrations of how others serve as examples of the way to serve the Lord. Now in 2 Timothy 2:8-10 we read, “Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” Here, we are reminded that Christ is our greatest example. Christ chose to be obedient even unto death. Philippians 2:8 says, “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.” Christ was willing to carry out the will of the Father by dying the most horrible form of death.

However, the Father made the message of the Gospel complete by raising Christ from the dead. As a result, Paul was very willing to follow the example of Christ. It is true that he was suffering hardships. In fact, he was being treated as an evildoer. The word that is translated “evildoer” is used three other times in the New Testament. All three of the other uses are in Luke 23 where the word is used to describe the two criminals who were crucified on each side of Christ. Paul was even bound in chains like a common criminal. As a result, Paul could truly say that he was being treated like a common criminal. At the same time, Paul made it clear that the Word of God could not be chained. Here, we see that even though Paul was in chains the Word of God could not be stopped.

The word that is translated “endure” means “*to bear suffering calmly and with patience.*” 1 Peter 2:20 says, “For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God.” Paul accepted the suffering that he was experiencing with patience because he was suffering for the sake of the elect. The word translated “elect” means “*those who had been chosen by God to salvation.*” Paul was willing to do whatever was necessary in order to make it possible for others to hear the Word of God. Paul had written earlier in 1 Corinthians 9:22, “To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.” The goal of Paul was to share the Gospel so that others would be able to look forward to eternal glory.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 says, “*This is* a faithful saying: For if we died with *Him*, we shall also live with *Him*. If we endure, we shall also reign with *Him*. If we deny *Him*, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” Each time Paul said, “*This is* a faithful saying,” he was summarizing a key teaching that was commonly repeated among the churches. When we placed our faith in Christ, we died with Christ. Romans 6:3-4 says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” The result of dying with Christ means that we now live with Him and will live with Him

for all eternity.

If we endure (bear suffering calmly and with patience), we can look forward to the day when we will also rule with Christ. However, we are also given a warning if we deny Christ. Christ said in Matthew 10:33, “But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” Here, we are reminded that those who reject Christ and do not place their faith in Him will be rejected by Christ when they stand before the Father at the time of judgment. Such individuals will be denied because they never had a true faith. John 3:18 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Christ is always faithful. He is always faithful to give life to those who believe and He must be faithful to reject those who reject.

In 2 Timothy 2:14-16 we read, “Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.” Here, we see that Paul urged Timothy to remind the people to whom He ministered of the fact that Christ is faithful. To be faithful to save those who believe means He must also be faithful to judge those who reject. This was to help all those who were believers in the time of Timothy to recognize a key characteristic of false teachers.

False teachers like to strive about words. The word that is translated “to strive” means “*to argue about words.*” Another form of this word is used in 1 Timothy 6:3-5 where we read, “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain.* From such withdraw yourself.” Here, we see that their purpose in striving or arguing about words is to try and teach their false ideas for self-gain. Paul told Timothy to tell the Christians not to participate in arguments over words with such false teachers since the goal of false teachers is to overthrow the faith of those who listen to them.

Instead, Timothy was told to be diligent to present himself approved to God. The word that is translated “be diligent” means “*to focus on the goal.*” 2 Peter 3:14 says, “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.” Here, we see that a person that seeks to be diligent before God is focusing on being blameless in the sight of God. In order to be blameless in the sight of God, Timothy was to be a worker that did not need to be ashamed. The word that is translated “worker” here is translated “laborer” twice in Matthew 9:37-38. Those verses say, “Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” Timothy was not to be ashamed as he worked in the harvest field of the Lord.

In the same way, we do not want our physical and spiritual children to be ashamed as they work in the harvest field of the Lord. In order to avoid being ashamed, Timothy was told to rightly divide the work of truth and we want to teach our children to do the same. The word that is translated “rightly divide” means “*to cut straight or to teach the truth directly and correctly.*” The phrase “the word of truth” is explained in Ephesians 1:13 where we read, “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” Here, we see that the word of truth speaks about the Word of God, especially about the message of the Gospel in the Word of God.

Timothy was to make certain that He taught the Gospel and the whole Word of God directly and correctly.

In order to teach the Gospel correctly, Timothy was to shun profane and vain babblings. 1 Timothy 6:20-21 says, “O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace *be* with you. Amen.” Here, we see that false teachers who speak profane and vain babblings claim that they have been given special knowledge from God. We want to help our children learn to recognize any person that is adding to the Word of God or taking away from the Word of God. Revelation 22:18-19 says, “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.” False teachers often claim to have special revelation from God. Such false teachings always increase ungodliness.

2 Timothy 2:17-18 goes on to say, “And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.” Here, we see two of the false teachers with whom Timothy was familiar. The words of such false teachers are like a dangerous cancer that spreads through the body of a person until it causes the death of the person. The word that is translated “strayed” means “*to swerve and miss the mark.*” It was used in the verses quoted in the previous paragraph and also in 1 Timothy 1:5-7 where we read, “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.”

Instead of developing a godly life, false teachers twist the Word of God to get people to follow their false ideas. These two false teachers were saying that the Christians had missed the resurrection. We want to help our children learn to recognize when false teachers are twisting the Word of God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to follow the example of Christ and not be deceived by false teachers.

Learning How to Be a Good Example to Others

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to follow the example of Christ. We also saw that learning to follow the example of Christ will cause us to be faithful in our study and teaching of the Word of God so that we teach what the Word of God says and not our own ideas or opinions. In our topic today, we are going to see that Paul explained to Timothy how to be a good example to others. In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to be a good example for others to follow.

In order to be a good example to others, Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:19-21, “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” 1 Corinthians 3:11 says, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Then Ephesians 2:19-20 says, “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*.” The apostles gave us eyewitness testimony of the resurrection and the prophets gave us the written Word of God. Together with Christ, this makes a solid foundation.

False teachers have built on a false foundation. True believers have built on this solid foundation. God has placed His seal on those who have built on the solid foundation. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 says, “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” The fact that the Holy Spirit is our guarantee and seal of our salvation means that the Father knows us and we are His children. Romans 8:14-15 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’” We can know the Father as Abba (Daddy). Second, the Holy Spirit gives us His power to depart from iniquity. Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?” Each moment we yield to the Holy Spirit, He gives us His power to keep one’s self from sin.

As Paul wrote to Timothy, he compared people’s lives to vessels (a household container or utensil). Some containers are made of metals that last. Other containers are made of materials like wood or clay that do not last. Containers that last are often used for food (honor) while containers that do not last are used for things like garbage (dishonor). We are to confess our sins and cleanse our lives from the things that bring dishonor. Then, our lives will be like a container that is set apart for God. Our lives will then be useful to the Lord. The Lord will use our lives to accomplish every good work.

To have a life that is useful to the Lord, we are to flee certain things and follow other things. 2 Timothy 2:22 says, “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Youthful lusts involve a variety of things. 1 Corinthians 6:18 says, “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.” 1 Corinthians 10:14 says, “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” 1 Timothy 6:10-11 says, “For the love of money

is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.” These verses give us a sample of things to flee.

The word that is translated “to pursue” means “*to run swiftly to catch a person or a thing.*” When we are calling on the Lord out of a pure heart we will have a strong desire to see righteousness, faith, love and peace develop in our lives. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The whole Word of God will help us grow in righteousness and equip us for every good work. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 says, “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.” Then Philippians 4:7 adds, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” As we pursue these things, the Lord is able to work mightily through our lives.

We also see how we are to minister to those who oppose us as we serve the Lord. 2 Timothy 2:23-26 says, “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.” The word that is translated “foolish” means *godless*. The word that is translated “ignorant” means *rude or uneducated*. The word that is translated “disputes” means *things that stir up arguments*. False teachers try to get those who serve the Lord to argue about meaningless and worthless questions. Such questions just stir up fights and arguments. Titus 3:9 adds, “But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.” We may win an argument but we will lose the opportunity to share the Gospel.

Like Timothy, we are to realize that we are servants of the Lord. If we are going to show the attitude of a bondservant of the Lord, we must not quarrel (get involved in a war of words). Christ is our example. 1 Peter 2:21-23 says, “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously.” Christ did not sin, did not speak to deceive, did not speak evil, and did not threaten. Instead, He committed Himself to the Father. As the bondservants of Christ, He gives us an example to follow.

As we follow the instructions to Timothy, we see we are to show godly attitudes even when we speak to those who are in rebellion against the Word of God. First, we are to be gentle to all. The word that is translated “gentle” is only used one other place in the New Testament. 1 Thessalonians 2:7 says, “But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children.” When a mother is nursing an infant, she must be very gentle or she could injure or even kill a newborn infant. We are to have that same attitude toward everyone including those who are in opposition to the Gospel.

Second, we are to be able to teach. The word that is translated “able to teach” means *skillful in teaching*. The only other place this word is used is in 1 Timothy 3:2 where it is a qualification for an elder. Since we want to help our children become qualified for spiritual leadership, we want to help them become skillful in teaching. In Ephesians 4:11-13 we read, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for

the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Here, we see that evangelists equip the saints for evangelism, pastors equip the saints to minister to one another and teachers equip the saints to teach and apply the Word of God. In order to help our children become skillful at teaching, we realize that this includes growth in knowledge, in understanding and in application.

Third, we are to teach with patience. This will only happen as we have a humble attitude. Titus 3:1-2 says, “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.” Here, we see that we are to have an attitude of humility toward all people. People will often have an attitude of rebellion if correction is done with pride. In contrast, they will often accept correction if it is done with a humble attitude. As we show our children how to correct with humility, they will see many respond with an attitude of repentance and come to a correct understanding of the truth.

False teachers have been taken captive by Satan to do his will. Sound correction and teaching with humility makes it possible for some of them to come to a true understanding of the grace of God and escape the trap of the devil. Paul certainly understood how the Lord can change and transform a life because of what happened in his own life. Paul was transformed from the chief persecutor of the church to the apostle to the Gentiles. Just as Paul told Timothy that the Lord could use Timothy to help others, the Lord also wants to use us and our children to change and transform the lives of others. We want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example how to correct with humility others people including false teachers. The Lord will use our attitudes to accomplish His purpose in the lives of others and draw some of them to the Lord so that their lives are also transformed. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to be a good example to others.

Learning Why People Follow False Teachers

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to be an example to others. We saw that we want to help them learn how to become an example to all people including those who are false teachers. This requires an attitude of gentleness and humility. We are to show our children by our example how to develop these attitudes so that they can have a ministry even to those who are in opposition to the truth. Today, we are going to see in our topic why many people are attracted to false teachers and their teachings.

Paul shared with Timothy what many people will be like in the last days. We have to help our children learn to understand the attitudes of people so that they can learn how to be effective as they minister to them. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 says, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.” Here, we see that Paul wanted to help Timothy understand what the times will be like between the return of Christ to heaven and His second coming. We need to help our children understand we are living in the last days.

The word that is translated “perilous” is only used one other time in the New Testament. Matthew 8:28 says, “When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed *men*, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.” Here, we see that the word is translated “fierce” because the word means *dangerous or troublesome*. As a result, we are given a long list of the characteristics of people without Christ. These characteristics certainly describe many people today.

First, we see that people will be lovers of themselves or selfish. Christ said in Mark 7:20-23, “And He said, ‘What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.’” Here, we see the source of such selfishness. We see that such attitudes come out of the heart of man. Proverbs 23:7 says, “For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he. ‘Eat and drink!’ he says to you, but his heart is not with you.” Then Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Here, we see that we want to help our children understand the hearts of people without Christ in their lives.

Second, we see that people will be lovers of money. The only other verse where the word translated “lovers of money” is used is Luke 16:14 where we read, “Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him.” However, Paul also wrote in 1 Timothy 6:9-10, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Here, we see the destructive power of the love of money.

We also see many other negative characteristics. The word translated “boasters” means *an empty pretender and speaks about a person who pretends to be something that he is not*. The word translated “proud” means *one that despises others and treats them with contempt*. James

4:6 says, “But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” Christ spoke about the proud when He said in Luke 18:9, “Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.” Here, we see that the reason why the proud despise others is due to the fact that they trust in themselves.

The word that is translated “blasphemers” means *one who speaks evil or abusive language to another person*. 1 Timothy 1:12-13 says, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.” Here, we see that Paul realized that he had been a blasphemer before Christ changed his life. The angel said to Zacharias in Luke 1:17, “He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,” and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Here, we see the ministry of John the Baptist and it points out that he would speak to those who were disobedient.

The next four negative characteristics: unthankful, unholy, unloving and unforgiving all begin with “un,” which means “not.” Today, we certainly see that many people are not thankful. They do not live holy lives. They do not even understand godly love and many cannot even show human affection. The word that is translated “unforgiving” is not the usual word for forgive but instead means *one who will not make a treaty or keep an agreement*. The word translated “slanderers” means *a false accuser and is usually translated the devil*. 1 John 3:8 says, “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” Here, we see the word is translated “the devil” three times.

The word translated “without self-control” describes a person that does not have control over his sinful desires. “Brutal” means *fierce or not tame*. The word translated “despisers of good” means *a person that is opposed to goodness or good people*. The word “traitors” is used to describe a betrayer and is used in Luke 6:16 where we read, “Judas *the son of James*, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.” The word translated “headstrong” means *a person who is reckless*. The only other place where it is used is in Acts 19:36 where we read, “Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly.” Here, we see the word is translated “rashly.” The word translated “haughty” means *to be lifted up with pride or to be conceited*. In 1 Timothy 6:4 we read, “He is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions.” In this verse, it is talking about individuals who are false teachers.

The phrase “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God” means *loving pleasure and speaks of people who live to please themselves*. The phrase “having a form of godliness but denying its power” speaks about people who have an outward appearance of respect for God but inwardly they refuse to accept the power or influence of God over their lives. A more complete description of such individuals is given in Romans 2:17-20 where we read, “Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.” Here, we see that such people think that they can lead and teach others when they are spiritually blind themselves. Paul gives a warning to turn away and avoid the teaching of such individuals because they are deceiving themselves.

2 Timothy 3:6-9 says, “For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives

of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.” Here we see that such false teachers particularly try to get their teachings into households where there are gullible women. The word that is translated “gullible” speaks about women who have a large amount of guilt about their sins or various lusts from their past.

Titus 3:3 says, “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” As Christians, we did serve various lusts and pleasures before we became Christians. However, we have been forgiven and no longer need to live with past guilt. Here, we see that false teachers seek such women that are continually trying to find some new way to get rid of their guilt but will not come to Christ for forgiveness.

False teachers are compared to Jannes and Jambres. According to Jewish tradition, these two men were part of the mixed multitude of Egyptians that left Egypt with Israel. Jewish tradition says that later these were the two people who encouraged Israel to make the golden calf. Here, we see that Paul used them as illustrations of false teachers. False teachers resist the truth. They are people with corrupt (depraved) minds. Titus 1:16 says, “They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.” Their false teachings and their sinful actions show that they do not have a true faith. God says that the day will come when their total lack of spiritual understanding will be revealed to all because they will be sent to eternal judgment when they stand before God.

As we see why people follow false teachers, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to recognize and avoid them. We also want to teach them how to protect weak Christians from such false teachers. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to protect others from false teachers.

Learning to Be a Faithful Man of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn why people are so willing to follow false teachers. We saw that the real problem starts in the hearts of such people because they are looking for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear instead of telling them the truth. Such people may even have a form of religion but in their hearts they reject the power of God. In contrast to such people, in our topic today, we are going to see how to become a faithful man of God.

As we come to 2 Timothy 3:10-11 we read, “But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.” The word that is translated “carefully followed” means *to understand and faithfully follow*. The same word is also used in 1 Timothy 4:6 where we read, “If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.” Here, we see that Timothy had come to an understanding of many things from Paul and carefully followed them.

First, Timothy came to a clear understanding of the things that Paul had taught. The word that is translated “doctrine” refers to what is taught. This would refer to the things that Paul had taught Timothy. Second, the word that is translated “manner of life” means *the way that Paul lived*. Third, Acts 11:22-23 says, “Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.” Here, we see that the word translated “purpose” speaks of purpose of heart. Paul had explained to Timothy the purpose that the Lord had given to Paul for his life.

Fourth, the word translated “faith” speaks of the relationship that people have with God through Christ. 1 Timothy 3:13 says, “For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Here, we see that the reason that deacons can have good standing and great boldness is due to the fact that their faith is in Christ. Fifth, the word that is translated “longsuffering” speaks of patience or endurance. 2 Peter 3:14-15 says, “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you.” In addition to writing about the longsuffering of Christ, Paul also modeled that patience and endurance in his own life.

Sixth, Paul certainly both taught and provided an example of the love of Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:4 says, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.” Paul could show the love of Christ because he was motivated by the love of Christ for him. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” Paul had chosen to live his life for Christ and for others.

Seventh, the word that is translated “perseverance” means *to patiently endure*. In 2 Corinthians 1:6 we read, “Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effective

for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.” We see that this perseverance caused Paul to endure persecution and affliction in various cities. However, the Lord delivered him in each situation.

Paul went on to say in 2 Timothy 3:12-13, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” Paul told Timothy that when we determine to live a godly life we can expect to suffer persecution. Paul had experienced such persecution in his own life. 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 says, “*We are* hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.” We will suffer if we live godly lives because evil men will become worse and worse. They work to deceive others but they are also deceived themselves.

As a result, Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-15, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” The word that is translated “continue” means *to abide or remain in the things that he had been taught*. Timothy knew that the things that he had been taught were trustworthy. The reason that he knew that they were trustworthy was because he had faithfully been taught the Holy Scriptures so that the things he had been taught did not come from the opinions and ideas of people.

He had learned the Old Testament from his grandmother and mother and then he had learned the teachings of the New Testament from Paul. As a result, he knew that the things that He had learned had come from the Word of God. Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” The Word of God had given him wisdom and understanding of the salvation that he had received through faith in Christ. Here, we see the importance of helping our children to really get to know the Word of God. Then, they will immediately recognize the opinions and ideas of people that are not in agreement with the Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 goes on to say, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” In these two verses, we see several key lessons that we want to help our children learn to know and understand. The word that is translated “Scripture” means *the Bible and everything written in it*. This includes the Old Testament as mentioned in Romans 15:4 in the previous paragraph. This also includes the New Testament. 2 Peter 3:15-16 says, “And consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.” We can depend on all that is written in the 66 books of the Bible.

The reason that we can depend completely on the 66 books is the fact that all of the original writings are inspired or God-breathed. 2 Peter 1:19-21 says, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.” In addition, thousands of copies of manuscripts from various parts of the world show that there have not been any major changes in the original manuscripts. Revelation 22:18-19 are some of the last verses of the last chapter of

the Bible written and those verses say, “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.” Here, we see a clear warning not to add to or take away anything from the things that are written in these 66 books.

We also see that all Scripture is profitable. Scripture is profitable for doctrine (to help us know what God teaches). Scripture is profitable for reproof (to show us when we do wrong). Scripture is profitable for correction (to restore us to a right relationship with Christ). Scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness. The word that is translated “instruction” is translated training in Ephesians 6:4 where we read, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Training provides an example of godly instruction and behavior along with discipline given in love when discipline is necessary.

Doctrine shows God’s ideal for our lives. Reproof shows us those areas in which we come short of that ideal. Correction shows us how to correct what we are doing wrong. Training in righteousness provides us with an example of how to become complete (more and more like God’s ideal for our lives). We provide that training by our own example. The word translated “thoroughly equipped” means *to finish so that we are equipped for every good work*. Here, we see that our goal is to help our physical and spiritual children become equipped to carry out every good work that God has for their lives. As we teach our children the Word of God, show them by example how to develop godly character in their lives and show them how to skillfully serve the Lord, we are equipping them for a very effective ministry in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example and teaching how to become a faithful man of God.

Learning How to Finish Well

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to become men of God. We saw that will happen as we help them to become familiar with the whole Word of God, provide an example for them to follow and show them how to develop ministry skills. However, we still have one more goal even after they become a man or woman of God. We also want to show them how to finish well by being faithful to the Lord as long as the Lord leaves them on this earth. Finishing well will be the focus of our topic today.

In 2 Timothy 4:1-2 we read, “I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” The word that is translated “charge” means *to give solemn testimony*. Paul gave this solemn testimony in the presence of the Father and Christ so it was similar to a command. Christ is the One who will judge the living and the dead. “The living” is talking about those who have spiritual life, as the judgment of Christians is for rewards for faithful ministry. The judgment of “the dead” is talking those who lack spiritual life and they will experience eternal judgment for sin.

Since Paul wanted Timothy to receive great rewards for faithful service, Paul encouraged him to focus on the ministries to which Christ had called him. The first thing that Timothy was told to do was preach the Word. The word translated “preach” means *to proclaim openly as a messenger*. However, Timothy was not to give just any message. He was to share the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Then Isaiah 55:8-9 adds, “‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor *are* your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’” The Word of God is living and powerful while our thoughts and ideas are not. God’s thoughts and ways are much greater than ours so we want to share His Word and not our thoughts.

In the same way, we want to help our children learn to share the Word of God instead of their own thoughts or ideas. Like Timothy, we and our children are to be ready to share the Word of God at any time. “In season” means *when the opportunity occurs* and “out of season” means *we are to share the Word of God even when people do not want to hear the Word*. 1 Peter 3:15-16 says, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.” To be effective in sharing the Word of God at all times, we are to have actions that agree with our words.

As Timothy shared the Word, he was to convince. The word that is translated “convince” means *to convict or refute*. While talking about the Holy Spirit, Christ said in John 16:8-11 says, “‘And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.’” Here, we see that as we work with the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit convinces the world of the sin of unbelief, of the fact that Christ is the Righteous One and of the fact that the prince of this world has already been judged and that those who continue to follow him will share in that judgment.

Timothy was also to rebuke. Christ rebuked both the waves of the sea and the demons and told them to stop. At the same time, Timothy was to exhort (encourage). Timothy was to do these things with patience and by teaching the Word of God.

We see why Paul told Timothy both to warn and to encourage. 2 Timothy 4:3-5 says, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” Paul told Timothy that the time was coming when people would not want to hear sound doctrine. Instead, Paul said that such individuals would want to hear teaching that agreed with their sinful desires. As a result, Paul warned that such people would want teachers who would tell them pleasant things that would make them feel good.

In fact, Paul warned that such people would certainly turn away from the truth. Instead, they would turn aside to fables. The word that is translated “fables” means *ideas and philosophies that are the ideas of man instead of the Word of God*. Titus 1:14-15 says, “Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.” Here, we see that people who turn away from the truth would much rather hear worldly ideas, philosophies and commandments of men than hear the Word of God. This is due to the fact that they have defiled their minds and their consciences.

Even when people turn away from the truth, Timothy was to keep teaching the Word of God. The word that is translated “be watchful” means *to be calm in spirit*. Timothy was also told to be ready to suffer. Even if Timothy suffered, Paul encouraged Timothy to keep doing the work to which God had called him. Here, we see that God had called him to do the work of an evangelist. Ephesians 4:11-13 says, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Here, we see that evangelists are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Timothy was to be faithful in sharing the Gospel and equipping others to share the Gospel even if those who rejected the Gospel persecuted him and made him suffer. Timothy was to fulfill every part of the ministry to which the Lord had called him.

Paul then reminded Timothy of his own example of faithful service. 2 Timothy 4:6-8 says, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” Paul was at that very moment of time waiting for the day when he would be put to death for his faith and his ministry.

In the Old Testament, the drink offering was the final offering that the priest offered after he finished offering the burnt offering and the grain offering. Paul was making it clear that he would soon give his own life for his faithful ministry of proclaiming the Gospel. Here, we see that Paul did not fear death. He had said earlier in Philippians 1:21-24, “For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you.” Paul knew at this earlier period that Christ would protect him and allow him to live because his work was not yet complete. Now, he recognized that his work was almost

complete.

Paul had three summary comments about his ministry. First, Paul said that he had fought the good fight. The word that is translated “fought” means *to strive, to enter a contest or to fight*. The word is translated “striving” in Colossians 1:28-29 where we read, “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” Paul had been involved in a spiritual battle for many years. He had faithfully served the Lord throughout those years and he could now say that he had fought a good fight.

Second, Paul said that he had finished the race. The word that is translated “finish” means to *bring to a close or to end*. This is the same word that Christ used in John 19:30 when he said, “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” Just as Christ knew that He had finished the work of paying for our salvation, Paul knew that he had finished the ministry that Christ had given him to do. We can certainly say that Paul finished well.

Third, Paul said that he had kept the faith. 1 John 2:5 says, “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.” Paul was obedient to the Lord right up to the point of his death. As a result, Paul knew that he could look forward to the crown of righteousness as his reward. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Paul knew that he would have the righteousness of Christ for all eternity. We can help our physical and spiritual children know that they will also have the righteousness of Christ for all eternity. That is the reward for all who have placed their faith in Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to finish well, as they look forward to the crown of righteousness.

Learning How to Be Strengthened in Testing

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to finish well. In order for this to happen in our own lives and the lives of our children, we must make the choice to finish well by asking the Lord to give us His strength moment by moment throughout the remainder of our lives. As we yield to the Lord moment by moment, He will give us His strength to finish well. In our topic today, we will see how the Lord worked in the life of Paul to strengthen him right up to the time of his death. We can learn many lessons from his life for our own lives and for the lives of our children.

In 2 Timothy 4:9-13 we read, “Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica--Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come--and the books, especially the parchments.” In these verses, we see that Paul was going through a final period of testing before his death. During this time of testing, Paul wanted very much to see Timothy for one last time. As a result, he asked Timothy to do his best to come to him quickly.

We see that one of the tests that Paul faced was the fact that one of his close co-workers had deserted him. Demas is mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 as one of the companions with Paul when he wrote those two letters. Here we see that he had deserted Paul and gone to Thessalonica. The word that is translated “deserted” means *to totally abandon or forsake*. It is the word that Christ used on the cross in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 where we read, “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” At the very time that Paul faced death, Demas had chosen to totally forsake him. The reason for this abandonment is also given. We see that Demas loved this present world. The word translated “love” here is the same word Christ used to describe His love for us. It is also the word Christ used in the new commandment.

Paul had sent his other companions to minister in other places. Crescens had gone to the region of Galatia. Titus had been sent to Dalmatia. Tychicus had been sent to Ephesus. As a result, the only person that was still with him, in Rome where he was a prisoner, was Luke. Paul asked Timothy to bring Mark with him, because he said that Mark would be helpful to him in his ministry. At a much earlier time, Paul and Barnabas had divided into two different teams because of Mark. Acts 15:37-39 says, “Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus.” Now Paul had come to realize that Mark would be a great help to him during these last few months as he faced death. We can thank the Lord for men like Barnabas who gave Mark a second opportunity and helped him to grow spiritually.

Paul asked Timothy to bring three things with him when he came. First, Paul wanted him to bring the cloak (a heavy coat to protect a person in cold weather and it was also used as a blanket). Second, Paul wanted Timothy to bring the books. The books were probably his personal copies of books (scrolls) of Old Testament books. Third, Paul wanted Timothy to bring the parchments. The word translated “parchments” was the word that described animal skins that had been prepared so that important things could be written on them. As a result,

they were very expensive. Paul used parchments to write the various books that he wrote to the churches.

In 2 Timothy 4:14-15 we read, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.” Here, we see that Alexander had done much to hinder the work of Paul. 1 Timothy 1:19-20 says, “Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” Here, we see that Alexander had been opposing Paul already at the time Paul had written his first letter to Timothy. Paul knew that the Lord would be the One who would judge Alexander. However, Paul warned Timothy to watch out for him because he had set himself against Paul and Timothy and really opposed them.

Paul went on to speak about his first defense before the Roman leaders. 2 Timothy 4:16-18 says, “At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!” Here, we see how the Roman courts worked. They had a first hearing to decide whether there was evidence for which a person could be brought to trial. That was the first defense. If the hearing decided that there was enough evidence for a trial, then the second defense was the trial.

At the first appearance that Paul made in the Roman court, we see that no one stood with Paul. The word that is translated “stood with” is only used one other time in the New Testament. Luke 23:48 says, “And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned.” Here, the word is translated “came together”. In this verse, the crowd came to see Christ as He hung on the cross but none of the crowd stood with Christ. Just as Demas had forsaken Paul in verse ten, we see that everyone forsook Paul at the time of the first court appearance of Paul. Here, we see what can happen even to Christians when they are controlled by fear.

Christ told Peter in Luke 22:31-32, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’” Here, Christ warned Peter that although he would forsake and deny Christ that night Christ had already prayed for him. We see that Paul followed the example of Christ and prayed for the Christians that had forsaken him at his first court appearance.

However, Paul realized that he was not alone even though the Christians had avoided that first court appearance because of fear. Paul said that the Lord did three things for him. First, the Lord stood with him. Hebrews 13:5-6 says, “*Let your* conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” Paul knew that the Lord had stood with him as he made that court appearance.

Second, the Lord strengthened him. The word that is translated “strengthened” is also used in Philippians 4:13 where we read, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Here, we see that the Lord gave him the strength so that the message of the Gospel could be explained fully through Paul to the Roman judges at the first court appearance. The Lord had told Paul several years earlier in Acts 23:11, “But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.’” The Lord had told Ananias many years earlier in Acts 9:15-16, “But the

Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.’” It was the plan of God for Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles and the Lord fully carried out His plan for the life of Paul.

Third, the Lord delivered Paul out of the mouth of the lion. Here, we see that Paul explained the real source of the opposition against him and the Gospel. 1 Peter 5:8-9 says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” Paul knew that he had experienced the presence of the Lord as he faced the opposition of Satan. He also knew that the Lord would continue to deliver him and preserve him for eternal life.

Paul also sent greetings to several Christians and from several Christians as he concluded his letter. 2 Timothy 4:19-22 says, “Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.” Here, we see that Paul used each letter that he wrote to build stronger relationships between the Christians in different areas. In the same way, we want to help Christians build good relationships with Christians in other areas.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand how Paul knew that the Lord strengthened him during this time of testing that came during the last few months of his life. We can know that the Lord will also give us strength as we face testing. We want our children to understand that the Lord will also give them His strength as they go through times of testing in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to learn how to be strengthened during times of testing.

Learning to Qualify Men as Elders – Part 1

The books of I and 2 Timothy along with Titus were written by Paul to give instruction to Timothy and Titus about how to develop and qualify people for spiritual leadership. These instructions to Timothy and Titus also give us the instructions that we need to qualify people for spiritual leadership and help them to understand how they are to minister as spiritual leaders. In this topic and the next, we will see what Titus was to do to qualify men to serve as elders in each church. The principles that Paul gave to Titus are the same principles that we need to follow as we develop leadership in each local church.

Paul began this letter by telling Titus how the Lord had worked in his life. Titus 1:1-3 says, “Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.” First, we see that Paul called himself a bondservant of God. The word that is translated “bondservant” was the word that was used to describe a slave in the Roman Empire. However, instead of being a slave to some man, Paul said that he was a bondservant of God.

In the same way, we want to help others understand that this is the nature of Biblical leadership. In Mark 10:42-45, “But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” Here, we see that spiritual leadership means learning to be a slave (bondservant) of all. In order to be the slave of all, we need to help our children learn to become the bondservants of God.

Christian leaders do not have any authority in themselves. In Matthew 28:18, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” Christ has been given all authority. First, we see that all Christians are to be servants (ministers) to others under the authority of Christ. Galatians 5:13 explains what this means when that verse says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Here, we see that as Christians we are all to serve one another in love. We do not serve by sharing our own opinions. Instead, we serve one another in love when we share the principles of the Word of God in love.

The word that is translated “desires to be first” speaks about anything that is first in time, place or rank. In Acts 28:17 we read, “And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: ‘Men *and* brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.’” Here, we see that the word meant all of the leaders of the Jews that lived in the city of Rome. As a result, we could translate the verse in Mark 10:44 “anyone who desires to be a leader.” Anyone who desires to be a leader among Christians is to be a bondservant of God so that he can be an effective leader to all. Helping men to become bondservants of God is part of the process of developing them to be an effective leader to all.

Second, we see that Paul called himself an apostle of Jesus Christ. As an apostle of Jesus

Christ, Paul was to give eyewitness testimony of the resurrection of Christ. Acts 1:21-22 gives us the qualifications of an apostle when those verses say, “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” Paul saw Christ on the road to Damascus and Ananias was told in Acts 9:15-16, “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.’” Christ chose Paul to be His apostle and said he would take the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul also looked at men who were potential leaders by looking at the past, the present and the future. First, in looking at the past, Paul said that God’s elect came to a true faith in Christ. Second, in the present, Paul said that leaders are to come to a precise and correct knowledge of the truth, which will lead them to godly living. Third, in the future, Paul said that godly leaders have the hope (confident assurance) of the salvation and eternal life that God promised before the world began. Although that was the plan of God before the world began, God has revealed that plan to the world through the Word of God and the preaching of the Gospel. Paul gave all potential leaders an example by the fact that He continually used the Word of God as he explained the Gospel wherever he went.

Titus 1:4 goes on to say, “To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.” Here, we see that Paul called Titus a true son in our common faith. Here, we see that Paul taught by his example as he developed men who had become true sons in the faith. 1 Corinthians 4:17 says, “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” Timothy and Titus plus many others were sons of Paul in the faith. We see several characteristics of a true son in the faith. A true son in the faith knows that he is loved. He is faithful to the Lord. He points to the example of his spiritual father and shows how that example agrees with the Word of God. He is able to say that his spiritual father is consistent in his teaching because he always taught the Word of God in every church where he preached. A spiritual son is following that example by teaching the Word of God and not his own opinions.

We also see the ministry that Paul had asked Titus to carry out as we come to verse five. Titus 1:5 says, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.” Here, we see that Titus had been left on the island of Crete for a specific purpose. We will explain that purpose more fully in a moment but first we need to understand a little about the island of Crete. Crete is an island that is 160 miles long. The island is 35 wide at its widest point. At the time of Paul, the island contained various cities scattered along the length of the island. This is important to know and understand these facts about Crete because they help us to understand the ministry that Paul gave to Titus.

We see that Titus was instructed to do two things to carry out the purpose for which Paul had left him in Crete. First, Titus was to set in order the things that were lacking. The word that is translated “the things that are lacking” is used six times in the New Testament: three in the book of James, two in the book of Titus and once in the book of Luke. The word is used twice in James 1:4-5 where we read, “But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” In verse 4, we see that Christians are to become mature so that they lack nothing. In verse 5, they are told what Christians are to do if they lack wisdom. In James 2:15, it talks about how to help those who lack daily food. In Titus 3:13, Titus was to make sure that two of the team members had what they needed as they

traveled.

Here, we see that the churches were not yet fully organized and needed to be developed to the point where they could function on their own as churches. Paul had provided an example of how to do this throughout his ministry. Acts 14:21-23 says, “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” In addition to preaching the Gospel, Paul and Barnabas made disciples, strengthened those disciples, encouraged their continuing growth in the faith, prepared them for tribulation and developed a team of leaders in every church. These were the same things that Titus was to do to help these churches become fully organized and able to carry on their ministry on their own.

The second thing Titus was to do was to appoint leaders for the churches in every city. The qualifications for that leadership will be in our next topic. Here, we see the most important ministry of church planters or members of a church leadership team. They are to help men become qualified for spiritual leadership. Today, many churches say that they have no leaders because no one is qualified. Others appoint leaders who are not qualified. A key part of the ministry of Titus was to help potential leaders become qualified. We might ask the question this way, “Was Titus left in Crete to disqualify men or qualify men for spiritual leadership?” The way you answer that question will greatly change the way that you serve as a bondservant of Jesus Christ in your ministry.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to help men become qualified for spiritual leadership. We will see in our next topic that most of the qualifications for spiritual leadership are character-related because qualified leaders lead others by godly example and the teaching of sound doctrine. That is our goal as we help our children learn to develop other potential spiritual leaders. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to qualify men for spiritual leadership.

Learning to Qualify Men as Elders – Part 2

In our last topic, we saw that we are to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to show others by example how to become qualified for spiritual leadership. We saw that Titus was to help the churches on the island of Crete become fully developed. To be most effective, they needed to develop the things that were still lacking in their development. We also saw that Titus was to help men to become qualified for spiritual leadership so that they would be able to lead the churches after Titus left the area. In our topic today, we will look at the qualifications that we are to help men develop so that they can become qualified spiritual leaders in their churches.

As we look at this list of Biblical qualifications, we might give the following summary of the primary areas in which Titus was to help men develop:

Help potential leaders develop a respected life.

Help potential leaders develop a healthy marriage.

Help potential leaders develop a healthy family relationship.

Help potential leaders become Christ-centered and not self centered.

Help potential leaders deal with former sinful habits.

Help potential leaders learn to use their homes for ministry.

Help potential leaders develop godly character.

Help potential leaders learn to teach the Word of God.

Help potential leaders learn to correct those who contradict.

We want to help our children become qualified in each of these areas. Then we want to show them how to help others become qualified.

Titus 1:6-8 talks about godly character that provides spiritual leadership by example while Titus 1:9 talks about the teaching ministry of a godly leader. Titus 1:6 says, “If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.” Now, we will look at each individual qualification. First, we see that a man is to be blameless. This qualification really summarizes all of the qualifications as together they explain what it means to be blameless. The word translated “blameless” means *that which cannot be laid hold of*. This means that there is no obvious sin with which the person could be charged. The first area where we want to help a man become qualified for spiritual leadership is in his own home as he learns how to lead his family to become a godly family.

Ephesians 5:25 says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.” The husband of one wife means that a man demonstrates his love for his wife by his thoughts, attitudes, words and actions. He is faithful in all ways to his wife (or to the future wife that the Lord might give him if he is not yet married). We might call him a one-woman man.

We also want to show each man how to develop faithful children. Ephesians 6:4 says, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” If a father drives his children by his anger and their fear, his children often become rebellious. In contrast, if a father leads his children by love and example, they will learn to lead others by love and example. The word that is translated “dissipation” is also used in Ephesians 5:18 where we read, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” The word that is translated “insubordination” speaks of those who reject authority over them. It is used in Titus 1:10 where we read, “For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision.” As fathers

learn to lead their children by love and example, those children will develop and become faithful children.

Titus 1:7 says, “For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money.” Three words, elders, bishops and overseers, are used to describe the leaders of a local church in the New Testament. Here, we see that as a part of being blameless we want to help our children understand what it means to be a steward of God. The word translated “steward” was the word used to describe the person the head of a household chose to manage his affairs. Paul used the word twice in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 where we read, “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” This verse tells the things that a person must avoid to become a faithful steward. Verse 8 will tell the positive things a person is to do to be a faithful steward.

In this verse, we see that we help a man to become a faithful steward by helping him learn to change one or more of five negative areas that might be in his life at the time he becomes a Christian. First, is a self-willed person. A self-willed person is one who is proud and wants his own way. We want to help such a person learn to seek the will of God for his life. Second, is a quick-tempered person. This is a person who gets angry quickly. We want to show such a person how to become a patient person. Third, is a person given to wine. Proverbs 31:4-5 says, “*It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.*” Here, we see that godly leaders cannot lead effectively if they are given to wine.

Fourth, is a violent person. This speaks about a person that is ready to fight. Instead we want to help such a person learn to practice 2 Timothy 2:24-25 which says, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.” Fifth, is a person greedy for money. This is common in most people before they become Christians. As a result, we want to help such a person learn to practice 1 Timothy 6:6-8 which says, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” Here, we see that true spiritual growth will help individuals change negative habits from their former lives.

Titus 1:8 goes on to talk about the positive characteristics that we want to help our children and other potential spiritual leaders develop in their lives. That verse gives six positive characteristics when that verse says, “But hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled.” First, a hospitable person is one who makes guests feel at home. 1 Peter 4:8-9 says, “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins’. Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.” Here, we see that we show our love by making people feel at home.

Second, the word that is translated “a lover of what is good” means *a person who has a great concern for what is good and beneficial for others*. Third, “sober-minded” means *one that has a seriousness of mind and purpose that causes him to exercise self-control in all areas of his life*. Titus 2:2 says, “That the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience.” Here, the word is translated “temperate.” Fourth, just (righteous) speaks of one whose thoughts, words and actions are pleasing to God. Fifth, the word translated “holy” means *a person that is undefiled by sin*. Sixth, the word translated “self-controlled” means *a person who has power over sinful desires because he is yielding his life to the Holy Spirit as a pattern of life*. Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Titus 1:9 says, “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.” Here, we see three areas where we want to qualify our sons and other men so that they can provide godly teaching. First, the word that is translated “holding fast” is used four times in the New Testament. Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13 are almost exactly the same except Matthew begins “no one” and Luke begins “no servant” Luke 16:13 says, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Here the word is translated “be loyal to”. A godly leader must be totally committed to the Word of God in order to be an effective spiritual leader.

Second, a godly leader must be able to teach sound doctrine. The word that is translated “be able” means *to have strength or power*. Romans 15:1 says, “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” To have the strength to teach sound doctrine requires that we learn to teach in the strength of the Lord instead of our own strength. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, “And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” The teaching of a godly leader will be effective when it is done in the strength that the Lord supplies. Third, a godly leader must be able to teach Christians sound doctrine and convict those who contradict. Here, we see that a godly leader is to learn to work with the Holy Spirit as he shares the Word of God with those who reject. John 16:8 says, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

We want to show our physical and spiritual sons how to become qualified for spiritual leadership in the church. As they grow in godly character and dependence on the Holy Spirit, the Lord will use their lives in a mighty way. May the Lord richly bless you as you learn to qualify men for spiritual leadership.

Learning to Deal With False Teachings in the Church

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual sons become qualified for spiritual leadership. We saw that most of the qualifications for spiritual leadership deal with godly character. That focus on the development of godly character is essential if we want to help our children become godly leaders. In addition, godly leaders also need to learn how to teach the Word of God. First, this is important so that they can help other Christians grow. Second, this is important so that they can refute false teachings. Our topic today will show how to deal with false teachings

Titus 1:10-11 says, “For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.” We saw in the previous topic that the word that is translated “insubordinate” speaks of those who reject authority over them. Here, we see that there are two characteristics of people who reject authority. First, they are called idle talkers (this means those who speak senseless things). Second, they are called deceivers (this means those who try to deceive or seduce others). As a result, Paul said that there are many who speak senseless things in order to deceive others. Paul said that such deceptive teachers were especially common among the Jews that lived on the island of Crete. The false teachings of these Jews had influenced many of the new or weak Christians.

We see that the goal of those who reject authority is to subvert (destroy or overthrow) whole households. The only other place this word is used in the New Testament is 2 Timothy 2:16-18 where we read, “But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.” Here, we see two of the results of such false teaching. First, false teaching increases ungodliness. Second, we see that false teaching even overthrows (subverts) the faith of some. We see that such false talkers are to be stopped or put to silence. That is to be done with the Word of God.

We also see why such individuals teach the things that they teach. We see that they teach for the sake of dishonest gain. 1 Peter 5:2-3 says, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” Here, we see that leaders who teach false teachings are usually motivated either by dishonest gain or power over others. This reminds us that there can even be leaders in the church that have developed wrong motives. Paul warned the elders in Ephesus in Acts 20:30, “Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” This is why it is so important that most of the qualifications for spiritual leadership deal with godly character.

Titus 1:12-14 goes on to say, “One of them, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’ This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.” More than five hundred years before Christ was born, a Greek poet named Epimenides who was born on the island of Crete wrote, “Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” Here, we see that the people of Crete had a bad reputation among the other Greeks. Epimenides described his own people of Crete in three ways. He said that they were

always liars. He said that they acted like wild animals (evil beasts). He said that they only thought of their own stomach. Paul said that what Epimenides said about his own people was true.

When people out of such a background become Christians, it is important to help them develop godly character so that they will become mature. Ephesians 4:14 warns, "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting." Here, we see that people from such a background need spiritual parents to help them mature and develop godly character. In Crete, as in many other places, Jews who had learned the traditions of the elders tried to get Gentile Christians to follow the Jewish traditions. Christ had warned in Mark 7:6-8, "He answered and said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.'" Like Paul instructed Titus, we need to understand the backgrounds of others and show them how to become mature godly Christians.

The word that is translated "rebuke" means *to correct a person or to tell him his fault*. Matthew 18:15 says, "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother." Here, we see that the word is translated "tell his fault". Here, we see that Matthew tells us how to rebuke a person who may be spreading false teachings. We are first to talk to that person alone to try and help him correct the false teaching that he is spreading. Many times, people who are not growing spiritually are easily deceived as we saw in the previous paragraph. They have been deceived by others and are telling what they heard. Often, if we will go to them individually and show them what the Word of God says, they will accept what the Word of God says and change what they are teaching. In this way, Paul said that they will become sound in the faith.

We also see the dangers of Jewish fables and commandments of men. Fables are stories that people tell and may be either true or false. One problem with such stories is that the people hearing those stories do not know whether those stories are true or false. Commandments of men are rules that people give to Christians that do not come from the Bible. In Mark 7:8-9 Christ said, "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.' He said to them, '*All too well* you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.'" Here, we see that many people will lay aside the commandment of God and will teach their own rules or traditions. That is why Galatians 5:1 warns, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." The commandments of men become a yoke of bondage.

We see that fables and commandments of men turn people from the truth. Paul warned Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables." Just as Timothy and Titus both had to deal with people being deceived by fables and commandments of men, we also need to equip our children to deal with these same things because such teachings are also very common today.

Titus 1:15-16 goes on to say, "To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work." The word that is translated "pure" means *innocent or free from sin and*

guilt. In contrast, the word that is translated “defiled” means *to be defiled with sin*. This word is used in Jude 8 where we read, “Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.” Jude is speaking about false teachers and he describes how such teachers affect others. The Jewish false teachers were causing great confusion to the weak Christians on the island of Crete.

We also see that both the mind and conscience of a person become defiled. In Hebrews 12:15 we read, “Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.” Here, we see that a person with a root of bitterness can even cause many others to become defiled. This is due to the fact that weak Christians may become convinced that they are committing sins when no sin has been committed. Other weak Christians may believe false teachings and feel that some sins are not sin.

False teachers who are defiled and unbelieving may claim to know God. At the same time, they commit sins that deny or show that what they are saying when they claim to know God does not come from the heart. Then, we have three words used to describe the works or actions of such false teachers. First, we see that their works are abominable (their works are so evil that they are like something that has a bad smell). Second, we see that their works are disobedient. This means that it is evident that such false teachers are in disobedience to the Word of God. Third, we see that they are disqualified for every good work. The word that is translated “disqualified” was used to describe metals and coins that did not pass the test because they were not genuine. In Hebrews 6:8, the word is translated “rejected” and says, “But if it bears thorns and briars, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.” False teachers show by their works that they are not true Christians at all. Often, such false teachers do not even recognize that their works are evil.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to protect new and weak Christians from false teachers and their teachings by helping our children learn how to deal with such false teachings in the church. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to deal with false teachings that have been taught by false teachers.

Learning to Develop People for Ministry

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to deal with false teachings in the church. Sometimes, these are false teachings because people do not know the Word of God. Other times, they are taught by false teachers who are trying to develop people who will follow them instead of the Word of God. A key way to prevent the first kind of false teachings is to have a plan to develop people for ministry so that people grow to spiritual maturity. That will be the focus in this topic.

In order to help our children learn to help other people develop and become equipped for ministry, we want to help them learn to teach sound doctrine. Titus 2:1-2 says, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience.” Here, we see that Titus was to teach six things to older men, which would help to develop sound doctrine. Sound doctrine speaks of teaching that is pure and does not have errors mixed into it. This will only happen as men develop godly character and learn to teach from the Word of God instead of giving their own opinions. Five of the six things relate to godly character and the sixth to making sure the teaching is what the Word of God teaches.

The word for “older men” usually spoke of those over the age of sixty and is different than the word for “elder.” First, the word that is translated “sober” means *one that is free from the influence of alcohol*. Here, we see that a person must have a clear mind in order for him to teach sound doctrine. Second, the word that is translated “reverent” means *honorable or noble*. Philippians 4:8 translates it “noble” when it says, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.” We could also say that it describes a person that is spiritually healthy.

Third, the word that is translated “temperate” means *one who exercises self-control so that he does not yield to sinful desires*. This same word will be used in verse five for the younger women. We are able to exercise self-control as we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit moment by moment. Fourth, the word that is translated “sound in faith” is the same word that was used in the previous verse for sound doctrine. In order to be sound in faith, a person must know and understand the Word of God so he can obey it in his daily life. In Titus 1:9, we see that elders are to be, “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.” We want to help our children learn to help others learn to use the Word of God to teach others and to answer the questions of those who contradict.

Fifth, the word that is translated “love” is the word that is used in the new commandment to describe the love that we are to have for one another. 1 John 4:7-8 says, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” In these verses, we see that the word is used twice. First, it is used to describe the love we have for one another; and second, it is used to describe the character of God. Sixth, the word that is translated “patience” means *endurance or perseverance*. Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” We see that as we study and apply the Word of God to our lives we develop patience and hope. As we look at these six things, we see that Titus, as a young man, was told to help

older men develop these six characteristics. We want to help our sons learn to do the same.

As we go on to Titus 2:3-5 we read, “The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things--that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” In these verses, we see that Titus was also to teach the older women how to develop godly character so they could teach the younger women. Like older men, older women were to learn to be reverent in behavior. We saw in verse two that this describes a person that is spiritually healthy. Older women were also to be taught not to slander others. The word that is translated “slanderer” is used to speak of those who accuse others falsely and is also used as a name of the devil. Those who slander others are doing the work of the devil. We also see that older women are to be free from the influence of alcohol because the older women are to teach the younger women.

Titus was to teach the older women how to become teachers of good things so that they could teach the younger women. We see that the older women were to teach the younger women in seven areas. First, the older women were to teach the younger women to love their husbands. In many cultures marriages were arranged by the parents and a young bride might not even know the husband. The word for “love” comes from the word for family love rather than God’s love. Second, they are to teach younger women to love their children. Again this word comes from the word for family love. 1 Thessalonians 2:7 says, “But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children.” Here, we see the love of a nursing mother.

Third, the older women were to teach the younger women to be discreet. The word translated “discreet” was translated “temperate” in verse two and means *one who exercises self-control so that she does not yield to sinful desires*. Fourth, the word translated “chaste” means *pure from sinful living*. Fifth, the word translated “homemakers” means *taking care of household affairs*. A related word is used in 1 Timothy 5:14 where we read, “Therefore I desire that *the younger widows* marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” Here, we see that wives are to learn how to rule or manage the house.

Sixth, the older women were to teach the younger women to seek those things which are good. The word that is translated “good” means *those things that are good in their nature and beneficial in their effect*. Galatians 6:9-10 says, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” The older women are to encourage the younger women to look for opportunities to do good. Seventh, the older women were to teach the younger women to be obedient to their own husbands. The word that is translated “obedient” is usually translated “submit” or “to subject oneself” in the New Testament and means *to place our full potential at the disposal of another*. In Ephesians 5:21, this word is used and we see that husbands and wives are to submit themselves to one another. That verse says, “Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” This is explained for wives in Ephesians 5:22-24 and for husbands in Ephesians 5:25-33. This keeps the Word of God from being blasphemed.

Titus 2:6-8 says, “Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.” First, we see that Titus was to encourage young men to be sober-minded. The word that is translated “sober-minded” means *to think in such a way that it causes us to exercise self-control in the things that we do*. Second, since Titus was a young man, we see that by his life he was to be an example to other young men. The word that is translated

“pattern” means *to be an example that others can follow*. Paul also used this word when he said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” Just like Timothy, Titus was told to be an example that others could follow.

In his teaching, Titus was to model certain characteristics. Titus was to show integrity. The word translated “integrity” is used only here in the New Testament and means *soundness of mind*. The next two words are closely related. The word “reverence” means *to live a life that is honest and worthy of respect*. 1 Timothy 2:2 says, Pray...“for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” The word translated “incorruptibility” means *that which is pure and will not corrupt (rot)*. Usually, it speaks of our lives after the resurrection such as in 1 Corinthians 15:54 where we read, “So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’” Titus was to show young men by example what it means to teach in such a way that their teaching would be pure and in agreement with the Word of God. Such sound teaching cannot be condemned.

As young men learn how to teach sound Biblical teaching, their teaching cannot be condemned. Teaching will be sound as young men are shown how to share the Word of God instead of sharing their own opinions. The Word will have a powerful effect when those who are listening see that young men are teaching from the context of the whole chapter and book. The most powerful effect will be when others see that young men are living in their daily lives the things that they are teaching from the Word of God. Such teaching will cause any who might oppose to be ashamed because they realize that the things such young men are teaching are being lived out in their lives. As a result, any opponents will have nothing evil that they can say. We want to help our physical and spiritual sons learn how to teach the Word of God so that they will be able to show others how to teach the Word with power. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to develop people for ministry.

Learning to Help People Develop an Eternal Focus

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to develop other people for effective ministry. We saw that even a young man like Titus could help older men and women to develop and become effective in ministry. The same will be true for our children as we show them how to develop godly character in the lives of others. In this topic, we are going to see how we help our children learn to help other people develop an eternal focus instead of just thinking about the present.

In our last topic, we saw how to help our children learn to help older men, older women, younger women and younger men to develop lives that will give them the opportunity for effective ministry. We begin this topic by seeing how Paul told Titus to develop those who are bondservants so that they can have effective ministries also. Titus 2:9-10 says, “*Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*” Even though they were bondservants, Paul explained to Titus that bondservants can develop a very effective ministry.

We have seen that in the time of the New Testament bondservants were owned by their masters and often were not treated with respect or kindness. However, here we see that Titus was to encourage Christian bondservants and show them how to develop godly character so that their lives would make an impact. First, we see that bondservants were to be obedient to their masters. The word that is translated “obedient” is usually translated “submit” or “to subject oneself” in the New Testament and means *to place our full potential at the disposal of another*. Titus 3:1-2 uses this word when it says, “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.” Here, we see several key attitudes that show our submission.

Second, we see that bondservants are to be well pleasing in all things. The word that is translated “well pleasing” means *acceptable*. Two of the nine times where this word is used in the New Testament are in Romans 12:1-2 where we read, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Here, we see that both times the word is translated “acceptable.”

Third, we see that bondservants were not to answer back. The word that is translated “answering back” means *to contradict, to argue or to refuse to obey*. Here, we see that bondservants were not to argue with their masters. In the same way, we want to help our children learn to show others by their example not to argue with their employers. Fourth, the word translated “pilfering” means *to set apart for self or take for one’s own use*. The only other place this word is used in the New Testament is to describe the actions of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:2-3 where we read, “And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?’” Here, the word is translated “kept back” and “keep back.” This would describe those who take things that belong to their employer for themselves.

Fifth, bondservants were to show all good fidelity. The word translated “fidelity” is almost always translated “faith” in the New Testament. Bondservants show their good faith by being

loyal to their masters. We also see why Titus was to teach bondservants to do these five things. They were to do these things so that their lives would adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. The word that is translated “to adorn” means *to put in order*, to make ready or to arrange. Here, we see that if bondservants lived orderly lives it would cause their masters to realize that faith in Christ makes it possible for a life to be transformed. In the same way, as Christians live godly lives in the places where they work it will cause others to see that Christ can change and transform their lives also.

In verses one through ten of this chapter, we have seen how older men, older women, younger women, younger men and bondservants can make a difference by the lives that they live. As we come to verses eleven through thirteen, we see that such living is really the result of developing an eternal focus in our lives. Titus 2:11-13 says, “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, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Here, we see the past, present and future as we see why Christians should want to have an eternal focus in our lives.

In the past, God showed His grace by sending Christ to provide salvation for all. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Here, we see that Christ came and lived among us. In 1 John 2:2 we read, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” Here, we see that the Father was satisfied with the payment that Christ made for the sins of all. However, each person must individually come to Christ and accept that payment by faith in order to have eternal life. Romans 10:9-10 says, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” We each must make that choice.

In the present, God calls us to be transformed so that our lives reflect the fact that we have this eternal focus. That transformation happens as we ask the Lord to give us His strength. We need His strength to deny (chose to reject) ungodliness and worldly lusts. We also need His strength to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present time (while we are here on this earth). The word “soberly” means *to live with a sound mind*. The word “righteously” means *to live a life that is in agreement with the things that are right in the sight of God*. The word “godly” means *to live in a way that pleases God*. This word is only used one other time in the New Testament. 2 Timothy 3:12 says, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” If we have an eternal focus, we will count it a privilege to suffer for Christ. Acts 5:41 says, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”

In the future, God says that we can look forward to the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. That blessed hope and glorious appearing is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 where we read, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” Here, we see that as Christians we should all be eagerly looking for that moment when Christ will come and take us to be with Him so that we can be with Him for eternity.

We also see what Christ did for us and how that changes our whole purpose and focus in life. Titus 2:14-15 says, “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. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.” Here, we are reminded

that Christ gave His life for us so that He could buy us back and purify our lives. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.” It is His death in our place and for our sins that makes it possible for our lives to be transformed.

The word that is translated “redeem” means that *Christ gave His life as a ransom to buy us back from sin, to remove us from further sale and to set us free.* That ransom paid the price for our every lawless deed (sin). The word translated “purify” means *to free us from the defilement of sin and the guilt of sin.* Christ purified us for Himself and made us His own special people. This means that we are the possession of Christ and belong to Him. Revelation 21:3 says, “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.’” Here, we see that we will be His people for all eternity. As a result, we see that it should be our great desire to do good works that will please Him while we are on this earth.

Titus was told to speak (explain), exhort (apply) and rebuke (correct from the Word of God) these things. He was not to let any person despise him. That would only happen as he used the Word of God instead of his own ideas or opinions. It would only happen as he spoke the truth in love. In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to help other people develop an eternal focus. That will only happen as they share the Word of God and share that Word in love. We show our children how to speak the truth as we speak the Word of God and we show them how to speak in love as we show love by the way we say what we say. By doing those things, we can help our children learn to help others develop an eternal focus. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children develop an eternal focus.

Learning to Help People Live Godly Lives

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to develop an eternal focus. We saw that an eternal focus looks backward to be reminded of what Christ did for us in the past, looks at the present as we see how Christ gives us the strength to live a godly life and looks to the future when Christ will come to take us to be with Him for all eternity. As we help our children learn to help others develop a similar focus, we also want to show our children how to help others learn to live godly lives.

Titus 3:1-2 says, “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.” Here, we see several areas where we want to show our children by example how to live godly lives. As they see our example, they learn how to become an example to others. We see that these verses start out by talking about our relationship to those in authority. The word “remind” means *to cause people to recall or remember something that they have been taught in the past*. Titus was to remind the Christians in Crete of some of the key things that Paul had taught them in the past.

First, he was to remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities. “To be subject” means *to place ourselves under someone else and to place our full potential at their disposal*. Romans 13:1 explains why we are to be subject to rulers and authorities when that verse says, “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.” God has placed rulers and authorities over us so that we can have an orderly life. The word translated “rulers” speaks of those who are leaders. The word translated “authorities” speaks of the power of rule or government. Here, we see that Titus was to remind the Christians to obey the rulers and the government that God had placed over them.

Second, Titus was to remind the Christians to be ready for every good work. Galatians 6:10 says, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Here, we see that Titus was to help Christians look for opportunities to do good to others. We want to be an example to our children and to all Christians to show them the importance of doing things that are good to all people including both other Christians and those who are not yet Christians. Third, Titus was to remind Christians to speak evil of (blaspheme) no one. 2 Timothy 2:24-25 says, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.” Here, we see that we are to speak with humility so that the Lord can use our words to draw others to Himself.

Fourth, Titus was to remind the Christians to be peaceable. The word that is translated “to be peaceable” means *to avoid fighting*. We want to be an example to our children by avoiding both physical and word battles. Ephesians 4:15 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ.” We want to be known for our love both in our actions and in our words. Fifth, Titus was to remind the Christians to be gentle. James 3:17 says, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” Here, we see why it is important to help all Christian seek godly wisdom. Godly wisdom is peaceable and gentle and such wisdom will help our children learn to help others learn to apply godly wisdom to their daily lives.

Sixth, Titus was to remind the Christians to show all humility to all people. We saw two paragraphs earlier that we are to correct those in opposition in humility. Galatians 6:1 says, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” Here, we see that we are also to show our children how to restore others in a spirit of humility or gentleness. We teach others to do this by our example.

Paul also reminded Titus of what all of our lives were like before we placed our faith in Christ. Titus 3:3 says, “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” As we look at this list, we are reminded of the fact that this is the way that people who are not Christians live. We can expect them to live this way because they are controlled by a sin nature. Instead of focusing on their sins, we need to focus on the one sin that keeps non-Christians out of heaven. In John 16:8-9, Christ spoke of the ministry of the Holy Spirit and said, ““And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me.”” We need to show our children how to work with the Holy Spirit by learning to share verses about the sin of unbelief that keeps people separated from God.

Titus 3:4-7 goes on to say, “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Paul reminded Titus of the way that we were saved and how those who are not yet Christians can be saved and receive the gift of eternal life. Ephesians 2:4-6 says, “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” We see that Christ had to show His kindness and love to us because there was nothing we could do to be saved.

There are no righteous works that any person can do to earn their salvation. Instead, every person has to realize that God saves us because of His mercy. We see that Christ saved us by the washing of regeneration. The word translated “regeneration” means *a new birth or a recreation*. All people have had a physical birth but all without Christ still need a spiritual birth. Christ told Nicodemus in John 3:5-7, “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.”’” Then 2 Corinthians 5:17 adds, “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” Christ gave us spiritual birth, recreated us in His image and gave us a new nature.

The word that is translated “renewing” means *a renewal or a complete change for the better*. The only other place this word is used is in Romans 12:2 where we read, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” The Holy Spirit came into our human spirit at the moment of salvation. That gave us spiritual life as Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” With that spiritual life we are now able to have our lives transformed by the renewing of our minds. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 says, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” The Holy Spirit renews us as we grow spiritually and we begin to think with godly wisdom.

Christ also gave us additional blessings by giving us the Holy Spirit at the moment of our salvation. It is now possible for us to learn to act in the power of the Holy Spirit instead of our own strength. The last recorded words of Christ before He returned to heaven are recorded in Acts 1:8 where we read, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 4:31 tells us what happens as we learn to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit instead of our own strength. That verse says, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” Here, we see the Holy Spirit gives us power to speak the Word of God with boldness. When we speak in our own strength, we are often afraid to share the Word of God with others. When we are speaking in the strength that the Holy Spirit gives, He also guides us so that we know what to share with others from the Word of God.

Christ also justified us and made us joint heirs with Him. Romans 8:14-17 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” Because of the fact that we are joint heirs with Christ, we can be thankful for that relationship with Him.

We have the hope of eternal life. Titus 2:13 says, “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” When the word “hope” is used in the New Testament, it speaks of the confident assurance that we have in Christ because we know that we will be with Him for all eternity. This makes it possible for us to help our physical and spiritual children look forward to the day when we will be glorified together with Him. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to help others learn to live godly lives.

Learning to Practice Good Works

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to help others learn to live godly lives. We saw that it is possible for every Christian to do good works because of the fact that the Holy Spirit is working in each of our lives. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to do good works as we learn to depend on Him for strength instead of trying to do things in our own strength. In our topic today, we are going to see how to help our children learn to practice good works in their lives.

Titus 3:8 says, “This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.” A faithful saying is a saying upon which we can always depend. As a result, Paul told Titus to continually remind Christians of this statement. Then he gave the statement that “Those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.” Here, we see that as Christians we want to give careful attention to the things that we do. We want to help each Christian learn to carry out good works. Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” As we help our children learn to do the good works that God has for each one of us, we see that those works bring glory to God. Those works are also profitable for each Christian because God will reward all works that have eternal value. 1 Corinthians 3:14 says, “If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward.” The Lord is eager to reward us and our children.

We also see that those good works are good and profitable to others. The word that is translated “good” in this verse means *that which is good in its character and beneficial in its effects*. As we show other Christians how to do those things that are pleasing to God, we see that those things are also noticed by other people. The word that is translated “profitable” means *that those works are beneficial to others*. The word translated “profitable” is only used three other times in the New Testament. In 1 Timothy 4:8, we see that the word is used twice. That verse says, “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” Here, we see that godliness is profitable for all things. Then 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” In these verses, we see that the Word of God equips us to live godly lives and to practice every good work.

We also see that we are to avoid certain things as we practice good works. Titus 3:9-11 says, “But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” Here, we see that there are certain things that we want to avoid if we are going to be effective in doing the good works that the Lord has for us. The word that is translated “disputes” means *questions or debates*. It is used in 2 Timothy 2:23 where we read, “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.” Here, we see that foolish and ignorant disputes just stir up strife instead of helping those who are not Christians come to an understanding of how to have forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

Genealogies are the records of the line of a family. The only other place this form of the word is used in the New Testament is 1 Timothy 1:4 where we read, “Nor give heed to fables and

endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.” We see that endless study of genealogies will end up causing disputes. The word that is translated “contentions” means *strife or arguing*. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 we read, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men?” The Christians in Corinth had not grown to spiritual maturity. As a result, their lives were filled with envy, strife and divisions just like the lives of those who were not even Christians.

We see that Paul also warned Titus to avoid strivings about the law. Throughout his ministry Paul was followed by Jews who wanted to get the new Christians to follow the Jewish law. Paul knew that such people would want to argue with Titus. In Galatians 3:24-25 Paul had written, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” The purpose of the law was to show people that they were guilty of sin and needed a Savior. However, once a person comes to Christ we are no longer under the law. That is why Galatians 5:1 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” The law was the yoke of bondage to which Paul was referring as he wrote this verse. Paul went on to say in Galatians 5:13, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” We are to use our liberty to serve one another in love and not to cause us to argue about the law.

Paul said that all of the things mentioned in this verse are “unprofitable and useless.” We will never have an effective ministry to those who are not yet Christians by doing those things that are useless. That is why Paul told Titus to reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition. A divisive person is one who continues to do the things that Paul had just warned Titus to avoid. The goal of such a person is to gain followers for himself instead of Christ. Acts 20:30 says, “Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” Here, we see why such a person was to be rejected after the first and second warning. Matthew 18:15-17 says, “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that “by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” and if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” Here, we see the Biblical process for removing such a person from the church.

We also see why such a person should be removed from the church. Verse eleven says, “Knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” The word that is translated “warped” means *to change for the worse or to corrupt*. The word that is translated “sinning” means *one who has wandered away from the Word of God*. 1 Corinthians 8:12 says, “But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.” Here, we see that such a person hurts the growth of other Christians. We also see why such a person says what he says. We see that he is self-condemned. Such a person says and does the things that he says and does to try and cover his own sin and rebellion against God.

Titus 3:12-15 goes on to say, “When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. All who *are* with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.” Here, we see that Paul planned to send either Artemas or Tychicus to replace Titus on the island of Crete at least for a period of time. This is the only time that Artemas is mentioned. However,

Tychicus was mentioned by Paul in several other places in the letters that he wrote.

The reason why Paul was going to send one of those men was due to the fact that he wanted Titus to come and spend the winter with him at Nicopolis. There were several different places called Nicopolis because that name means “city of victory.” A city was given that name because an important military victory had been won at that location. It is possible that this Nicopolis was the one in southern Greece because that meant that it was fairly close to the island of Crete. Paul also gave instructions regarding Zenas and Apollos and said to provide what they needed for the journey that they were taking.

Verse 14 gives a summary of why Paul wrote this book to Titus. It also helps us to clearly understand the goal that we have for our physical and spiritual children. We want to help our children learn to maintain good works. The word “learn” means *to increase one’s knowledge*. Here, we see that people do not automatically know how to serve the Lord. That is why we need to show them how to serve the Lord. The word that is translated “maintain” means *to set over or to lead*. Here, we see that we want to help our children learn to lead others to do good works that please the Lord and carry out His will. We see that the purpose of these good works is to meet “urgent needs” so that our children will not be unfruitful. Meeting the urgent needs of those who are not Christians provides an opportunity to share the Gospel with them. Christ fed both the 5,000 and the 4,000 because He saw an urgent need. Meeting the urgent needs of Christians helps them to see how the Lord supplies and gives opportunities to show the love of Christ to one another.

Paul concluded this letter by sending greetings from all of the Christians that were with him. He also told Titus to give his greetings to all of the Christians that knew him as he went to the various cities of Crete. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to practice good works.