

## 14. 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.