

The Difference Grace Makes

Five-Day Devotional on Titus 2:15–3:2

Day 1 Grace Keeps Speaking

Read: Titus 2:15, Titus 2:11–14, Titus 3:1–2

Paul has just said that God's grace appeared, bringing salvation, and that this grace trains us to live differently in the present age. Then he turns to Titus: “Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority.” The truth of grace must keep coming to the church. Titus is to tell people what Christ has done, urge them to respond, and correct them when their lives contradict what they have heard.

It is easy to welcome the part about grace that assures us of forgiveness and resist the part that confronts the way we live. We may dislike the messenger, wish the correction were gentler, or know exactly which obedience we have been avoiding. Yet Christ has not left His people to teach themselves how to grow. He uses His Word to bring His saving truth to bear on us again and again. Titus' authority comes from the truth Christ entrusted to him; it is not permission for a pastor to rule by personality.

That distinction matters when God's Word is uncomfortable. We should not confuse a preacher's preferences with Christ's command. But once the text is clear, dismissing it because we dislike being corrected is not a harmless preference either. The grace that received us also teaches us to say no to ungodliness and yes to the life Christ calls good.

If you have heard the same passage many times, do not assume you have outgrown its claim on you. The church needs to keep hearing what Christ has done, and we need the honest correction of His Word. That is not evidence that grace has failed. It is one of the ways saving grace continues to train us. Begin today by listening to Titus 2:15 as someone who belongs to Christ and still needs His saving truth.

Reflection Questions

1. Which part of God's Word are you tempted to dismiss because the obedience it calls for is uncomfortable?
2. How does Christ's use of His Word to train His people change the way you receive correction?

Practical Application

Read Titus 2:11–15 slowly today. Name one specific response the text calls for, and follow it today.

Prayer

Father, thank You for saving me through Christ and for continuing to teach me through Your Word. I confess that I sometimes welcome comfort while resisting correction. Help me hear what is true, receive what You are showing me, and obey by the grace You give. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 2 Living Under Civil Authority

Read: Titus 3:1, Titus 2:11–14, Acts 5:29

“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient.” Paul is speaking about civil authority. He is not giving a vague rule for every relationship in which someone has influence over us. He calls Christians to live genuinely under the authorities who govern public life, and to make that submission concrete through obedience. Grace-trained life has a public shape, even in an ordinary matter like following a lawful instruction.

This command is positive before it becomes searching. Christians need not wait for a frustrating decision to discover whether they recognize legitimate authority. We can live faithfully within the civil order because we belong to Christ. Then the heart question presses us: What happens in me when legitimate authority means I don't get to be in charge? We may find it easy to recognize authority when it agrees with us or serves our interests. Submission becomes visible when we do not get the decision we would have made.

Human authority is real, but it is never absolute. When a ruler commands what God forbids or forbids what God commands, “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). That boundary matters. Yet disagreement with a decision is not the same as being required to disobey God. We can acknowledge the boundary without making it swallow Paul's ordinary command.

Christ gave Himself to redeem and purify a people for His own possession. We do not submit in order to earn that belonging. His grace trains us to live under His lordship in the world He has placed us in. Today, this may look less dramatic than a public dispute. It may mean obeying a rule you would not have written, without feeding your own desire to be in charge. Receive the command as part of the distinctive life Christ is forming in His people.

Reflection Questions

1. What happens in you when legitimate authority makes a decision you would not have made?
2. How can you distinguish a genuine command to disobey God from a decision you simply dislike?

Practical Application

Identify one ordinary obligation under civil authority that you have been tempted to resist. Fulfill it this week without using your disagreement as an excuse for disobedience.

Prayer

Father, thank You that I belong to Christ and live under His gracious lordship. I confess my desire to be in charge when legitimate authority does not suit me. Help me obey where I should, honor Your authority above every human authority, and live faithfully in the world. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 3 Ready for Good

Read: Titus 3:1, Titus 1:16, Titus 2:14

Paul tells Christians to be “ready for every good work.” That small word, ready, gives us something practical to consider. Titus has already described false teachers as “unfit for any good work” (1:16). Christ gave Himself to redeem and purify a people “zealous for good works” (2:14). Now those people are told to be ready. The movement matters: what Christ has done for us produces an eagerness for good, and that eagerness becomes availability to actually do it.

Zeal and readiness are related, but they are not identical. I may honestly want to help and still arrange my life so that no interruption can reach me. An opportunity to do good often arrives when I am tired, when a need is inconvenient, or when I would rather finish something else. It may be a practical need someone has not asked about yet. Paul does not ask us to admire good works from a safe distance. He calls Christ's people to stand prepared for them.

Good works do not make us belong to Jesus. That order is worth repeating, because guilt can make us busy without making us ready. Christ gave Himself for a people who were in need of rescue. He redeemed and purified them for Himself. His grace teaches us to turn from ungodliness, but it also gives us a positive eagerness to do what is good. Sanctification is not only subtraction; grace makes us available for faithful action.

Ask whether your plans leave any room for the good directly in front of you. Perhaps there is a person you can help, a burden you can share, or a practical task you can take up without waiting for credit. You do not need to manufacture an impressive act of service. Stand ready for the one Christ has put within reach, and do it as someone already loved and claimed by Him.

Reflection Questions

1. Where have you been eager to talk about doing good but slow to make yourself available?
2. How does Christ's redeeming work free you from serving for credit or acceptance?

Practical Application

Before the day ends, meet one practical need you already know about without waiting for someone to ask you.

Prayer

Father, thank You that Christ gave Himself to redeem me and make me His own. I confess how easily I protect my plans from the needs of others. Give me a willing heart and open eyes for the good I can do today. Help me act from Your grace, not from guilt or a desire for praise. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 4 Words Without Contempt

Read: Titus 3:2, Titus 2:15, Titus 3:1

Paul says Christians are to “speak evil of no one” and “avoid quarreling.” He is not asking us to call wrong things right or to pretend disagreement has disappeared. Titus himself must declare truth, exhort the church, and rebuke what contradicts it. A Christian may identify sin, make a truthful judgment, and offer needed correction. The question is whether we will use truth to serve another person or use it as cover for reviling them.

“But what I said was true” is an easy defense. Truthfulness matters, but it does not answer why I said it, how I said it, or what I wanted to accomplish. Someone else's wrong does not give me permission to sin with my mouth. This can be tested in a family conversation, a disagreement at church, or political speech. We may criticize a policy or oppose injustice without speaking abusively about a leader. Paul's “no one” does not change when the person has made a serious mistake.

Avoiding quarrels does not mean avoiding every argument. Sometimes love requires us to contend for what is true. Yet we can become attached to the fight itself. Do I need the last word? Am I trying to help this person see the truth, or do I mainly want to win? A taste for conflict can make even a correct claim sound like contempt. The Christian can contend for truth without becoming contentious in character.

Christ gave Himself to redeem people whose lives needed more than a better tone. His grace is training us now. If you spoke sinfully yesterday, do not defend it by rehearsing the other person's faults. Tell the truth about your words, and ask Christ to teach you a better way to speak today. Grace does not ask you to surrender truth. It teaches you to speak truth without contempt.

Reflection Questions

1. In a recent disagreement, were you trying to help with truth or trying to win?
2. Have you used the truthfulness of your words to avoid examining their tone or purpose?

Practical Application

Before answering one difficult message or conversation this week, ask why you want to speak and what your words are meant to accomplish.

Prayer

Father, thank You for the truth You have given Your church and for the grace Christ gives sinners like me. I confess that I can use truthful words with a sinful purpose. Teach me to name what is wrong without contempt, to resist a taste for the fight, and to speak in a way that serves others. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 5 Gentleness for All

Read: Titus 3:2, Titus 3:3, Galatians 5:23

Paul ends Titus 3:2 by calling Christians to be gentle and to show “perfect courtesy toward all people.” The final phrase is about meekness, not merely good manners. Galatians 5:23 names that same meekness as fruit of the Spirit. Paul is not rewarding a naturally quiet temperament or excusing someone who is naturally forceful. He is describing character that saving grace produces in Christ's people.

Gentleness does not require us to pretend that another person's conduct is acceptable. We may have the stronger argument or the authority to insist on our way. We may be able to expose the person's mistake. The question is whether we will press every advantage or deal with them in a way that reflects the grace Christ has shown us. Titus is told to rebuke with authority, while Christians are told to be gentle. Truth and gentleness belong together.

Look at the ends of the verse. Paul begins with “no one” and ends with “all people.” He is not speaking only about difficult people. He is removing our exceptions. Still, the difficult person is where this command can press hardest. We hear ourselves saying, “I'll respect them when they respect me,” or “If they want a fight, they can have one.” Their wrong may need to be confronted, but their conduct does not determine your character. Grace does.

Paul's next words help us resist superiority: “For we ourselves were once...” He will tell us more about mercy in the next passage; here we only need the reminder that we needed grace too. Christ gave Himself to redeem and purify a people for Himself. His grace saved us, and it is training us now. If you are not a Christian, your first need is not to become nicer. You need the Savior whose grace makes a new life possible. If you belong to Him, ask what difference that grace is making toward the person you are most tempted to exempt.

Reflection Questions

1. Whom are you tempted to exempt from Paul's “all people,” and why?
2. How does remembering that you needed grace too affect the way you speak to that person?

Practical Application

Choose one conversation you expect to be difficult. Tell the truth if needed, but decide beforehand how you will answer without reviling or pressing every advantage.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Christ's mercy toward me when I needed rescue. I confess how easily I make an exception for someone who frustrates me. Produce gentleness in me by Your Spirit. Help me tell the truth, remember the grace I received, and treat this person as Paul commands. In Jesus' name, Amen