

## Remind Them

When I need to remember something, I will sometimes write what I don't want to forget on a post-it note and stick it somewhere so I will see it. We could think of Titus 3:1-2 as seven post-it notes Paul wants Titus to help believers remember: be submissive to rulers and authorities; be obedient (to them); be ready for every good work (related to them); speak evil of no one; avoid quarrelling; be gentle; show perfect courtesy to all people. These are things these believers had already been taught, but Christians need to be regularly stirred by what they have already heard.

The first three indicate that believers are to be reminded of how they are to relate to those who are authorities over them. They are to submit to them, obey them and be ready for every good work by doing what the authorities require of them, unless doing so would not be a good work. As a rule, good Christians are to be good citizens. Christians are to obey authorities, because to do so is a good work, unless it means disobeying God.

The next four things Titus is to remind believers about relate to how they should relate to all who are around them. These instructions are to be followed with everyone. There are no exceptions. Believers are to speak evil of no one. Notice he says 'no one' and the word 'except' does not appear in the command. Next, believers are to be reminded to avoid quarreling. What is quarreling? The English Journalist G. K. Chesterton said, "People generally quarrel because they can not argue." It seems from other things he wrote that he saw arguing as, having a position that is different and presenting the reasons in a rational and respectful way. Quarrelling was when a person had a different position but his reasons were weak and so there was anger instead of a respectful and rational attempt to persuade. This is probably what is in mind in this command, because right after it believers are told to be gentle or kind. Quarrelling seems to be arguing that is not gentle or kind. Yet the command to be gentle or kind applies to more than just how we disagree. It is to characterize Christians always. The next and last of these commands reinforces the kind of temperament he is describing that should characterize a Christian. He says finally, "show perfect courtesy toward all people". Literally this command says, "show all meekness toward all people". Because 'meekness' miscommunicates what is meant to most people, the word 'courtesy' or 'humility' are better words. Christians are never to be anything less than completely courteous to everyone: even those who are the worst or the least, and even those who are in the other party or of another race.

Think about this as it relates to what you post on social media. Could what you post be described by these words: courteousness, gentleness, respectfulness, and kindness? Ben Sasse, a Senator from Nebraska, has recently written a book about the political polarization of our day called, "Them: Why we hate each other and how to heal." Whatever party you are in, those in the other party are your 'them'. Scripture says believers are to "speak evil of no one, avoid quarrelling, be gentle and show perfect courtesy to all people." All of this applies to how Christians should relate to 'them', whomever that might be for you.

The kind of behavior and spirit which should describe Christians is rooted in the gospel. The next word after these reminders is "for". We are told after "for" the reason Christians are to have this kind of disposition toward all people. It is because those who have been saved were saved by the undeserved loving kindness of God in Jesus that we are to show loving kindness to all, even those who are very undeserving. We were among 'them', who were the objects of God's wrath, but also His love. This kind of grace, which we have received, we should reflect toward all people.