

Specific Duties for Titus-Titus 2:7-8

At the beginning of Titus 2, Paul instructs Titus to ‘teach what accords with sound doctrine’. That means, he is to teach sound doctrine and to teach specific duties that accord with sound doctrine.

After this, Paul prescribes specific duties, based on sound doctrine, for the older men, the older women, the younger women and the young men. Then in 2:7-8, Paul prescribes more specific duties for Titus, who is a young man.

Before we look at these instructions to Titus, let’s talk more about Titus, himself. We saw in Titus 1:4 that this book was written to Titus and that he was Paul’s “true child in a common faith”. This probably means that Paul was instrumental in Titus coming to faith in Christ and then helping him grow in faith. Later, Paul gave Titus two difficult tasks in Corinth. He was involved in confronting sin in the Corinthian church and then in collecting money from the Corinthian church. These were not attractive assignments. Yet Titus was successful with both. After this, it seems that Paul and Titus went to the island of Crete to plant churches. After working together, Paul evidently left for other ministry and left Titus there to “put what remained into order” which meant first and foremost he was to “appoint elders in every town” as already directed. William Barclay said, “Titus was the man for a tough assignment. There are two kinds of people: people who can make a bad situation worse and people who can bring order out of chaos. Titus was the man to send when there was trouble.”

In Titus 2:7-8, Paul instructs Titus in two ways. As a spiritual leader he is to show and tell. By showing with his works and telling with his words, as instructed, he would lead the churches on Crete to adorn the doctrine of God. Throughout Titus Paul expresses his desire for the churches on Crete, like all believers, to be engaged in good works. In 2:14, we see that Christ’s intention in giving himself for us, was that we would become zealous for good works. The good news should motivate good works, and Titus was to set the example in good works.

In addition to instructing Titus about how he was supposed to live, he also instructs him about how he is supposed to teach by saying, “...and in your teaching show integrity, dignity and sound speech that cannot be condemned...” Titus is told he is to teach in a way that shows integrity. John Stott says this may refer to his motive as a teacher. Titus was to be uncorrupted by the desire for money or praise in his motivation in teaching. Titus was also to teach in a way that shows dignity. Stott says this defines his manner as a teacher. Titus was to teach eternal truth with a seriousness and with dignity. Last, Titus is to teach in a way that shows sound speech which can’t be condemned. Stott suggests that this refers to his message as a teacher. Paul is saying again, in another way, what he said before “teach what accords with sound doctrine.”

How Titus is to live and teach, as well as how the different groups in the church are to live is “so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.” Notice, “us”. This isn’t just about Titus but the people in the churches. The reason for Titus, as well as the older men, older women, younger women and young men, to live like this is so that the opponents of the church would see alignment between their words and deeds. While Titus was to be their model, the gospel would be their motivation and power to live this way. Christ giving himself for his people to redeem, possess, and purify them, should create in them zeal for good works. The gospel is the powerful inspiration to live a life marked by the good works that accord with the good news, that Christ died for our sins for our forgiveness and for our holiness.