
Restored Witness Part 1

April 29, 2018 - Titus 2:7-8

Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

2:6–8. The men also are to be self-disciplined, and Timothy was to provide a model for them, as a good teacher should. Paul uses the expression “good deeds” in a variety of ways (see 1:16; 2:14; 3:1, 8, 14; 1 Tim 2:10; 5:10; 6:18; 2 Tim 2:21; 3:17).¹

2:7–8. Titus qualified as a young man too, and so received some direct advice from the apostle. He must strive to “show himself” **an example** (*typos*, “pattern”) to all (but esp. to the other young men) in every good work (cf. 1 Tim. 4:15–16). In his public ministry of teaching Titus must show an **integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned**. Paul was always concerned lest **those who oppose** be provided ammunition for their attacks. Far better, said the apostle, that they **be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us**. They would not cease their attacks, of course, but they might at least be embarrassed by having to make up their own false accusations.²

the example

show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, (2:7b–8a)

Having given a general admonition for Titus to pass on to other young men under his care in Crete, Paul then gives that young spiritual leader a personal charge to **show [himself] to** be an example for them, as well as for all other believers in the churches, to follow. He was to confront them not only with spiritual words but with a spiritual life that corresponded to those words. Even the most forceful and compelling counsel will fall on deaf ears if the one who gives it fails to live by it.

¹ Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Tt 2:6–8). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

² Litfin, A. D. (1985). Titus. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 764). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Tupos (**example**) literally refers to a mark or impression left by an instrument such as a pen, a sword, or a hammer. Thomas refused to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead unless he saw “in His hands the imprint [*tupos*] of the nails” (John 20:25). It also came to be used figuratively of a pattern, mold, model, or copy of the original of something, whether a physical object, such as a statute, or a principle or virtue.

If **example** does not follow advice, the one giving it will be viewed rightly as a hypocrite, and hypocrisy never promotes righteousness, no matter how sound and biblical a person’s teaching and counsel may be. Others may be inclined to accept the principles intellectually but will see no reason for living by them, and will themselves, like their teacher, become hypocrites.

Jesus’ harshest words were to religious hypocrites. To some Pharisees and scribes in Jerusalem, He said, “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me’ ” (Matt. 15:7–8). When another group of Pharisees tried to trick Him into treason, “Jesus perceived their malice, and said, ‘Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites?’ ” (Matt. 22:18). The evil effect of their hypocrisy went far beyond their own lives. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” the Lord castigated them, “because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in” (Matt. 23:13). Hypocrites “say things,” He said, but “do not do them” (Matt. 23:3).

In his sorrowful meeting with the Ephesian elders on the seashore near Miletus, Paul gave them the parting advice to “help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ ” (Acts 20:35b). We can be sure that his counsel was taken fully to heart by those men. He reminded them—doubtless unnecessarily—that, while he was among them, he had “coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know,” he continued, “that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you [these principles] by working hard in this manner [myself]” (vv. 33–35a).

With perfect confidence, the apostle could exhort believers at Corinth to “be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1; cf. 4:16) and the brethren in Philippi to “join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Phil. 3:17). In his second letter to the church at Thessalonica, he said, “We [did not] eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you” (2 Thess. 3:8). It was “not because we do not have the right to this,” he went on to explain, “but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example” (v. 9). Paul did not want to give even the appearance of using his ministry as a means to financial gain or of his life being in the least way inconsistent with his teaching (cf. 1 Thess. 5:22).

Consistency of life with teaching is perhaps the most important aspect of effective spiritual leadership. The writer of Hebrews could confidently admonish his readers to imitate “those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you,” because the conduct of those leaders corresponded to their counsel (Heb. 13:7). Paul informed Timothy that the surest way to overcome the perceived disadvantage of his youthfulness was to make sure that, “in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity,” he showed himself “an example of those who believe” (1 Tim. 4:12). Members of the church at Ephesus might resist the bare words that he taught, but they could not deny the power of the truths that were faithfully exemplified in his life. If his *speech* in daily living, not just “from the pulpit,” was godly; if the *conduct* of his personal life was moral and selfless; if his *love* for the Lord and for fellow believers was genuine; if his *faith* was manifested in genuine trust in the Lord; and if his life was characterized by moral *purity*; he could be sure that his ministry would be effective, that it would be blessed and bear fruit.

There were several categories in which exemplary behavior was to be manifest. First, Titus was to be **an example** in doing **good deeds**. *Kalos* (**good**) does not refer to that which is superficial or cosmetic but to what is genuinely and inherently **good**, righteous, noble, and excellent. Titus’s **deeds** were to be true reflections of what he preached and taught. Christians are the Lord’s divine workmanship and are “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

Second, Titus was to be an example of **purity in doctrine**. Perhaps Paul was urging this young elder to make sure that he preached pure, orthodox **doctrine**, which he has already mentioned in 1:9 and 2:1. On the other hand, there may be another explanation. *Aphthoria* (**purity**) is a negative form of a term that carries the basic idea of being morally corrupt and vile, which in extra-biblical literature was often used of morally depraved people such as rapists, seducers, and abortionists. A related form of the word is used by Peter, who says that false teachers promise “freedom while they themselves are slaves of *corruption*; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved” (2 Pet. 2:19, emphasis added). Paul may have used this term to admonish Titus to live a life of moral **purity** that corresponds to the pure **doctrine** that he proclaimed.

Third, Titus was to set the example of a **dignified** life, a serious life that is fixed on God and honors whatever honors Him. As noted previously in relation to older men (v. 2), being **dignified** does not preclude a sense of humor, laughter, or enjoyment. It does mean that they should be able to distinguish between that which is important and that which is trivial.

Fourth, Titus was to set an example by being **sound in speech that is beyond reproach**. **Sound** is the same word (*hugiainō*) that is found in verse 1 and has the basic meaning of “being well, healthy, and whole.” *Logos* (**speech**) is often translated “word” and frequently refers to the Word of God, both written Scripture (see, e.g., Mark 7:13; Rev. 1:2, 9) and the living Christ (see, e.g., John 1:1; Rev. 19:13). But the Greek term has a number of

other connotations, including those of “talk” and “language.” In Ephesians 4:29 it is rendered “word,” referring to conversation, and in Ephesians 6:19 as “utterance.”

The issue here is not doctrine or theology but conversation, day by day **speech**. Titus’s speaking, whether formal teaching or informal conversation, was to be **sound**, healthy, edifying, life-giving, appropriate, and **beyond reproach**. Such virtuous and consistent conversation is surely the mark of a genuinely spiritual man.

The writer of Ecclesiastes says, “Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things” (Eccles. 11:9). The guard against foolishness and sinfulness is to “remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no delight in them’ ” (12:1).

the effect

in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. (2:8b)

The phrase **in order that the opponent may be put to shame** is the second purpose clause in this passage that reflects a reason for such high standards of holy living (see also vv. 5, 10) and refers back to the admonitions in verses 2–8a. The godly lives of older men, older women, young women, and young men all have, as part of their purpose, the putting **to shame** of the critics of Christ, His church, and His people. The opponents on Crete obviously included the “many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision” whom Paul mentions in 1:10.

When an **opponent** makes a rash, unfounded charge against a believer, the obvious and public testimony of that believer’s life should be so commonly known that the accuser is embarrassed by his false criticism.

The true effectiveness of evangelism does not come from manmade methods, strategy, or marketing techniques adapted from the culture, but from the genuine virtue, moral purity, and godliness of believers whose lives give proof of the truth of God’s Word and the power of Christ to redeem men from sin. That is what silences the critics and makes the gospel believable.

It is for that reason that Peter admonished believers to “abstain from fleshly lusts” for the sake of their own spiritual well-being, because those lusts “wage war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11). He then urges them to “keep [their] behavior excellent among the Gentiles” for the sake of those to whom and before whom they witness, “so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe

them, glorify God in the day of visitation” (v. 12; cf. 2:15). He means that, when the Lord returns, they will be among those who glorify God because they have come to salvation through the testimony of godly saints (cf. Matt. 5:16).

When an unbeliever criticizes us, our righteous living should make it clear that he really has **nothing bad to say about us**. Hopefully our godly testimony will arouse his curiosity, then his consideration, and ultimately his receiving Christ as Savior and Lord.

Us may simply refer to Christians in general, because people often judge a local church, or the Christian faith, by what they know about Christians. But it seems likely in this context that Paul includes himself in this **us**. All believers on Crete, and doubtless a large number of unbelievers as well, knew of Paul’s close association with Titus. Therefore, if Titus did not lead an exemplary spiritual life, his failure would reflect negatively on the apostle as well. And,³ on the other hand, Titus’s faithful living would also reflect positively on the noble apostle.

2:7 “show yourself to be an example” This is a PRESENT MIDDLE PARTICIPLE used as an IMPERATIVE (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12).

. 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1</8.14). Lifestyle change was the evidence of and an attraction to the Christian message.

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NASB	“with purity in doctrine”
NKJV	“in doctrine <i>showing</i> integrity”
NRSV	“in your teaching show integrity”
TEV	“be sincere ... in your teaching”
NJB	“by sincerity ... when you are teaching”

This seems to describe the way Titus is to teach (in contrast to the false teachers’ impure lives and motives), not only the content of his preaching and teaching. If it does refer to content, then possibly it is an emphasis on the resurrection (cf. Rom. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:42, 53, 54).

³ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1996). *Titus* (pp. 91–96). Chicago: Moody Press.

There are several Greek manuscript problems related to this phrase. In *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* Bruce M. Metzger says the term *aphthorian* (incorruption) (1) has the good manuscript support (i.e. \aleph^* , A, C, D*); (2) fits the context; (3) explains the other variants; and (4) is the most unusual of the options. The most common option (i.e. \aleph^c , D^c, L and most later minuscule manuscripts) is *adiaphthorian* (sincerity) (p. 654).

2:8 “sound in speech” This is the same recurrent term used in vv. 1 and 2 which meant “healthy” (in contrast to the false teachers).

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NASB	“dignified”
NKJV	“reverence”
NRSV	“gravity”
TEV	“serious”
NJB	“earnestness”

See full note at 2:2.

© **“which is beyond reproach”** This is a guideline for both leaders and laymen (cf. 1:6–7, 8, 10; 1 Tim. 3:2, 7, 10; 5:8, 14; 6:1). See Special Topic at 1 Tim. 3:2.

© **“the opponent”** In context this could refer to (1) the false teachers of 1:10–16; or (2) the unbelievers of society who criticized Christianity out of pagan ignorance. Believers’ lives should silence both groups and attract them to the gospel.⁴

7. *In all things shewing thyself.* For doctrine will otherwise carry little authority, if its power and majesty do not shine in the life of the bishop, as in a mirror. He wishes, therefore, that the teacher may be a pattern, which his scholars may copy.³

A pattern of good works in doctrine, uprightness, gravity. In the original Greek the style is here involved and obscure, and this creates ambiguity. First, he makes use of the words *in doctrine*, and then adds, in the accusative case, *integrity, gravity, &c.* Without mentioning the interpretations given by others, I shall state that which appears to me to be the most probable. First, I connect these words, *of good works in doctrine*; for, after having enjoined Titus that, in teaching, he shall inculcate the practice of good works, he wishes that good

⁴ Uteley, R. J. (2000). *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy* (Vol. Volume 9, pp. 108–109). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

works, which correspond to this doctrine, may be visible in his life; and consequently the preposition *in* means that they shall be suitable, or shall correspond, to the doctrine. What follows is in no degree obscure; for, in order that he may exhibit a representation of his doctrine in morals, he bids him be “upright and grave.”

8. *Sound speech, unblamable.* “Sound speech” relates (in my opinion) to ordinary life and familiar conversation; for it would be absurd to interpret it as relating to public instruction, since he only wishes that Titus, both in his actions and in his words, shall lead a life that agrees with his preaching. He therefore enjoins that his words shall be pure and free from all corruption.

Unblamable may apply either to the words or the person of Titus. I prefer the latter view, that the other nouns in the accusative case (which the Greek syntax easily allows) may depend upon it in this sense—“that thou mayest shew thyself unblamable in gravity, in integrity, and in sound words.”

That the adversary may be ashamed. Although a Christian man ought to look at other objects, yet this must not be neglected, to shut the mouth of wicked men, as we are everywhere taught that we should give no occasion for slander. Everything that they can seize on as improper in our conduct is maliciously turned against Christ and his doctrine. The consequence is, that, through our fault, the sacred name of God is exposed to insult. Accordingly, the more we perceive that we are keenly observed by enemies, let us be the more attentive to guard against their calumnies, and thus let their malignity strengthen in us the desire of doing well.⁵

⁵ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (pp. 313–315). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.