

Series	Gamma 17 – Study 16 (Christian Behaviour)
Reference	Titus
Date	4 August 2021
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Welcome back to Gamma. We are now come to the last two studies on the Pastoral Epistles and we're going to take two studies to finish the book of Titus which is very short book and it actually repeats a lot of stuff that Paul has actually spoken to Timothy about, so hence we're not going to take too long on this. And the title of this study is basically 'Christian Behaviour'. What is Christian behaviour and the next study, Study 17 will be what is the basis of Christian behaviour. We cannot get this wrong.

Now let's start with the word of prayer. Lord we ask that you be with us this evening, help us understand what Christian behaviour is and more importantly what is the basis of that behaviour. We ask for Jesus say. Amen.

Now we've been dealing with the first and second letter to Timothy which is basically he is located in Ephesus, all right. So now we're going to go south to the island of Crete all right, a little island by the south, basically is a picture of Crete which is ancient buildings there and Paul is writing to Titus, if you look in verse 4

To Titus my true child in the common faith.

All right. Now Titus chapter 1 basically deals with two issues. One is the qualifications and functions of overseers and elders and number two false teachers, exactly the same as 1 Timothy. So we are not going to deal very much with that but I am just going to bring out the extra points that you found in Titus and not found in the letters to Timothy. Titus 1:5

This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remain in order and appoint elders in every town as I directed you

So elders are actually appointed, all right. So these are basis of appointment elders in scripture and number two qualification. The qualifications are similar to that in chapter 3 of 1-Timothy all right but a bit extra here

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy word as taught so that they may be able to give instructions to sound doctrine so the elders must be able to teach or instruct in sound doctrine

Very important because they protect the church and number two rebuke those who contradict. So therefore the elders must have an ability to understand what false doctrine is and to refute it to argue and bring forward points that will support sound doctrine and refute false doctrine. So whoever you get as an elder must have the qualification, not only spiritual maturity but if he is unable to rebuke those who contradict then the life, the spiritual life of the church is in jeopardy, because in this situation there are a lot of false teachers people, who are Judaizers who basically want them to continue to obey the Mosaic Law. Even today we got people like the Hebrew wrote movement who really want people to obey the Jewish laws which is absolutely false teaching and then two false teaching for prophet. If you think today prosperity gospel for example. Then our purpose and in verse 13 to 15

Therefore rebuke them sharply that they be sound in faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths

and the commands of people who turn away from the truth

So here he is asking them to rebuke sharply. So there is a purpose for rebuking, so that they will be sound in faith. The whole purpose of elders correcting folk are not to basically to judge them but basically to pull them back so that they would have right doctrine. Now there is a difference here between Titus and Timothy.

Titus tells them to rebuke, Paul tells Titus to rebuke them sharply and if you look at Paul writing to Timothy verse 25 of chapter 2, correcting his opponents with gentleness. Why is there a difference? He asked Titus to rebuke them sharply and Timothy to rebuke them with gentleness. Well, I think there is occasion for both situations, for both methods depending on your audience, what kind of people. Obviously these people would be far more difficult than the people Timothy had to deal with them. In fact in verse 12 Paul says,

One of the Cretans a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
And Paul says this testimony is true

Now if you look in the ancient Greek world there are basically seven ancient sages of wise men or philosophers of which one of them was Epimenidis who lived in 600 BC who is a religious teacher, a miracle worker and respected as a prophet, right. It is he who said all Cretans are liars. In fact the word there is a verb, to cretize means is to lie. So Cretans have a reputation of lying. They have a reputation of being pirates and bandits which is maybe a difficult situation where Titus will thrust into because these are the people who are former pirates and bandits and now have come to know Christ, so never the easiest of people.

Let's look at chapter two,

But as for you teach what accords to sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified and self controlled.

So he is to teach them because doctrine will result in behaviour. Now he goes on in chapter 2 to look at the behaviour, to tell us what Christian behaviour looks like in older men in chapter 2 verse 2, older women chapter 2 verse 3 younger women 2 verses 4 to 5, younger men versus 2 to 6, and bond servants 2 to 9 also gives instruction to Titus himself. It is inseparable what you believe will determine what you behave. If you behave in an ungodly fashion it would mean that you actually do not hold right doctrine. If you hold right doctrine you would behave rightly that is what Paul is putting forward and there are reasons why we must have godly behaviour. There are five reasons given in this particular passage.

First of all, that they may encourage other people. Second of all that the word of God may not be dishonoured which means if they look at you and say "Oh! this is a Christian". How? That mean their God is useless as it were.

Third reason, to be example of good deeds. So when other people see our good deeds they may follow suit. Fourthly, so that opponents will be put to shame because when they try to condemn Christianity and the faith and they look compare their behaviour with your behaviour they will be put to shame.

And lastly so that they will adorn or make beautiful the doctrine of our God and saviour. So if you divide it into two, why we must have gospel behaviour, Why? Because of internal reasons and external reasons. The internal reasons is so that when we live godly lives it will encourage others to follow suit, all right. Second of all, we will give people an example what a good deed is because they are followers.

For example, some folk will go out during this time of pandemic and administer to people white flags or bring food and this encourages other people to jump in the bandwagon and do the same thing, it encourages and it gives example. Externally, you live up to reputation because it is a Christian church that steps into any pandemic, any crisis. The Christian church is the one that ministers to the lowliest, the disenfranchised, the poor, the marginalized, the people who are imprisoned. You live up to that reputation because that is what Jesus Christ did. Second thing is an indictment of unbelievers. They may blame Christians, they call them to be judgmental, exclusivistic when they say Jesus is the only way but when they see good works they will know that they have been wrong in their condemnations. And lastly we make beautiful the gospel as it were, we adorn.

Now let's look at the older men

As for you teach what accords to sound doctrine. Older man to be sober-minded, dignified, self-control, sound in faith, in love and in steadfastness

You know older people should not be written off. There is this movement called Ageism where elderly people are marginalized, they have got nothing to contribute. In fact if you look at Moses started the most active phase of his career in his 80s, right. Caleb convinced Israel to go into promised land and fight and take the hill when he was 85 years of age. We have to be sober-minded, dignified, self-control sound in faith in love and in steadfastness, sober-minded means moderate in drinking that means you are sober you have got to control, you are restrained, you are not going to let loose, level-headed balanced in your views, older people need to be that because they provide stability for the church. Dignify doesn't mean you're wearing a three-piece suit, a big moustache, dignified means worthy of respect, worthy of reverence because not based on the fact that you've got money or you drive a Lamborghini or position but because you've got character and integrity right.

You can't see the difference more than in these two United States presidents, Joe Biden looks dignified, self-control, doesn't let loose and you've got the former guy who's basically spinning, just spitting whatever comes to his mind, you know totally uncontrolled as it were all, right.

Chuck Swindoll, famous American preacher once wrote in his book about a elderly couple who actually got married and so they were counselled by Chuck Swindoll a number of years ago and the older lady was rather independent and very set in her ways and he on the other hand was a dominant older man, super intense and on top of that very jealous. It soon became obvious the mixture is very volatile and will lead to explosion unless both remain sober-minded and sensible. So therefore Chuck spent many sessions with them before the wedding, emphasizing important to maintain balance, urging both of them to guard against extremes. He even gave them practical projects to work to help them cultivate ways to adjust and work together as a team. Few months after the wedding they are back into the pastorate, being counselled by Chuck again. And you know what happened, the bride was furious at the groom because he refused to give her more breathing space. Now what do you mean by breathing space? Well breathing space for her, what he did was he had taken all the doors of the house, interior doors off the hinges and stacked them in the garage because he didn't want either of them to have any secrets. He also began the habit of checking on the odometer in her car when he left for work every morning and rechecking the odometer of her car every time when he comes back and then he will start to question her where did you go? What took you 18 miles from home? Oh that did it, she got very upset. You know what she did, she spent untold hours in a car driving wherever she wants and then when she comes back odometer shows 200 miles and then he would start to question her and they both have a big fight.

You see both took their behaviour to ridiculous extremes, both needed to compromise but they both

needed essential virtue, sensibility. So obviously they both divorced in less than two years. Now the other characteristic of an older person actually applies to everyone. It is self-control, soophroon in Greek. It applies to older men, younger women and younger men. It is the only characteristic of godly behaviour that is across the board and that indicates how important it is. In fact it is also a characteristic of an elder. An elder is a lover of good, he is also self-control. So self-control is the number one facet of godly behaviour. If you look where soophroon is found is when the man who was demon-possessed delivered by Jesus Christ. Luke 8:35

Then people went out to see what had happened to him and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed in his right mind. Soophroon, self-control they were afraid. You see instead of being controlled by demons or control by his own desires he is now self-controlled all right in his right mind as it was soophroon. You see we live in a world where there are impulses that seek to control us, either sexual where we desire someone who is not your wife, anger when you cannot control when somebody has slighted you, envy when somebody else drives a bigger car than you, pride when somebody questions you and doubts you or greed when what you have is not enough. These are all the impulses to control us and what self-control means is godly behaviour is an ability to control each of these desires and let them not control us.

Rudyard Kipling, famous author who wrote the book Jungle Book describes what self-control is and it's very interesting in his writing. He says if you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blame it on you. If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you but make allowance for their doubting too. If you can wait and not be tired of waiting or be lied about and don't deal in lies or being hated and don't give way to hating and yet don't look too good nor talk too wise. If you can dream and not make dreams your master. If you can think and not make your thoughts your aim. If you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those impulses just the same. If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue or walk with kings nor lose the common touch. If neither foes nor living enemies can friends can hurt you or if all men count with you but none too much. If you can fill the unforgiving minute within 60 seconds worth of a distance run yours is the earth and everything in it and what is more you'll be a man my son.

Good advice from father to son which describes in secular terms what a self-control person is who doesn't get overboard. He doesn't let circumstances or feeling control him and he is well controlled and what we actually face in this day and age is more of the thing that really challenges our self-control is basically social media. We are all addicted to social media. It is estimated in the United States 10 percent of the population is so addicted and become a pathological condition, addicted to your hand phone, to Whatsapp, to Facebook, to YouTube and always on it. You can actually see people, a family nowadays sitting anywhere in a restaurant that each of them with their heads buried in their social media sites. And the effects of this loss of self-control, because you allow social media to control you, loss of self-control when that happens you got low self-esteem which may be prompted by incorrect perception that other lives are better because when you look at Facebook everybody is having a good meal, everybody is traveling but not you, it could be an isolation and loneliness, anxiety and depression or fear of missing out which can lead to even more social media because you are always rushing, did I miss something somebody was celebrating or some trip you went to or some good makan he went to. You get insomnia because you put social media right before your bed time and you cannot sleep or decrease physical activity because you're always on social media, not exercising at all, poor interpersonal relationships because you are always on social media, you only know how to interact with your phone and not really anybody else. Ultimately it affects your work performance or poor grade at school and you have a reduced ability to empathize with others. So this is the biggest challenge to self-control in our day and age and for the men it is basically pornography because that urge to satisfy your sexual urges is available on social media at any time. That is a challenge of our age.

Now we also to be the older people supposed to be sound, I mean solid, correct in your faith, how you trust God, how you love folk and endurance. Because endurance shows character and perseverance and this is the best indicator of genuine faith, you continue with it. Then you've got the older women verse 3 to 5

Older women likewise are to be reverent in behaviour

So when he says likewise, which means all the characteristics of being self-controlled or being dignified that Paul has described older men and older women are the same thing. They got to do the same thing. There are no two separate instructions. Older women likewise are to be dignified, self-controlled all right and sensible all right, so they have to be reverent in behaviour, not slanderous or slaves, not addicted to wine, they're not going to gossip and say bad things about other people instead what they have to do, the positive sign, they have to teach what is good and to train younger women to love their husbands and children and to be self-control, pure, being sexually moral, working at home kind and submissive to their own husbands that the word of God may not be reviled.

So this is very practical, older women not only are to behave but in godly behaviour but they have a ministry to younger women. We would like to see this church where younger women are being disciplined or spend time with older women who've got more experience as well and in living godly lives and in their marriages as well, they could spend their ministry training younger women as well. So this is a good point in which the bible studies can actually discuss, how you can actually put this into practice because we find ourselves in a church where the older women and older men all stick together in Caris and they hardly interact with the younger women who have their own ministries and own groups. We should be inter-generational having the older generation minister to the younger generation as well that is the characteristic of a church. Younger women, all right. To train younger women to love their husbands and their children, to be self-control and working at home. Do younger women have to work at home rather than to, is it wrong to go to work in an office, good thing to discuss but you must take in the context of the society at that time and how after the industrial revolution things have actually changed. How does this piece of scripture apply to us today?

For younger men only one thing,

Urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

They are the ones who are impulsive, you have sexual desires, violence, pride so they are the ones that need this particular characteristic and for Titus himself,

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

So this is advice to Titus just the same advice which Paul gives to Timothy, to declare these things, exhort, rebuke with authority, let no one disregard you.

Last category is basically bondservants. So here are slaves or employees, bondservants. They are to be submissive to their own masters in everything, they are to be well pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our savior.

So basically gospel behaviour by bondservants by being submissive and not argumentative will be hard working and not stealing, showing all good faith. This adorns the gospel. You know the word 'adorn' is make beautiful attractive or decorative. If you look at picture of a woman who is adorned with pearls, okay. They actually make the gospel attractive. It doesn't make the contents. You see adorn means basically make attractive from the outset but it doesn't affect the content. You don't make the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, the love by which he came. Any better you don't alter the content but you make the external concept of the gospel held by non-Christians easier, all right, because they see your behaviour and so therefore they are going to ask themselves how come this slave, this person, this husband, this wife, this child acts differently from everybody else and that attracts them. Adorning makes it more decorative, more attractive but the contents of the gospel do not change, right.

So that is what we do when we have gospel behaviour. Now what is the motivation. Why do we actually have to have godly behaviour? Well that will be a topic for the last study which is very important, the motivation for godly behaviour is the gospel of Jesus Christ. What is the gospel Jesus Christ? Because so many churches, so many groups have got it wrong and they have over emphasized one aspect to the detriment of another. Chapter 2 verse 11-14 puts in a nutshell what gospel actually is, so till the next study may God add a blessing to this word.