

"Respond"

Titus 3:9-11

December 18, 2016

INTRO: Do you have favorite “parts” of the Bible?

- The Psalms? The Historical accounts?
- The Gospels? The Prophecies?

My favorite portions of Scripture are the “crescendos”

- Last words... Summary statements...
- The applications & “Battle-Cry” passages...

CONTEXT:

1. Biblical context is... N.T. mid 60's late in Paul's life
2. Paul is writing to Titus; "*put things in order on Crete*"
3. Titus the man... Titus the "inspired Word of God"
4. Titus the letter:
- 5.

God's Word – Definitions

a. **Ch.1 (BE Real - Truth)** Lovers; Leaders; **LIARS**

They were not disobedient believers; they were not believers!

BEHAVIOR reveals BELIEF!

BELIEF controls BEHAVIOR!

They were to be ejected from the churches immediately.

God's Work – Discipleship

b. Ch.2 (RE Righteous – Love)

- Read 2:1
- Distinguished Discipleship: dynamics/demographics
- Read 2:15

c. Ch.3 (BE Ready! – Warfare)

i. Remind: v.1-2

ii. Remember: v.3

"Titus 3:3 reveals & exposes every pompous & prideful church-goer... to be somewhere between a lukewarm hypocrite and a loud mouth counterfeit." - JDP

iii. Redeemed: v.4-7

VIDEO: "*Christmas' Messy Plan*"

iv. Reinforce: v.8

- **"These things" are Trustworthy**
- **Insist upon "these things"**
- **Be careful...** regarding **"these things"**
- **Be devoted...** to **"these things"**

BIG IDEA

We win spiritual warfare by **AVOIDING** the Traps, **ADDRESSING** the Trouble-Makers, and **ADVANCING** the Truth!

PREVIEW:

- A. AVOID the Traps (3:9)
- B. ADDRESS the Trouble-Makers (3:10)
- C. ADVANCE the Truth (3:11)

T/S: The 1st word is “**BUT**” – let’s read through the text before we “unpack” it and ask God to “impact” us with it :-) * These are Paul’s **LAST WORDS...**

TEXT:

⁹ But AVOID/shun foolish controversies/debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ REJECT a factious/divisive person AFTER a first and second warning, ¹¹ KNOWING that such a person is warped/perverted and sinful/sinning, (thus) being SELF-condemned.

T/S: The controversies and divisiveness that call for strong action on the part of Christian leaders require a rare blend of humility & authority, of love & uncompromising admonition.

- NIV Application Commentary

I. AVOID: Traps (WISDOM)

⁹ **BUT** - *avoid/shun foolish debates/dissensions, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.*

➤ **But = contrast...**

- “these things” vs. “those things”
- “insist” vs. “resist”
- Christ-like vs. Christ-less

➤ **AVOID/shun**

- Present imperative: Command!
- Don’t debate... dismiss & denounce

➤ **Foolish** (Gk. = English “moron”)

*“Any fool can KNOW...
The point is to UNDERSTAND.”* - Albert Einstein

Matthew 23:17 = foolishness equated with blindness.

- ### ➤ ***Unprofitable/Worthless***

R.O.I. on amazing grace?

Ephesians 5:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time (cf. Col. 4:5), because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

*** Remember the Parable of the Talents!

*** Even worse... FALSE Teaching

- ***Unsettles the soul*** (Acts 15:24)
 - ***Shipwrecks faith*** (1 Tim. 1:19)
 - ***Leads to blasphemy*** (1 Tim. 1:20)
 - ***Leads to the ruin of the hearers*** (2 Tim. 2:14)
 - ***Produces ungodliness*** (2 Tim. 2:16)
 - ***Spreads "like gangrene"*** (2 Tim. 2:17)

Read **Mark 8:36** & **Matt. 16:26**

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

T/S: Paul warned Titus to avoid people who like to argue about the unimportant things of the faith.

I have learned that professed Christians who like to argue about the Bible are usually covering up sin in their lives... - Wiersbe

II. ADDRESS: Trouble-Makers (WORSHIP)

¹⁰ Reject/have nothing to do with a factious or divisive person after a first and second warning,

➤ **Reject** = present imperative: Command

➤ **Factious**

- Gk: gives us the English “heretic”
- The self-willed; opinion > truth...

The factious person will not submit to the Word or to godly leaders in the church. He/she sees themselves as a law unto themselves & they have no concern for spiritual truth or unity of the body. – John MacArthur

Hence Paul’s command to the church at Thessalonica:

"If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother"

- 2 Thess. 3:14-15

➤ **After:** God has a plan... & purpose (see below)

➤ **Warning**

- Christian “Discernment”
or
- Church Discipline”

The N.T. on church discipline:

Matthew 18:15-20

Romans 16:17-18;

1 Corinthians 5:1-13;

2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 13:1-3;

Galatians 6:1-2;

2 Thessalonians 3:6-12

VIDEO: Mark Dever: ***“Church Discipline”***

“When discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it”

How does this happen?

First, we have lost our theological nerve, the courage to confront as well as comfort, to admonish as well as exhort. Out of fear of offending, we have slunk away into the false security of silence.

Second, we have been overcome by moral compromise. Our churches look and act so much like the world we would hardly know where to begin if we did restore church discipline.

Third, we are simply and sadly biblically illiterate. Lay this deficiency at the feet of preachers who have jettisoned an expository model of preaching and thereby allowed us to avoid and neglect the hard doctrines of Scripture like church discipline.

This is what tickling the ears of the lost looks like...

"If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction..." ([1 Tim. 6:3-5](#)).

T/S: This is why Paul warned believers in Rome

"I urge you, brothers, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting" (Rom. 16:17-18).

III. ADVANCE: Truth (WITNESS)

11 KNOWing that such a person is warped or perverted and sinful, (thus) being self condemned.

"Here is a man living life upside down and inside out. This is his settled state, heart, and mind. It is his continuous habit of life. God forbid that we who love this person would stand by and do nothing!"

"Nothing can be more cruel than that leniency which abandons others to sin. (By contrast) nothing can be more compassionate than that severe reprimand which calls another Christian in one's community back from the path of sin." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

VIDEO: Paul Washer "*Indictment*"

Following Paul's directive in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, we must turn him over to Satan with a hope and prayer that the discipline of the heavenly Father will bring him to brokenness and repentance and that he will give evidence he is indeed God's child after all.

We have our duty. God has His! - Christ-Centered Exposition

There will frequently be those attempting to influence the church who are not of God and are unwilling to receive instruction or correction. Church leaders must be willing to deal with such people directly and quickly. It isn't the leader or the church that condemns the troublemaker; it is the person himself. (3:11) - Layman's Bible Commentary

CLOSE: [Here it is in a nutshell](#)

1 Corinthians 15:33
*Do not be deceived,
bad company corrupts good character.*

Look out for the LIARS...

&

Live the TRUTH!

Matthew 10:16

*I am sending you out as sheep amongst wolves;
therefore, be as shrewd as a serpent
and as innocent as a dove.*

1 Corinthians 10:31

*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do
all to the glory of God.*

Psalm 115:1

*Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Your name give
glory Because of Your loving-kindness, because of Your
truth.*

Matthew 5:14-16

*You are the light of the world... Let your light so shine
before men that by your good deeds they will glorify the
Lord.*

John 17:4 & 15:8!

*"I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the
work which You have given Me to do.*

*"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit,
and so prove to be My disciples.*

1 Peter 4:10ff

(8) Above all, love each other deeply,

because love covers a multitude of sins...

(10) *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

"If you commit to build on the foundation of truth... love will be erected. And where love grows, relationships REQUIRE compassionate responsibility. Naturally, then, when authentic, loving, responsible relationships abound, accountability is not only accepted – its expected... it's a blessing!

By CONTRAST, because our culture abhors any and all forms of positional authority & personal accountability, foundational, ABSOLUTE-Truth (and ALL that comes with it in Christ & in HIS Church), is attacked, dismissed, marginalized, and maligned. In the aftermath, as God's truth is rejected, any and all hope for genuine love is replaced with the lies of the God-less liars.

No where is this tragic truth more evident than in the contrast that can be seen between the cultural, Christ-less churches of our day, and the committed, Christ-like Church of the New Testament – both past & present.

To that end, what has been marketed as church growth

& celebrated in church culture, is really counterfeit-growth & the advance of complacency-culture in the church.

Think about it... truth in love, the 3 Great C's (Commandments, Commission, & Conflict), as well as the call to cross-carrying, have all been neatly replaced by superficial-attendance, religious-ritualism, and for some in the really "attentive" churches, a latte-offering cafe that is strategically positioned just outside the childcare super-center....

Sadly, all this points to the current condition of the Christ-less, counterfeit churches of our day. This modern, hyper-people-pleasing, cultural-church has been swallowed up by the ministry-malls and the "perceived-needs, feel-good, crowd-building, faith-franchises that promise to give you a little victorious vaccination every Sunday... getting you in & out in under and hour – so as not to interfere with or bog down their customer's busy, encumbrance laden, self-bloating schedules.

Oh Lord, may Your Spirit bring the attitudes & actions of repentance, faith, love, and obedience to such people & places.

For our part BRIDGE family, may we, like Titus, BE... Be blessed to "*put what remains in order*" in our personal lives, in our communities, and on our Crete-like mission-fields that the Lord has called us to & placed us in... ALL for His GLORY, and ALL by His GRACE. Amen & AMEN! -JDP



One FAITH. One FAMILY. One FOCUS.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will BE My witnesses (locally, regionally, and globally).” — Acts 1:8

One Question:	WHAT DO YOU WANT?
One Offer:	COME AND SEE.
One Promise:	TRUTH IN LOVE!

Our Truth-in-Love Distinctives: We are...

- 1.** Responding to grace & repenting of sin...
- 2.** Trusting the Bible & obeying God's Word...
- 3.** Growing in-Christ & living Spirit-led...
- 4.** Praying for guidance & following by faith...
- 5.** Dying to self & carrying our cross...
- 6.** BE-ing the Church & loving one another...(*truly loving one another*)
- 7.** Equipping the saints & exemplifying supernatural unity...
- 8.** Ministering as ambassadors & discerning matters shrewdly...
- 9.** Worshipping God vertically & experiencing Him horizontally...
- 10.** Proclaiming the Gospel (*no matter what*) & fishing for men...
- 11.** Making discipled-warriors & winning spiritual-warfare...
- 12.** Loving our King & serving His kingdom!

2 Corinthians 9:13

Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God because of your obedience...

Let's Pray

Titus 3:9-11 (NASB)

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, ¹¹ knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

Titus 3:9-11 (ESV)

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

Titus 3:9-11 (HCSB)

⁹ But avoid foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is perverted and sins, being self-condemned.

Titus 3:9-11 (NIV)

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. ¹⁰ Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. ¹¹ You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

Titus 3:9-11 (KJV)

⁹ But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. ¹⁰ A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; ¹¹ Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Titus 3:9-11 (AMP)

⁹ But avoid stupid *and* foolish controversies and genealogies and dissensions and wrangling about the Law, for they are unprofitable and futile.

¹⁰ [As for] a man who is factious [a heretical sectarian and cause of divisions], after admonishing him a first and second time, reject [him from your fellowship and have nothing more to do with him],

¹¹ Well aware that such a person has utterly changed (is perverted and corrupted); he goes on sinning [though he] is convicted of guilt *and* self-condemned.

God's plan of salvation calls for strong churches that proclaim and live the reality of the transforming gospel so that it is attractive to the lost.

Titus faced a large ("many," [1:10](#)) and formidable group of leaders in the Cretan churches who were deluding believers about central truths of the gospel.

they were causing great damage to the cause of Christ and were to be refuted (v. 9), silenced (v. 11), and reproved (v. 13). They professed "to know God," Paul explained, "but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed" (v. 16). Like those about whom the apostle warned Timothy, these false teachers held "to a form of godliness, although they [had] denied its power" (2 Tim. 3:5).

They were not disobedient believers; they were not believers at all, as evidenced by the fact that they espoused ungodly doctrines and lived ungodly lives.

They were to be ejected from the churches immediately.

CONTEXT

The New Testament on church discipline:

Matthew 18:15-20

Romans 16:17-18;

1 Corinthians 5:1-13;

2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 13:1-3;

Galatians 6:1-2;

2 Thessalonians 3:6-12;

no aspect of church life is more neglected...

John L. Dagg rightly notes,
"When discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it"

The effects spread throughout the whole church, but the problem finds its origin at the top...

First, we have lost our theological nerve, the courage to confront as well as comfort, to admonish as well as exhort. Out of fear of offending, we have slunk away into the false security of silence.

Second, we have been overcome by moral compromise. Our churches look and act so much like the world we would hardly know where to begin if we did restore church discipline.

Third, we are simply and sadly biblically illiterate. Lay this deficiency at the feet of preachers who have jettisoned an expository model of preaching and thereby allowed us to avoid and neglect the hard doctrines of Scripture like church discipline.

Fourth, practical expediency and, I might add, personal ambition have played all-too-important roles. A bigger membership means greater bragging rights. It affords a more attractive platform to make the move to a larger and more influential pulpit or denominational post.

Where then do we turn for an answer, a solution, a cure to this critical condition in which we find Christ's church? Surely the answer must be found in returning to God's Word, which gives us the model that provides a way out and the way forward.

The point of verses 9-11 is not so much to identify and correct wrong doctrine as it is to silence the divisive person.

this passage in particular has to do with those who are divisive in their intentions, "warped and sinful."

one of the most difficult tasks is working with church leaders in the confrontation of strong-headed divisiveness (v. 10). This sometimes occurs low key, gradually grinding away at love and unity. But sometimes it is open to the view of the whole community.

Intransigence can characterize any-one—from heretic to minister. The godly pastor must face such people with all

the wisdom, patience, and boldness described in verses 9-11. Freedom from heresy does not mean freedom from controversy. How a church and its pastors handle this may affect the church's witness for years to come.

The controversies and divisiveness that call for strong action on the part of Christian leaders (vv. 9-10) require a rare blend of humility and authority, of love and uncompromising admonition.

- NIV Application Commentary

T/S:

The adversative conjunction “but” (*de*) marks the contrast between correct theological teaching and its “profitable” results and false teaching and its “unprofitable” results.

Paul recognized the long-range damage and division within the church resulting from such controversies. He specifically instructed Titus on a procedure for handling such matters, making it clear that such behavior would not be tolerated.

VERSE 9:

Avoid the Foolish

These are Paul's final words to his son in the ministry, Titus. Like the consistent beating of a drum, Paul repeatedly challenges those at Crete to maintain sound doctrine AND good works. It is essential that a church protects and values its doctrinal and moral integrity. Those who would cause compromise in either area must be confronted and, if unrepentant, avoided. To do so is loving. Not to do so is to mistake sentimentality for love.

Victor Masters understood this well:

"Sentimentality is the love of man divorced from the love of truth.... It cloaks... hypocrisy & moral decay"

In verse 9, Paul now draws a contrast to v.8.

In other words, insist on good works but avoid what is foolish.

The word "avoid" could be translated "shun." It is a present imperative, a word of command, calling for constant and consistent vigilance.

Why must we avoid, shun, turn away from the kind of people who fit this description?

Two reasons given: **They are unprofitable & worthless.**

These kinds of persons are not to be debated but denounced and dismissed.

Dealing with aberrant theology is not the time for dialogue; it is the time for action—action that is quick and swift.

Nothing good comes from their attitude or their teachings. Avoiding them has as its goal bringing to light their error and their sin. It is redemptive and restorative. It is essential and not optional. The risks are too great. We must avoid the foolish.

Shun = "to turn oneself around, to purposely turn away from something or someone."

Titus, the other elders, and the congregations on Crete were to turn the other way from morally and spiritually destructive false teachers, who not only corrupted the churches but, by their sinful and sordid lifestyles, were a great hindrance to the credibility of the gospel.

QUOTE:

The effect of false teaching is explained in several New Testament passages. *It unsettles the soul* ([Acts 15:24](#)), *shipwrecks faith* ([1 Tim. 1:19](#)), *leads to blasphemy* ([v. 20](#)) and to *the ruin of the hearers* ([2 Tim. 2:14](#)), *produces ungodliness* ([v. 16](#)), and *spreads "like gangrene"* ([v. 17](#)).

Foolish is from *mōros*, from which comes *moron*

“Any fool can KNOW... The point is to UNDERSTAND.” - Albert Einstein

“A wise man may look ridiculous in the company of fools.” - Thomas Fuller

Persons who do not possess wisdom are called “fools”; their behavior is described as “folly.” The picture which emerges from the biblical material is quite simple: folly is the opposite of wisdom, and a fool is the opposite of a

wise person. Both wisdom and folly are depicted as philosophies or perspectives on life. The religious person chooses wisdom, whereas the non-religious person opts for folly. Wisdom leads to victory; folly to defeat. Wisdom belongs to those who fear God, and the “fear” of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ([Prov. 1:7](#)). Wisdom is the essence of life. The foolish person is the one who is thoughtless, self-centered, and obviously indifferent to God.

The fool may be the one who is aloof. He “foldeth his hands” ([Eccl. 4:5a](#)).

In other passages the fool is described as the one who denies that God exists: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” ([Ps. 14:1](#)). Foolish behavior is also characterized by an inability to recognize the true character of God. Job chastised his wife for behaving as the foolish do when she denied the steadfast love of God ([Job 2:10](#)).

The simple-minded fool is encouraged to change in [Proverbs 9:4-6](#)

New Testament Usage The contrasting elements of wisdom and folly evident in the Old Testament were clearly in the mind of Paul when he asked, “hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” ([1 Cor. 1:20b](#)).

In [Matthew 7:26; 25:2,3](#); [Romans 2:20](#) “folly” is used synonymously with “experiential wisdom.” Wisdom based only on human intellect and experiences without considering God is folly.

In [Matthew 23:17](#), folly is equated with blindness. The characteristics of folly include thoughtlessness, the pursuit of unbridled aspirations, and a life-style characterized by envy, greed, and pride.

Foolishness is also described in paradoxical terms in the New Testament. In [1 Corinthians 1-3](#), the incarnation is portrayed as “foolishness,” but it is precisely this kind of perceived “foolishness” which is better than worldly wisdom.

Kenneth Craig; Holman Bible Dictionary.

False teachers in the church invariably distort and contradict Scripture, replacing it with novel insights, ideas & notions that confuse and mislead God's people and undercut their trust in God's revealed truth.

"If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language,

evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain" ([1 Tim. 6:3-5](#)).

The danger of false doctrine is made all the worse because, appealing to the natural man, it finds ready acceptance among unbelievers and even among worldly, self-centered Christians who are poorly grounded in the Word.

Once a false teacher is exposed, he is to be rejected by the church and given no platform to spread his spiritually cancerous and destructive falsehoods. He is not to be debated but denounced and expelled
(cf. [2 Cor. 6:14-18](#)).

Unlike believers, who accept the authority of Scripture and discuss its meaning, Paul is here referring to discussion with false teachers, who have no desire to accept divine truth.

Paul warned Titus to avoid people who like to argue about the unimportant things of the faith.

I have learned that professed Christians who like to argue about the Bible are usually covering up some sin

in their lives, are very insecure, and are usually unhappy at work or at home.

"How many angels can sit on the head of a pin?" We are to avoid foolish questions that have no bearing on life.

Theological debates do not help the Christian mature or draw lost men to God.

VERSE 10:

Reject the Divisive

Refusing to enter into unnecessary theological wranglings does not mean doing nothing. As the stakes rise, so must the response.

If at any point the evidence of genuine repentance comes forth, the process of discipline stops, and the ministry of restoration begins.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw the crucial nature of this when he wrote:

"Nothing can be more cruel than that leniency which abandons others to sin. Nothing can be more

compassionate than that severe reprimand which calls another Christian in one's community back from the path of sin" (Life Together, 105).

1. They Must Be Disciplined ([Titus 3:10](#))

"Reject" is another present imperative. The NIV translates it as **"warn."** The Greek word for "divisive" gives us our English word "heretic." However, its first-century meaning referred to "a person who is quarrelsome and stirs up factions through erroneous opinions, a man who is determined to go his own way and so forms parties and factions" (Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, 75).

Paul's instructions are clear: Warn him once; warn him twice. If there is no repentance, then he must be rejected.

Peter said of them: "*Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned*" ([2 Pet. 2:2](#)).

Throughout church history, those who "will not endure sound doctrine" have been plentiful. "Wanting to have their ears tickled, they... accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and... turn away their ears from the truth, and... turn aside to myths" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

Factious = the placing of self-willed opinions above the truth

The factious person will not submit to the Word or to godly leaders in the church. He is a law to himself and has no concern for spiritual truth or unity.

Because the consequences of insubordination, non-submission, and bickering can be so destructive of unity among the Lord's people, the apostle commands that a factious man, or woman, as the case may be, should be rejected by the church if they do not heed a first and second warning.

The issues themselves may be trivial, but arguing about them is not.

"I urge you, brethren," Paul warned believers in Rome, "keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances

contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting" ([Rom. 16:17-18](#)).

Speaking of false teachers and others who were **factious**, **Paul commanded the church at Thessalonica:**

"If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter"—which, even at that early time in the life of the church, carried the weight of Scripture—"take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" ([2 Thess. 3:14-15](#)).

Church discipline should always be given in a way that is loving, nonjudgmental, remedial, restorative, and redemptive. It should be administered in humility, "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth" ([2 Tim. 2:25](#)).

It is sad that men and women in evangelical churches who teach ideas that are utterly foreign to Scripture often are not only not disciplined but are instead praised and given opportunity for promulgating their aberrations.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

the "heretic." This word means "**one who makes a choice, a person who causes divisions.**" This is a self-willed person who thinks he is right, and who goes from person to person in the church, forcing people to make a choice. "**Are you for me or for the pastor?**" **This is a work of the flesh** (see [Gal. 5:20](#)).

*How do we apply this in a local church? Let me suggest one way. If a church member goes about trying to get a following, and then gets angry and leaves the church, let him go. If he comes back (maybe the other churches don't want him either), and if he shows a repentant attitude, receive him back. If he repeats this behavior (and they usually do), receive him back the second time. But if he does it a third time, do not receive him back into the fellowship of the church ([Titus 3:10](#)). Why not? "Such a man is warped in character, keeps on sinning, and has condemned himself" ([Titus 3:11](#), literal translation). **If more churches would follow this principle, we would***

have fewer "church tramps" who cause problems in various churches. - Bible Exposition Commentary

Paul described a false teacher as a “divisive person” (*hairetikon*). The terms *heresy* and *heretic* are derived from this Greek word.

Paul even included “factions” as one of “the deeds of the flesh” ([Gal 5:20](#)).

“divisive” indicates the destructive nature of those promoting error among believers (cf. [1:11](#)). Divisions within the church result in believers who are confused, frustrated, angry, and hurt. They become ineffective in ministering to one another and to a lost world in desperate need of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the “good works” characteristic of genuine Christians.

VERSE 11:

2. They Can Be Dangerous ([Titus 3:11](#))

Why must habitual, public, serious, unrepentant sinners be disciplined? Because they are dangerous.

"Perverted" or "warped" is in the perfect tense and means twisted, turned inside out. "Sins" is in the present tense. Here is a man living life upside down and inside out. This is his settled state, heart, and mind. It is his continuous habit of life. God forbid that we who love this person would stand by and do nothing!

3. They Are Destructive ([Titus 3:11](#))

Sin is destructive. It damages and destroys. What it can do to a community of believers is serious. What it does to the sinner enslaved by its addiction is tragic.

When the Greek word *autokatakritos* is broken down into its parts it means "to judge down on oneself," hence to be "self-condemned."

In action and attitude the sinner is without excuse, passing judgment on himself. Oh, he may not see it, for he is warped, twisted, self-deceived. He may even attempt to use Scripture to justify his sin. Often he will claim the leading of the Spirit and sometimes even the providence of God. There are times when he may even say, "My head tells me this is wrong, but my heart tells me it was never more right."

With grief, humility, self-examination, and a broken heart, we must confront him and, if necessary, shun and reject him.

Following Paul's directive in [1 Corinthians 5:1-13](#), we must turn him over to Satan with a hope and prayer that the discipline of the heavenly Father ([Heb 12:5-13](#)) will bring him to brokenness and repentance and that he will give evidence he is indeed God's child after all.

We have our duty. God has His
- Christ-Centered Exposition

Hiebert: “Further efforts would not be a good stewardship of his time and energies and would give the offender an undeserved sense of importance.”
he is self-condemned.”

Because the “factious man” refused to change, Titus could “be sure” (lit. “knowing,” *eidos*) of three things concerning this person:

First, he was “warped.” = it means *he has been* (perfect passive) *and remains off the track.*

Second, he was “sinful,” literally “*he continues to sin*”

Third, because he willfully continued in his sin, “he is self-condemned.”

Paul's instructions to Titus were direct and specific.

The (indication – JDP) **assumption** is that a failure to respond to two warnings is a clear sign that the offender is warped and sinful, and self-condemned.

Paul's thought here is similar to the Lord's instructions ([Matt. 18:15-17](#))

- The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The heretic is "subverted," or twisted inside out. He is so warped and twisted in his mind and heart that it is useless to reason with him or try to counsel him. He doesn't want to hear.

He "sinneth"; that is, he is wicked and rebellious against God's purposes.

CLOSE:

When the church cannot agree on the essentials of Christianity and is characterized by conflict and divisions, it is displeasing to God and ineffective to a lost world.

- New American Commentary

it is easy to talk about the contents of the Bible rather than teach them.

A primary purpose of scripture is to inspire believers to act on what they know to be true.

There will frequently be those attempting to influence the church who are not of God and are unwilling to receive instruction or correction. Church leaders must be willing to deal with such people directly and quickly.

It isn't the leader or the church that condemns the troublemaker; it is the person himself. ([3:11](#))

- Layman's Bible Commentary

God reminds us that there are a lot of people hungry for the Word; so move on to them. Don't get bogged down with the hardhearted.

This paragraph of Titus started with "This is a faithful saying."

We can confidently commit ourselves to the ways and purposes of God. We must not be dragged into contentions, strife, and disharmony. Rather, we are to move forward, serving God in a manner that is encouraging and helpful to those around us.

- Titus: Patterns for Christian Living.

Exegetical Outline

INTRO:

God's plan of salvation calls for strong churches that proclaim and live the reality of the transforming gospel so that it is attractive to the lost.

Titus faced a large ("many," [1:10](#)) and formidable group of leaders in the Cretan churches who were deluding believers about central truths of the gospel.

they were causing great damage to the cause of Christ and were to be refuted ([v. 9](#)), silenced ([v. 11](#)), and reproved ([v. 13](#)). They professed "to know God," Paul explained, "but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed" ([v. 16](#)). Like those about whom the apostle warned Timothy, these false teachers held "to a form of godliness, although they [had] denied its power" ([2 Tim. 3:5](#)).

They were not disobedient believers; they were not believers at all, as evidenced by the fact that they espoused ungodly doctrines and lived ungodly lives.

They were to be ejected from the churches immediately.

CONTEXT

The New Testament has a great deal to say about church discipline. Jesus addresses it in [Matthew 18:15-20](#), and Paul does so repeatedly in texts like [Romans 16:17-18](#); [1 Corinthians 5:1-13](#); [2 Corinthians 2:5-11](#);

13:1-3; Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12; and here in Titus 3:9-15.

no aspect of church life in our day is more neglected than this one.

Indeed, the contemporary church's disregard for this clear teaching of Holy Scripture is perhaps its greatest visible act of disobedience to our Lord. This rebellion is not without significant consequences.

John L. Dagg rightly notes,
"When discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it"

The effects spread throughout the whole church, but the problem finds its origin at the top, with the leadership, with the pastors.

First, we have lost our theological nerve, the courage to confront as well as comfort, to admonish as well as exhort. Out of fear of offending, we have slunk away into the false security of silence.

Second, we have been overcome by moral compromise. Our churches look and act so much like the world we

would hardly know where to begin if we did restore church discipline.

***Third**, we are simply and sadly biblically illiterate. Lay this deficiency at the feet of preachers who have jettisoned an expository model of preaching and thereby allowed us to avoid and neglect the hard doctrines of Scripture like church discipline.*

***Fourth**, practical expediency and, I might add, personal ambition have played all-too-important roles. A bigger membership means greater bragging rights. It affords a more attractive platform to make the move to a larger and more influential pulpit or denominational post.*

Where then do we turn for an answer, a solution, a cure to this critical condition in which we find Christ's church? Surely the answer must be found in returning to God's Word, which gives us the model that provides a way out and the way forward.

The point of verses 9-11 is not so much to identify and correct wrong doctrine as it is to silence the divisive person.

this passage in particular has to do with those who are divisive in their intentions, "warped and sinful."

one of the most difficult tasks is working with church leaders in the confrontation of strong-headed divisiveness (v. 10). This sometimes occurs low key, gradually grinding away at love and unity. But sometimes it is open to the view of the whole community.

Intransigence can characterize any-one—from heretic to minister. The godly pastor must face such people with all the wisdom, patience, and boldness described in verses 9-11. Freedom from heresy does not mean freedom from controversy. How a church and its pastors handle this may affect the church's witness for years to come.

The controversies and divisiveness that call for strong action on the part of Christian leaders (vv. 9-10) require a rare blend of humility and authority, of love and uncompromising admonition.

- NIV Application Commentary

T/S:

The adversative conjunction “but” (*de*) marks the contrast between correct theological teaching and its “profitable” results and false teaching and its “unprofitable” results.

Paul recognized the long-range damage and division within the church resulting from such controversies.
He specifically instructed Titus on a procedure for handling such matters, making it clear that such behavior would not be tolerated.

VERSE 9:

Avoid the Foolish

These are Paul's final words to his son in the ministry, Titus. Like the consistent beating of a drum, Paul repeatedly challenges those at Crete to maintain sound doctrine AND good works. It is essential that a church protects and values its doctrinal and moral integrity. Those who would cause compromise in either area must be confronted and, if unrepentant, avoided. To do so is loving. Not to do so is to mistake sentimentality for love.

Victor Masters understood this well:

"Sentimentality is the love of man divorced from the love of truth.... It cloaks... hypocrisy & moral decay"

In verse 9, Paul now draws a contrast to v.8.

In other words, insist on good works but avoid what is foolish.

The word "avoid" could be translated "shun." It is a present imperative, a word of command, calling for constant and consistent vigilance.

Why must we avoid, shun, turn away from the kind of people who fit this description?

Two reasons given: **They are unprofitable & worthless.**

These kinds of persons are not to be debated but denounced and dismissed.

Dealing with aberrant theology is not the time for dialogue; it is the time for action—action that is quick and swift.

Nothing good comes from their attitude or their teachings. Avoiding them has as its goal bringing to light their error and their sin. It is redemptive and restorative. It is essential and not optional. The risks are too great. We must avoid the foolish.

Shun = "to turn oneself around, to purposely turn away from something or someone."

Titus, the other elders, and the congregations on Crete were to turn the other way from morally and spiritually destructive false teachers, who not only corrupted the churches but, by their sinful and sordid lifestyles, were a great hindrance to the credibility of the gospel.

QUOTE:

The effect of false teaching is explained in several New Testament passages. *It unsettles the soul* (Acts 15:24), *shipwrecks faith* (1 Tim. 1:19), *leads to blasphemy* (v. 20) and to *the ruin of the hearers* (2 Tim. 2:14), *produces ungodliness* (v. 16), and *spreads "like gangrene"* (v. 17).

Foolish is from *mōros*, from which comes *moron*

"If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about

words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain" ([1 Tim. 6:3-5](#)).

False teachers in the church invariably distort and contradict Scripture, replacing it with novel insights, ideas & notions that confuse and mislead God's people and undercut their trust in God's revealed truth.

The danger of false doctrine is made all the worse because, appealing to the natural man, it finds ready acceptance among unbelievers and even among worldly, self-centered Christians who are poorly grounded in the Word.

Once a false teacher is exposed, he is to be rejected by the church and given no platform to spread his spiritually cancerous and destructive falsehoods. He is not to be debated but denounced and expelled
(cf. [2 Cor. 6:14-18](#)).

Unlike believers, who accept the authority of Scripture and discuss its meaning, Paul is here referring to discussion with false teachers, who have no desire to accept divine truth.

Paul warned Titus to avoid people who like to argue about the unimportant things of the faith.

I have learned that professed Christians who like to argue about the Bible are usually covering up some sin in their lives, are very insecure, and are usually unhappy at work or at home.

"How many angels can sit on the head of a pin?" We are to avoid foolish questions that have no bearing on life.

Theological debates do not help the Christian mature or draw lost men to God.

VERSE 10:

Reject the Divisive

Refusing to enter into unnecessary theological wranglings does not mean doing nothing. As the stakes rise, so must the response.

If at any point the evidence of genuine repentance comes forth, the process of discipline stops, and the ministry of restoration begins.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw the crucial nature of this when he wrote:

"Nothing can be more cruel than that leniency which abandons others to sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than that severe reprimand which calls another Christian in one's community back from the path of sin" (*Life Together*, 105).

1. They Must Be Disciplined ([Titus 3:10](#))

"Reject" is another present imperative. The NIV translates it as "warn." The Greek word for "divisive" gives us our English word "heretic." However, its first-century meaning referred to "a person who is quarrelsome and stirs up factions through erroneous opinions, a man who is determined to go his own way and so forms parties and factions" (Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, 75).

Paul's instructions are clear: Warn him once; warn him twice. If there is no repentance, then he must be rejected.

Peter said of them: "Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned" ([2 Pet. 2:2](#)).

Throughout church history, those who "will not endure sound doctrine" have been plentiful. "Wanting to have their ears tickled, they... accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and... turn away their ears from the truth, and... turn aside to myths" ([2 Tim. 4:3-4](#)).

Factious = the placing of self-willed opinions above the truth

The factious person will not submit to the Word or to godly leaders in the church. He is a law to himself and has no concern for spiritual truth or unity.

Because the consequences of insubordination, non-submission, and bickering can be so destructive of unity among the Lord's people, the apostle commands that a factious man, or woman, as the case may be, should be rejected by the church if they do not heed a first and second warning.

The issues themselves may be trivial, but arguing about them is not.

"I urge you, brethren," Paul warned believers in Rome, "keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting" (Rom. 16:17-18).

Speaking of false teachers and others who were **factious**, **Paul commanded the church at Thessalonica:**

"If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter"—which, even at that early time in the life of the church, carried the weight of Scripture—"take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

Church discipline should always be given in a way that is loving, nonjudgmental, remedial, restorative, and redemptive. It should be administered in humility,

"with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth" ([2 Tim. 2:25](#)).

It is sad that men and women in evangelical churches who teach ideas that are utterly foreign to Scripture often are not only not disciplined but are instead praised and given opportunity for promulgating their aberrations.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

the "heretic." This word means "one who makes a choice, a person who causes divisions." This is a self-willed person who thinks he is right, and who goes from person to person in the church, forcing people to make a choice. "Are you for *me* or for the pastor?" This is a work of the flesh (see [Gal. 5:20](#)).

How do we apply this in a local church? Let me suggest one way. If a church member goes about trying to get a following, and then gets angry and leaves the church, let him go. If he comes back (maybe the other churches don't want him either), and if he shows a repentant attitude, receive him back. If he repeats this behavior (and they

usually do), receive him back the second time. But if he does it a third time, do not receive him back into the fellowship of the church (Titus 3:10). Why not? "Such a man is warped in character, keeps on sinning, and has condemned himself" (Titus 3:11, literal translation). If more churches would follow this principle, we would have fewer "church tramps" who cause problems in various churches.

- Bible Exposition Commentary

Paul described a false teacher as a “divisive person” (*hairetikon*). The terms *heresy* and *heretic* are derived from this Greek word.

Paul even included “factions” as one of “the deeds of the flesh” ([Gal 5:20](#)).

“divisive” indicates the destructive nature of those promoting error among believers (cf. [1:11](#)). Divisions within the church result in believers who are confused, frustrated, angry, and hurt. They become ineffective in ministering to one another and to a lost world in desperate need of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the “good works” characteristic of genuine Christians.

VERSE 11:

2. They Can Be Dangerous ([Titus 3:11](#))

Why must habitual, public, serious, unrepentant sinners be disciplined? Because they are dangerous.

"Perverted" or "warped" is in the perfect tense and means twisted, turned inside out. "Sins" is in the present tense. Here is a man living life upside down and inside out. This is his settled state, heart, and mind. It is his continuous habit of life. God forbid that we who love this person would stand by and do nothing!

3. They Are Destructive ([Titus 3:11](#))

Sin is destructive. It damages and destroys. What it can do to a community of believers is serious. What it does to the sinner enslaved by its addiction is tragic.

When the Greek word *autokatakritos* is broken down into its parts it means "to judge down on oneself," hence to be "self-condemned."

In action and attitude the sinner is without excuse, passing judgment on himself. Oh, he may not see it, for he is warped, twisted, self-deceived. He may even

attempt to use Scripture to justify his sin. Often he will claim the leading of the Spirit and sometimes even the providence of God. There are times when he may even say, "My head tells me this is wrong, but my heart tells me it was never more right."

With grief, humility, self-examination, and a broken heart, we must confront him and, if necessary, shun and reject him.

Following Paul's directive in [1 Corinthians 5:1-13](#), we must turn him over to Satan with a hope and prayer that the discipline of the heavenly Father ([Heb 12:5-13](#)) will bring him to brokenness and repentance and that he will give evidence he is indeed God's child after all.

We have our duty. God has His
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Paul's instructions to Titus were direct and specific.

The (indication – JDP) assumption is that a failure to respond to two warnings is a clear sign that the offender is warped and sinful, and self-condemned.

Paul's thought here is similar to the Lord's instructions ([Matt. 18:15-17](#))

- The Bible Knowledge Commentary

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When the church cannot agree on the essentials of Christianity and is characterized by conflict and divisions, it is displeasing to God and ineffective to a lost world.

- New American Commentary

it is easy to talk about the contents of the Bible rather than teach them.

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God reminds us that there are a lot of people hungry for the Word; so move on to them. Don't get bogged down with the hardhearted.

This paragraph of Titus started with "This is a faithful saying."

We can confidently commit ourselves to the ways and purposes of God. We must not be dragged into contentions, strife, and disharmony. Rather, we are to move forward, serving God in a manner that is encouraging and helpful to those around us.

- Titus: Patterns for Christian Living.

Church Discipline: A Missing Essential in the Life of the Contemporary Church

([Titus 3:9-15](#))

Main Idea: We must practice church discipline in submission to the Word of God.

- I. Avoid the Foolish ([3:9](#)).
 - A. They are unwise.
 - B. They are unprofitable.
- II. Reject the Divisive ([3:10-11](#)).
 - A. They must be disciplined.
 - B. They can be dangerous.
 - C. They are destructive.
- III. Follow the Leader ([3:12-13](#)).
 - A. Listen to their advice.
 - B. Lend your assistance.
- IV. Maintain Good Works ([3:14](#)).
 - A. Good works must not be neglected.
 - B. Good works must meet needs.
- V. Enlist the Faithful ([3:15](#)).
 - A. Express the love we share.
 - B. Pray for the grace we need.

The New Testament has a great deal to say about church discipline. Jesus addresses it in [Matthew 18:15-20](#), and Paul does so repeatedly in texts like [Romans 16:17-18](#); [1 Corinthians 5:1-13](#); [2](#)

Corinthians 2:5-11; 13:1-3; Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12; and here in Titus 3:9-15.

This fact alone makes it all the more remarkable that no aspect of church life in our day is more neglected than this one.

Indeed, the contemporary church's disregard for this clear teaching of Holy Scripture is perhaps its greatest visible act of disobedience to our Lord. This rebellion is not without significant consequences.

John L. Dagg rightly notes,
*"When discipline leaves a church,
Christ goes with it"*
(*Church Order*, 274).

For Baptists this is striking when you consider that we have historically viewed church discipline as an essential mark, "the third mark," of the church, right alongside the Word rightly preached and the ordinances properly administered.

Al Mohler notes that a disciplined church as an essential mark of the church goes back at least to the Belgic Confession of 1561 ("Church Discipline," fn. 2, 26-27). One can also find the roots of this missing jewel of church life in the earliest Anabaptist confession, *The Schleitheim Confession of 1527* and its Article 2 on "the Ban" (Akin, "Expositional Analysis").

And **yet, none of Southern Baptists' most recent confessions—*The Baptist Faith and Message 1925, 1963, and 2000*—has a statement on this biblical teaching!**

Greg Wills notes that church discipline began to wane in Southern Baptist life in the 1870s and rapidly decreased thereafter, and "by the 1930's it was quite rare—most reported exclusions were merely the cleaning of church rolls of names of members long inactive and forgotten" ("Southern Baptist," 9-10). Of course today we seldom do even this. Even those who have expired and left this world for the world to come find it difficult, if not impossible, to have their names removed from the church roll!

How did we get here? How did we get to a place where the "people of the book" exercise such a blatant act of disobedience to a clear command of Christ and a crucial component of church life?

Certainly there have been abuses of the practice, though even the memory of this is so far removed from our own day that I seriously doubt one of us can point to a single example. No, **we have been seduced in a far more insidious fashion.**

This subtle slide away from biblical faithfulness can be seen in both practical and spiritual aspects. The effects spread throughout the whole church, but the problem finds its origin at the top, with the leadership, with the pastors.

First, we have lost our theological nerve, the courage to confront as well as comfort, to admonish as well as exhort. Out of fear of offending, we have slunk away into the false security of silence.

Second, we have been overcome by moral compromise. Our churches look and act so much like the world we would hardly know where to begin if we did restore church discipline.

Third, we are simply and sadly biblically illiterate. Lay this deficiency at the feet of preachers who have jettisoned an expository model of preaching and thereby allowed us to avoid and neglect the hard doctrines of Scripture like church discipline.

Fourth, practical expediency and, I might add, personal ambition have played all-too-important roles. A bigger membership means greater bragging rights. It affords a more attractive platform to make the move to a larger and more influential pulpit or denominational post.

I wish I did not believe that there was any merit to this particular observation. However, too many conversations with too many ministers make the case unavoidable.

Where then do we turn for an answer, a solution, a cure to this critical condition in which we find Christ's church? Surely the answer must be found in returning to God's Word, which gives us the model that provides a way out and the way forward.

While [Titus 3:9-15](#) is not a text deemed as one of the major Scriptures on church discipline, it does provide a foundation for a general treatment of this issue as well as specific counsel for particular situations that demand the practice of this necessary and lost treasure of the church. **Here Paul provides five principles by which the body of Christ is to conduct the practice of church discipline.**

Avoid the Foolish

Avoid the Foolish

Titus 3:9

These are Paul's final words to his son in the ministry, Titus. Like the consistent beating of a drum, Paul repeatedly challenges those at Crete to maintain sound doctrine and good works. It is essential that a church protects and values its doctrinal and moral integrity. Those who would cause compromise in either area must be confronted and, if unrepentant, avoided. To do so is loving. Not to do so is to mistake sentimentality for love.

Victor Masters understood this well:

"Sentimentality is an enemy of church discipline. Sentimentality is the love of man divorced from the love of truth.... It cloaks a big lot of hypocrisy and moral decay"

(Wills, "Southern Baptist," 9-10).

Paul once more warns against the false teachers at Crete, particularly their "unprofitable and worthless" deeds. In [3:1-8](#),

Paul charges Titus to "insist" that God's people be devoted to good works since they are good and profitable for everyone.

In [verse 9](#), Paul now draws a contrast.

He says, "But avoid foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law." **In other words, insist on good works but avoid what is foolish.**

The word "avoid" could be translated "shun." It is a present imperative, a word of command, calling for constant and consistent vigilance.

Why must we avoid, shun, turn away from the kind of people who fit this description?

**Two reasons are given:
"They are unprofitable and worthless."**

They Are Unwise

Paul describes these troublemakers first as those who engage in "foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law." He says these things are "worthless." **They are unwise and not worth your time.** In his context the troublemakers were Judiazers who added both to the words of Scripture and to the work of our Savior. They debated theological minutiae, created fanciful allegories and mythologies based on biblical genealogies, and added works to the doctrine of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Thinking of themselves as the theological elite, spiritual know-it-alls, they tore up and would continue to tear up "whole households" (1:11) if left unchecked.

These kinds of persons are not to be debated but denounced and dismissed.

Dealing with aberrant theology is not the time for dialogue; it is the time for action—action that is quick and swift.

But there is a second reason we must avoid the foolish.

They Are Unprofitable

Going beyond Scripture, adding to the work of Christ, advocating a "Jesus plus" and a "faith plus" and a "Word plus" theological agenda, these false teachers are "unprofitable."

Nothing good comes from their attitude or their teachings. Avoiding them has as its goal bringing to light their error and their sin. It is redemptive and restorative. It is essential and not optional. The risks are too great. We must avoid the foolish.

Reject the Divisive

Reject the Divisive

[Titus 3:10-11](#)

Refusing to enter into unnecessary theological wranglings does not mean doing nothing. As the stakes rise, so must the response.

Paul here, in essence, summarizes the teachings of Jesus on church discipline found in [Matthew 18:15-20](#).

Note carefully the sin we confront: it is public, habitual, serious, and lacking repentance. We are not called to be spiritual garbage inspectors or theological peeping Toms.

When we become aware of a sinning brother or sister, we go to them first individually, second with witnesses, and finally with the whole fellowship being involved if there is no repentance. If at any point the evidence of genuine repentance comes forth, the process of discipline stops, and the ministry of restoration begins. (Let me add that restoration to fellowship does not entail restoration to leadership. God's standard for the latter is higher than His standard for the former.)

The ministry of church discipline is mandatory if we are to be faithful to our head, who is Christ. We do it for the sake of the body and for the sake of the sinning brother.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw the crucial nature of this when he wrote:

"Nothing can be more cruel than that leniency which abandons others to sin.

Nothing can be more compassionate than that severe reprimand which calls another Christian in one's community back from the path of sin" (*Life Together*, 105).

Paul makes 3 helpful observations concerning the divisive.

1. They Must Be Disciplined ([Titus 3:10](#))

"Reject" is another present imperative. The NIV translates it as "warn." The Greek word for "divisive" gives us our English word "heretic." However, its first-century meaning referred to "a person who is quarrelsome and stirs up factions through erroneous opinions, a man who is determined to go his own way and so forms parties and factions" (Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, 75).

This is the man who, as John MacArthur says, "is a law unto himself and has no concern for spiritual truth or unity" (*Titus*, 164).

Paul's instructions are clear: Warn him once; warn him twice. If there is no repentance, then he must be rejected.

Dealing with such an individual in this manner has pastoral benefits. It will keep the issue on the level of principle and not personality.

Personality battles result when we delay in taking action and are perceived to be showing favoritism. This is always a lose-lose scenario and must be avoided. We must move quickly in the initial stage when the sin is discovered. We may extend the "grace of patience" as we seek the repentance of the one living in sin. However, we must be clear, above board, and timely. We cannot go once and then walk away as if all is forgiven if there is no change.

Vigilance and steadfastness are required, all the while keeping [Galatians 6:1-2](#) before our mind's eye:

"Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you also won't be tempted. Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

2. They Can Be Dangerous ([Titus 3:11](#))

Why must habitual, public, serious, unrepentant sinners be disciplined? Because they are dangerous.

Paul says such a person is "perverted and sins." "**Perverted**" or "**warped**" is in the perfect tense and means twisted, turned inside out. "**Sins**" is in the present tense. Here is a man living life upside down and inside out. This is his settled state, heart, and mind. It is his continuous habit of life. God forbid that we who love this person would stand by and do nothing!

3. They Are Destructive ([Titus 3:11](#))

Sin is destructive. It damages and destroys. What it can do to a community of believers is serious. What it does to the sinner enslaved by its addiction is tragic.

"Self-condemned" is an interesting word. Though I am well aware of the etymological fallacy, this is one instance when an etymological investigation proves insightful and fruitful.

When the Greek word *autokatakritos* is broken down into its parts it means "to judge down on oneself," hence to be "self-condemned."

In action and attitude the sinner is without excuse, passing judgment on himself. Oh, he may not see it, for he is warped, twisted, self-deceived. He may even attempt to use Scripture to justify his sin. Often he will claim the leading of the Spirit and sometimes even the providence of God. There are times when he may even say, "My head tells me this is wrong, but my heart tells me it was never more right."

With grief, humility, self-examination, and a broken heart, we must confront him and, if necessary, shun and reject him.

Following Paul's directive in [1 Corinthians 5:1-13](#), we must turn him over to Satan with a hope and prayer that the discipline of the heavenly Father ([Heb 12:5-13](#)) will bring him to brokenness and repentance and that he will give evidence he is indeed God's child after all.

*We have our duty.
God has His.*

- Christ-Centered Exposition

[Final Words About Controversies 3:9 -11](#)

AS IN [2:11-14](#) Paul's exhortation here has a negative as well as positive side. In contrast to this strong affirmation of doctrine and life, there are things to be avoided ([v. 9](#)). **The handling of controversies is an important matter in the Pastoral Letters (see [1 Tim. 1:4, 7; 6:4](#); [2 Tim. 2:23](#) and comments).** The reason given here for avoiding them is **that they are "unprofitable and useless."** In [2 Timothy 2:23](#) the reason is because stupid arguments produce quarrels,

which are contrary to the attitude a servant of the Lord should have in trying to win others. **Here in Titus the uselessness of controversy relates to its ineffectiveness in changing others.** Therefore, after a couple of warnings ([Titus 3:10](#)), Titus is to have "nothing to do" with that person.

The words "you may be sure" ([v. 11](#)) introduce the reason why this person should be rejected: the individual's own hopeless nature.

This does not mean that grace is never extended, for the person has already had a second chance ([v. 10](#); cf. [Matt. 18:15-17](#)).

It has been established that this "divisive person" cannot be redeemed. He is not only "warped and sinful," but he has also condemned himself, so the responsibility is not on Titus.

Warnings about divisive people—again.

A number of problems surface in the Pastoral Letters that we find difficult to understand today. These include "genealogies" and "quarrels about the law" ([Titus 3:9](#)). But the lasting principle is not the nature of these controversies (though that is sometimes important) but the fact that they breed controversy and arise from divisive intentions.

The point of [verses 9-11](#) is not so much to identify and correct wrong doctrine as it is to silence the divisive person.

Some churches have painfully come to the realization that a wrong-headed advocacy for truth can be as destructive as a sincerely held minor error. This is not to ignore the seriousness of heresy or the fact that the Pastorals are dealing with evil-minded heretics. But **this passage in particular has to do with those who are divisive in their intentions, "warped and sinful."**

We can gain some perspective on this by noticing that in [1 Corinthians 5:9-11](#), when Paul talks about the kinds of people with whom Christians must not associate in the church (e.g., the immoral, the greedy, idolaters, drunkards, and swindlers), he inserts the verbally abusive person (KJV "railer"; NRSV "reviler"; NIV "slanderer") into this list. **Every pastor knows the threat that such people can be to the life of the church.** Unfortunately, a pastor may tolerate such behavior, not facing it squarely until it is directed to the staff or perhaps directly to that pastor.

Dealing with the dark side. Every pastor dreads certain aspects of ministry. Grieving with those in the valley of death and those recently bereaved is often both a precious privilege and a heavy experience. But one of the most difficult tasks is working with church leaders in the confrontation of strong-headed divisiveness (v. 10). This sometimes occurs low key, gradually grinding away at love and unity. But sometimes it is open to the view of the whole community.

A 1998 segment on the CBS TV program *48 Hours* focused on the conflict between a gospel-preaching minister and a fundamentalist preacher who was having an affair with the evangelist's wife. The hiring of a hit man (who was actually an undercover agent) to kill the fundamentalist resulted in the imprisonment of the other minister. What impressed this viewer (along with sadness and embarrassment) was the intransigence of the adversaries and the apparent disregard by allegedly Christian ministers of the very theme we have been observing in the Pastorals: sound doctrine blended with godly living before the outside community.

Intransigence can characterize any-one—from heretic to minister. The godly pastor must face such people with all the wisdom, patience, and boldness described in verses 9-11. Freedom from heresy does not mean freedom from controversy. How a church and its pastors handle this may affect the church's witness for years to come.

The controversies and divisiveness that call for strong action on the part of Christian leaders (vv. 9-10) require a rare blend of humility and authority, of love and uncompromising admonition.

The stronger the reputation of a church and its leaders for expansive love, integrity, and civility in demeanor, the more effective will be their vigorous insistence on doctrinal purity.

If Jesus had had a reputation as a hard-liner devoid of compassion, his resolute opposition to error and sin would have seemed more like the outburst of a pathological faultfinder than the justified outrage of a holy prophet and compassionate Savior.

- NIV Application Commentary

But shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. (3:9-11)

God's plan of salvation calls for strong churches that proclaim and live the reality of the transforming gospel so that it is attractive to the lost.

Such testimony is built on sanctified relationships.

As noted in the [Introduction, chapter 1](#) of Titus deals with the relationship of believers in the church with the Lord of the

church, as exemplified by its leadership. [Chapter 2](#) deals with believers' relationships with each other, and the first half of [chapter 3](#) deals with the relationship of believers with the unregenerate society in which they live. In the last half of [chapter 3](#), the end of the letter, Paul gives what might be called "The last word on relationships," which emphasizes the relationship of church leaders with each other.

When a person has an important conversation or correspondence with a friend or counselor, the most personal, and sometimes the most urgent, concerns are mentioned last. That seems to be true in this epistle. In his closing words, Paul mentions four distinct and important categories of personal relationships within the church that are of special importance: relationships with false teachers, with factious people, with fellow servants, and with faithful friends.

False Teachers

But shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless. ([3:9](#))

Believers on the island of Crete had been overexposed to a large number of men who claimed to represent the Lord, to be His servants, and to teach His Word. In reality, however, they were spiritually corrupt and were enemies of the Lord, His Word, and His church. Those men had generated so much confusion that Paul

had admonished Titus to "set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city... [who would hold] fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that [they] may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict," namely, the "many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain" (1:5, 9-11).

Titus faced a large ("many," 1:10) and formidable group of leaders in the Cretan churches who were deluding believers about central truths of the gospel. The most influential and dangerous were Jewish legalists, "those of the circumcision" (v. 10), who promoted "Jewish myths and commandments of men" (v. 14). They were not even honest false teachers, because their primary motive was not to instruct, even in falsehood, but rather to earn "sordid gain." Nevertheless, **they were causing great damage to the cause of Christ and were to be refuted (v. 9), silenced (v. 11), and reproved (v. 13).**

They professed "to know God," Paul explained, "but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed" (v. 16).

Like those about whom the apostle warned Timothy, these false teachers held "to a form of godliness, although they [had] denied its power" ([2 Tim. 3:5](#)).

They were not disobedient believers; they were not believers at all, as evidenced by the fact that they espoused ungodly doctrines and lived ungodly lives.

They were to be ejected from the churches immediately.

Paul himself had been dogged by judaizing false teachers and leaders throughout his ministry and was well aware both of their danger and their persistence. One of his encounters with them had involved Titus. Some years earlier, accompanied by Barnabas and Titus, Paul had gone to Jerusalem to explain his Gentile ministry to Jewish Christian leaders there. In his letter to the churches of Galatia, he explains that, contrary to the demands of the Judaizers, "not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised" ([Gal. 2:3](#)). "It was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage," he goes on to say. "But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you" ([vv. 4-5](#)).

At the end of that epistle he comments further about "those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh [and] try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ" ([6:12](#)).

Shun translates a form of the verb *periistēmi*, which in the middle voice, as here, means "**to turn oneself around, to purposely turn away from something or someone.**"

Titus, the other elders, and the congregations on Crete were to turn the other way from morally and spiritually destructive false teachers, who not only corrupted the churches but, by their sinful and sordid lifestyles, were a great hindrance to the credibility of the gospel.

QUOTE:

The effect of false teaching is explained in several New Testament passages. It unsettles the soul ([Acts 15:24](#)), shipwrecks faith ([1 Tim. 1:19](#)), leads to blasphemy ([v. 20](#)) and to the ruin of the hearers ([2 Tim. 2:14](#)), produces ungodliness ([v. 16](#)), and spreads "like gangrene" ([v. 17](#)).

In this single verse Paul mentions four specific categories of errors these false teachers were espousing: **foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law.**

Foolish is from *mōros*, from which comes *moron*

controversies is from *zētēsis*, which has **the basic sense of searching or investigating but came to be used for discussion or debate, especially that which was controversial and contentious.**

In Paul's letters *zētēsis* always has a negative connotation and is used in warnings—similar to the one given here—about Christians becoming involved in futile arguments about matters of philosophy, or even theology, that are based on human reason and imagination rather than God's Word. Paul uses it three times in his words to Timothy. At the beginning of his first letter, the apostle admonishes that other young elder to "instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere *speculation* rather than furthering the administration of God" and which **inevitably result in "fruitless discussion"** (**1 Tim. 1:3-6**, emphasis added). Near the end of that

letter he repeats the warning: "**If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in *controversial questions* and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain**" ([1 Tim. 6:3-5](#)).

In his second letter, **Paul further exhorts Timothy:** "**But refuse foolish and ignorant *speculations*, knowing that they produce quarrels**" ([2 Tim. 2:23](#)).

False teachers in the church invariably distort and contradict Scripture, replacing it with novel insights, ideas, and notions that confuse and mislead God's people and undercut their trust in God's revealed truth.

The danger of false doctrine is made all the worse because, appealing to the natural man, it finds ready acceptance among unbelievers and even among worldly, self-centered Christians who are poorly grounded in the Word.

It is for that reason that Paul instructs Timothy to "be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,... [and will] spread like gangrene" ([2 Tim. 2:15-17](#)).

Once a false teacher is exposed, he is to be rejected by the church and given no platform to spread his spiritually cancerous and destructive falsehoods. He is not to be debated but denounced and expelled
(cf. [2 Cor. 6:14-18](#)).

One wonders how many hours and years and lifetimes of Christians have been lost to genuine teaching of God's Word and to effective evangelism and discipling because of time wasted with **foolish controversies**. Although false doctrines themselves certainly are foolish, Paul's point here is that wasting time discussing them is a seriously foolish **behavior** for God's people to be involved in.

Equally worthless for believers is becoming involved in interpretations of **genealogies**. Paul was not, of course, belittling the many **genealogies** that are found in both the New and Old Testaments. Those **genealogies** were critical for determining the God-given lineage of the priesthood, the kings of Judah and Israel, and even the Messiah. Matthew's gospel opens with "the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham...." ([Matt. 1:1](#); cf. [vv. 2-17](#)). Paul's warning to Titus concerned rather the many fanciful and allegorical interpretations of such **genealogies** that had fascinated many Jews for centuries.

The fourth-century church historian Eusebius reported that when the apostles died, a conspiracy of godless error arose through deceptive false teachers, who arrogantly propagated their insidious lies in opposition to God's Word. It is obvious from Paul's counsel to Timothy and Titus that those godless errors were a serious threat to the church even before all of the apostles were gone.

A third kind of error that Christians on Crete faced is simply referred to as **strife**, a general term that carries the ideas of all kinds of self-centered rivalry and contentiousness about the truth.

Because the early church included so many converted Jews, a fourth common error involved **disputes about the Mosaic Law**. Paul refers to that problem in his letter to the Galatian churches. "Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised," he warned, "simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh" ([Gal. 6:12-13](#); cf. [1 Tim. 1:6-7](#)).

The Council of Jerusalem was called for the specific purpose of dealing with Judaizers, including "certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, [and who said], 'It is necessary to circumcise them [Gentiles], and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses'" ([Acts 15:5](#)). The first speaker at the council was Peter, who ended his comments with the question, "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we [Jews] are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they [Gentiles] also are" ([vv. 10-11](#)). After Paul, Barnabas, and others had spoken, James, the moderator of the council and probably the half-brother of Jesus (see [Acts 12:17; 21:18](#)), closed the meeting with the words, "It is my judgment that we do not trouble [with circumcision and observance of the Mosaic Law] those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles" ([v. 19](#)).

For believers who recognize the authority of the apostles and of God's Word, **disputes about the Law** of Moses and its relation to Christians were permanently settled at that time.

Things such as Paul mentions in this verse are to be shunned because they **are unprofitable and worthless**. Arguing theology, doctrine, or morality with those who distort or disregard God's Word is unavoidably fruitless.

Unlike believers, who accept the authority of Scripture and discuss its meaning, Paul is here referring to discussion with false teachers, who have no desire to accept divine truth.

False teachers are themselves taken in by "deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" ([1 Tim. 4:1](#)). Unfortunately, however, they seem never to lack for disciples.

Peter said of them: "Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned" ([2 Pet. 2:2](#)).

Throughout church history, those who "will not endure sound doctrine" have been plentiful. "Wanting to have their ears tickled, they... accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and... turn away their ears from the truth, and... turn aside to myths" ([2 Tim. 4:3-4](#)).

Factious People

Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. ([3:10-11](#))

*Just as we are to shun the ungodly, fruitless, and corrupting endeavors mentioned in [verse 9](#), we are to **reject a factious man**.*

Reject is from *paraiteomi*, which is also translated, "have nothing to do with" ([1 Tim. 4:7](#)) and "refuse" ([2 Tim. 2:23](#)). In the first case Paul is referring to "worldly fables fit only for old women" and in the second to "foolish and ignorant speculations that... produce quarrels."

Factious is from *hairetikos*, from which *heretic* is derived.

The original word simply meant "to choose," but eventually the term came to signify **the placing of self-willed opinions above the truth**, refusing even to consider views contrary to one's own. In its noun form, it is associated with such serious "deeds of the flesh" as "immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, *factions*, envying, drunkenness, carousing" ([Gal. 5:19-21](#), emphasis added).

The factious person will not submit to the Word or to godly leaders in the church. He is a law to himself and has no concern for spiritual truth or unity.

Although false teachers certainly are the most devastatingly **factious**, Paul is here casting a broader net, which includes *anyone* in the church who is divisive and disruptive.

Because the consequences of insubordination, nonsubmission, and bickering can be so destructive of unity among the Lord's people, the apostle commands that a **factious man**, or woman, as the case may be, should be rejected by the church if they do not heed a **first and second warning**.

The issues themselves may be trivial, but arguing about them is not.

The apostle's harsh words apply not only to heretics and apostates but to anyone who is **factious**.

"I urge you, brethren," Paul warned believers in Rome, "keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting" ([Rom. 16:17-18](#)).

Speaking of false teachers and others who were **factious**, Paul commanded the church at Thessalonica:

"If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter"—which, even at that early time in the life of the church, carried the weight of Scripture—"take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" ([2 Thess. 3:14-15](#)).

Church discipline should always be given in a way that is loving, nonjudgmental, remedial, restorative, and redemptive. It should be administered in humility, "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth" ([2 Tim. 2:25](#)).

Unity in divine truth and in spiritual fellowship is imperative for effective evangelism. It is testimony to the world, Jesus said, that "Thou [the Father] didst send Me... [and] didst love Me." Shortly before that prayer, in what is often called the Upper Room Discourse ([John 13:1-16:33](#)), the Lord told the Twelve, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" ([13:35](#)).

Genuine, godly love is the binding force of genuine spiritual unity and is an integral, divinely ordained part of our testimony before the world. "We, who are many," Paul declares, "are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" ([Rom. 12:5](#)).

In his letter to believers in Ephesus, the apostle sets forth the same basic truth in different words: "**T**here is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" ([Eph. 4:4-6](#)).

Paul goes on to explain that God's plan for apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers is "for the equipping of the

saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to *the unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" ([vv. 11-13](#), emphasis added).

Perhaps Paul's most comprehensive teaching about the nature and importance of genuine unity in the church is found in his first letter to the church in Corinth, which was confused and fractured by false doctrine, personal animosities, and factionalism.

"*I exhort you, brethren,*" he said,

by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ... Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.... For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ([1 Cor. 1:10-13](#); [10:16-17](#); [12:12](#))

Paul's last words to that quarrelsome, problem-ridden church were, "Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11).

To a believer who is well grounded in the Word, the errors and sinfulness of factious and divisive people in the church should be obvious, **knowing that** a person who persists in quarreling over foolish ideas **is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.**

Perverted translates *ekstrepheō*, which has the meaning of **"turning inside out, or twisting."**

The factious person, who is twisted by his constant **sinning**, will manifest his wicked condition by his own words and actions, thereby becoming **self-condemned.**

It is sad that men and women in evangelical churches who teach ideas that are utterly foreign to Scripture often are not only not disciplined but are instead praised and given opportunity for promulgating their aberrations.

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Titus.

Problem People (Titus 3:9-11)

We wish we did not have "problem people" in our churches; but wherever there are people, there can be problems. In this case,

Paul warned Titus to avoid people who like to argue about the unimportant things of the faith.

I recall being approached by a young man after a Bible lesson and getting involved with him in all sorts of hypothetical questions of doctrine.

"Now, if this were true... if that were true..." was about all he could say. I was very inexperienced at the time; I should have ignored him in a gracious way. **As it was, I missed the opportunity to talk with several sincere people who had personal problems and wanted help.**

I have learned that professed Christians who like to argue about the Bible are usually covering up some sin in their lives, are very insecure, and are usually unhappy at work or at home.

But there is another kind of problem person we should deal with:

the "heretic." This word means "**one who makes a choice, a person who causes divisions.**" This is a self-willed person who thinks he is right, and who goes from person to person in the church, forcing people to make a choice. "**Are you for me or for the pastor?**" This is a work of **the flesh** (see [Gal. 5:20](#)).

How do we apply this in a local church? Let me suggest one way. If a church member goes about trying to get a following, and then gets angry and leaves the church, let him go. If he comes back (maybe the other churches don't want him either), and if he shows a repentant attitude, receive him back. If he repeats this behavior (and they usually do), receive him back the second time. But if he does it a third time, do not receive him back into the fellowship of the church ([Titus 3:10](#)). Why not? "Such a man is warped in character, keeps on sinning, and has condemned himself" ([Titus 3:11](#), literal translation). If more churches would follow this principle, we would have fewer "church tramps" who cause problems in various churches.

- Bible Exposition Commentary

Final Warning Concerning False Teaching and Division

3:9 Having offered an eloquent theological summary of the gospel and its inherent motivation to profitable good works, Paul again warned Titus concerning the “unprofitable” works of the false teachers.

The adversative conjunction “but” (*de*) marks the contrast between correct theological teaching and its “profitable” results and false teaching and its “unprofitable” results.

Paul’s warning to “avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because they are unprofitable and useless” recalls Paul’s previous instructions to Titus in [1:10–11, 13–16](#).

Some differences appear in Paul’s instructions to Titus concerning dealing with false teachers in [1:10–16](#) and those instructions described in [3:9–11](#).

In the first chapter Titus was exhorted to “rebuke them sharply,” with the purpose of correcting and restoring them to “sound doctrine.” This heresy of the Judaizers clearly threatened the very heart of the gospel, the true nature of salvation itself.

However, in this present warning Titus was to “avoid” divisive discussions or debates. He was to have nothing to do with them if restoration failed after a second warning. Although the issues described appear to be more peripheral and esoteric in [3:9](#), they certainly suggest a Jewish perspective and mind-set.

Whether Paul’s description of these issues in [3:9–11](#) is a direct amplification of the false teaching in [1:10–16](#) is uncertain.

Even if these errors are less significant in terms of diluting the central issue of salvation, **Paul recognized the long-range damage and division within the church resulting from such controversies. He specifically instructed Titus on a procedure for handling such matters, making it clear that such behavior would not be tolerated.**

Paul evidently prescribed different action for different problems (cf. [2 Tim 2:24–26](#)).

The verbal similarities with [1 Tim 1:4](#) (genealogies), [1 Tim 6:4](#) (controversies and quarrels), [2 Tim 2:16](#) (avoid), and [2 Tim 2:23](#) (foolish and stupid arguments) all occur in the context of dealing with false teaching. This suggests that similar, if not identical, false doctrines were common during this period.

The reference to “the law” (i.e., the Mosaic law) establishes the Jewish nature of the false teaching (see comments on [1:10](#), [14–16](#)). These “foolish” matters concerning the minutia of the Mosaic law and its Jewish interpretations were divisive (producing “arguments and quarrels”) and were “unprofitable” and “useless” (“worthless,” author’s translation). P. Fairbairn best describes the false teaching as “utterly wanting in the practical element which so remarkably characterizes the true doctrine of the gospel.”

3:10 Concerning those persons who promote false teaching, Paul commanded that Titus “warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.” **Paul described a false teacher as a “divisive person” (*hairetikon*). The terms *heresy* and *heretic* are derived from this Greek word.** Although this adjective appears only here in the New Testament, the noun form *hairesis* refers to sects within Judaism ([Acts 5:17](#); [15:5](#); [24:5](#), [14](#); [28:22](#)) and factions or parties within the church ([1 Cor 11:19](#)).

Paul even included “factions” as one of “the deeds of the flesh” ([Gal 5:20](#)).

While Paul stood squarely against false teaching (1:13; 2:15), his use of the term “**divisive**” indicates the destructive nature of those promoting error among believers (cf. 1:11). Divisions within the church result in believers who are confused, frustrated, angry, and hurt. They become ineffective in ministering to one another and to a lost world in desperate need of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the “good works” characteristic of genuine Christians.

Reminiscent of Jesus’ teaching ([Matt 18:15–17](#)), Paul required personal confrontation characterized by patience (i.e., two warnings). If this failed, Paul allowed no hesitation in “having nothing to do with him” (lit. “reject” him).

Hiebert aptly sums up the reasonableness of this rejection by stating, “**Further efforts would not be a good stewardship of his time and energies and would give the offender an undeserved sense of importance.**”

3:11 Paul concluded, “You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; **he is self-condemned.**”

Because the “factious man” refused to change, Titus could “be sure” (lit. “knowing,” *eidos*) of three things concerning this person:

First, he was “warped.” This term renders the verb *ekstrepho*, used here in the perfect tense, passive mood. Literally, **it means *he has been* (perfect passive) *and remains off the track.***

Second, he was “sinful,” literally “*he continues to sin*” (*hamartanei*, present tense). And

Third, because he willfully continued in his sin, “he is self-condemned.” Paul’s use of the rare term “self-condemned” (*autokatakritos*) suggests that having refused correction, the factious person actually participates in his own condemnation since he is without excuse.

Summary. **The significance of refuting false teaching in this letter is indicated by Paul’s direct attack on factious men at the beginning of the letter (1:10ff.) and now at its conclusion (3:9–11).**

His outstanding theological statements ([1:1-4](#); [2:11-15](#); [3:3-7](#)) provide the “sound doctrine” that motivates believers to “good works” and makes the gospel “attractive” to a lost world.

In contrast, the false teachers with their erroneous teaching motivate their followers to works that in essence “deny” a true knowledge of God ([1:16](#)) and destroy the doctrinal unity of the church.

When the church cannot agree on the essentials of Christianity and is characterized by conflict and divisions, it is displeasing to God and ineffective to a lost world.

- New American Commentary

Behavior inconsistent with grace ([3:9-11](#))

[3:9](#). If sound teaching is profitable for everyone, **foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the Law... are unprofitable and useless.** This is a repeated theme in the Pastorals (cf. [1 Tim. 1:4](#); [6:4](#); [2 Tim. 2:23](#); [Titus 1:14](#)). Titus was to **avoid** (lit., "turn away from") such things.

3:10-11. As to the people who are advocating these useless things and thereby exerting a divisive and otherwise destructive influence in the church (cf. [1:11](#)), **Paul's instructions to Titus were direct and specific.** He was to give such a person two warnings. If that did not work, he was to **have nothing to do with him.**

The (indication –_{JDP}) **assumption is that a failure to respond to two warnings is a clear sign that the offender is warped and sinful, and self-condemned.**

Paul's thought here is similar to the Lord's instructions ([Matt. 18:15-17](#)), when He taught that after giving an offender three chances to repent, he is then to be cut off (but cf. [2 Thes. 3:14-15](#)).

- The Bible Knowledge Commentary

People to Avoid

Paul isn't just expressing his opinions. He instructs Titus to *stress* these teachings—to insist on them ([3:8](#)). They are not only excellent and profitable for anyone who heeds them, they are also trustworthy. Even after salvation, those who want to experience the abundant life that God offers must be careful to devote themselves to doing good. God makes all things possible, but believers must be disciplined and willing.

It is easy to get caught up in various forms of foolishness and nonproductive activity. Paul mentions a few potential problems to Titus.

Those in the Greek culture were prone to intellectual debate. While there is nothing wrong with verbal interaction per se, it could become problematic when applied to scripture.

It is relatively easy to speculate on theological or philosophical what-ifs while ignoring the clear and straightforward truths of God's revealed Word... it is easy to talk about the contents of the Bible rather than teach them.

The Jewish culture could also get off track when it came to teaching scripture. Throughout the centuries, rabbis had added myths and legends to the inspired scriptures, frequently based on the same characters. Genealogies of key figures were sometimes doctored to make Jewish heroes appear more impressive. Other teachers could nitpick for hours about, for example, what was or was not appropriate on the Sabbath.

These were the kinds of things Titus was to insist be avoided.

A primary purpose of scripture is to inspire believers to act on what they know to be true.

Intellectual pursuits have their place, but they are not to replace loving actions among those in the church as well as toward those outside.

Titus is given a mandate to put an end to such time-wasting controversies and the authority to deal with anyone who would not respond. Those who were being divisive were to receive two clear warnings. If they still did not heed the authority of the church, they were to be cut off from fellowship ([3:9-10](#)).

There will frequently be those attempting to influence the church who are not of God and are unwilling to receive instruction or correction. Church leaders must be willing to deal with such people directly and quickly. It isn't the leader or the church that condemns the troublemaker; it is the person himself. ([3:11](#))

- Layman's Bible Commentary

[3:9-11 The Problem Restated: False Teachers.](#) Paul returns to the problem of false teachers. Thus, the discussion of gospel living ([2:1-3:8](#)) is flanked by discussion of those who claim to believe this gospel but fail to live it out.

[3:9 But.](#) The reference to the usefulness of correct doctrine in [v. 8](#) sets up the contrast with the **worthless** nature of the false teaching. As elsewhere in the letters to Timothy and Titus, the exact content of the false teaching is not clear. The point is that it is **foolish, unprofitable, and worthless**.

[3:10-11 Have nothing more to do with him](#) describes the final stage of church discipline (see also [1 Corinthians 5](#)). A divisive person who refuses to repent and change after being confronted (see [Matt. 18:15-20](#)) shows himself to be twisted by sin (**warped**); thus, he is **self-condemned**. The NT is clear about seeking the repentance of such people, but it is equally clear that refusal to receive rebuke eventually shows that one is not in Christ and must be excluded from the Christian community.

- ESV Study Bible

We are also to "avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" ([3:9](#)). The word "**"foolish" is moros**". We get our word "**"moron"** from it.

"How many angels can sit on the head of a pin?" We are to avoid foolish questions that have no bearing on life.

Further, we are to avoid genealogies. One of the Jews' favorite studies was to trace their ancestors back and see if they came from the "right" line. It does not really matter what our earthly lineage is, or what our background may be. We do not go to heaven or gain spiritual maturity because of our background, but on the basis of our own personal faith in Jesus Christ.

We are to avoid "contentions." This could be translated "strife." **It never honors God when his people argue among themselves.**

Then too, we are to avoid "strivings about the law." The Pharisees' favorite pastime seemed to be to think up new ways to interpret or apply the Old Testament law. They had many requirements for things they were to do and not to do, adding literally hundreds of man-made traditions to the commands of Scripture.

Arguments about the law are "unprofitable." No one ever grows through them. They don't lead to maturity or progress. Legalists are just treading water, not going forward in the Christian life.

Such arguments are also "vain" or fruitless. No one ever gets saved as a result of them.

Theological debates do not help the Christian mature or draw lost men to God.

Now we are told to reject a person who is a heretic, a person who perverts spiritual truth. The heretic is contentious, critical, and schismatic. We are to warn him once, then twice, and after that leave him alone.

Certainly we are to endeavor to be reconciled with others. But we reach a point where, according to the Scripture, we are to leave them alone.

God reminds us that there are a lot of people hungry for the Word; so move on to them.

Don't get bogged down with the
hardhearted.

AN ACCUSATION

Notice the arraignment or accusation in [v.11](#).

The reason we should leave the heretic alone is clear: "Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

The heretic is "subverted," or twisted inside out. He is so warped and twisted in his mind and heart that it is useless to reason with him or try to counsel him. He doesn't want to hear.

He "sinneth"; that is, he is wicked and rebellious against God's purposes.

Third, he is "being condemned of himself."

The contentious person, the schismatic, always factious, always trying to bring disharmony, is his own worst enemy. If we give him enough rope, he will hang himself.

This paragraph of Titus started with "This is a faithful saying."

We can confidently commit ourselves to the ways and purposes of God. We must not be dragged into contentions, strife, and disharmony.

Rather, we are to move forward, serving God in a manner that is encouraging and helpful to those around us.

- Titus: Patterns for Christian Living.

FOOL, FOOLISHNESS, AND FOLLY

Translations of several uncomplimentary words which appear approximately 360 times throughout the Old and New Testaments to describe unwise and ungodly people. The words are especially predominant in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. **Persons who do not possess wisdom are called “fools”; their behavior is described as “folly.”** The picture which emerges from the biblical material is quite simple: folly is the opposite of wisdom, and a fool is the opposite of a wise person. Both wisdom and folly are depicted as philosophies or perspectives on life. The religious person chooses wisdom, whereas the non-religious person opts for folly. Wisdom leads to victory; folly to defeat. Wisdom belongs to those who fear God, and the “fear” of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7). Wisdom is the essence of life. The foolish person is the one who is thoughtless, self-centered, and obviously indifferent to God.

Old Testament Usage Seven different Hebrew words are usually translated by the single English word, “folly.” Some of the shades of meaning suggested by these various words include: a) deliberate sinfulness; b) simple-mindedness; c) malicious simple-mindedness; and d) brutal or subhuman activity. In examining the literature of

the Old Testament, one gains a deeper appreciation for these various shades of meaning.

The fool may be the one who is aloof. He “foldeth his hands” (Eccl. 4:5a). This aloofness is also described in terms of the farmers who “follow worthless pursuits” instead of tending to the farm ([Prov. 12:11b NRSV](#)).

In other passages the fool is described as the one who denies that God exists: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” ([Ps. 14:1](#)). Foolish behavior is also characterized by an inability to recognize the true character of God. Job chastised his wife for behaving as the foolish do when she denied the steadfast love of God ([Job 2:10](#)).

The simple-minded fool is encouraged to change in Proverbs 9:4-6: “Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she [Wisdom] saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.” But the fool may be the one who is intentionally perverse. Nabal and Saul represent this kind of intentional and malicious folly toward David ([1 Sam. 25:25; 26:21](#)).

Since numerous examples of foolishness can be found in the Old Testament, additional references provide a more complete perspective: [Job 2:10; 30:8; 42:8; Psalm 53:1](#);

[Proverbs 17:7-21](#); [Isaiah 9:17](#); [Jeremiah 4:22](#). The various shades of meaning related to the Old Testament words, all translated “foolishness” in the English versions, provide a background picture for the New Testament usage of “fool” and “folly.”

New Testament Usage The contrasting elements of wisdom and folly evident in the Old Testament were clearly in the mind of Paul when he asked, “hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” ([1 Cor. 1:20b](#)). However, in the New Testament, this polarity between wisdom and folly is not always stressed. In fact, it is possible that a certain kind of wisdom can actually be folly. In [Matthew 7:26; 25:2,3](#); [Romans 2:20](#) “folly” is used synonymously with “experiential wisdom.” Wisdom based only on human intellect and experiences without considering God is folly.

In [Matthew 23:17](#), folly is equated with blindness. The characteristics of folly include thoughtlessness, the pursuit of unbridled aspirations, and a life-style characterized by envy, greed, and pride.

Foolishness is also described in paradoxical terms in the New Testament. In [1 Corinthians 1-3](#), the incarnation is portrayed as “foolishness,” but it is precisely this kind of perceived “foolishness” which is better than worldly wisdom. Our understanding of this paradoxical relationship affects the manner in which

Christ is proclaimed ([1 Cor. 1:18-2:5](#)). We must rely on God's gift and power of proclamation not on human powers and wisdom. The writer of Matthew records Jesus stating that "whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" ([5:22b](#)). See [***Wisdom***](#).

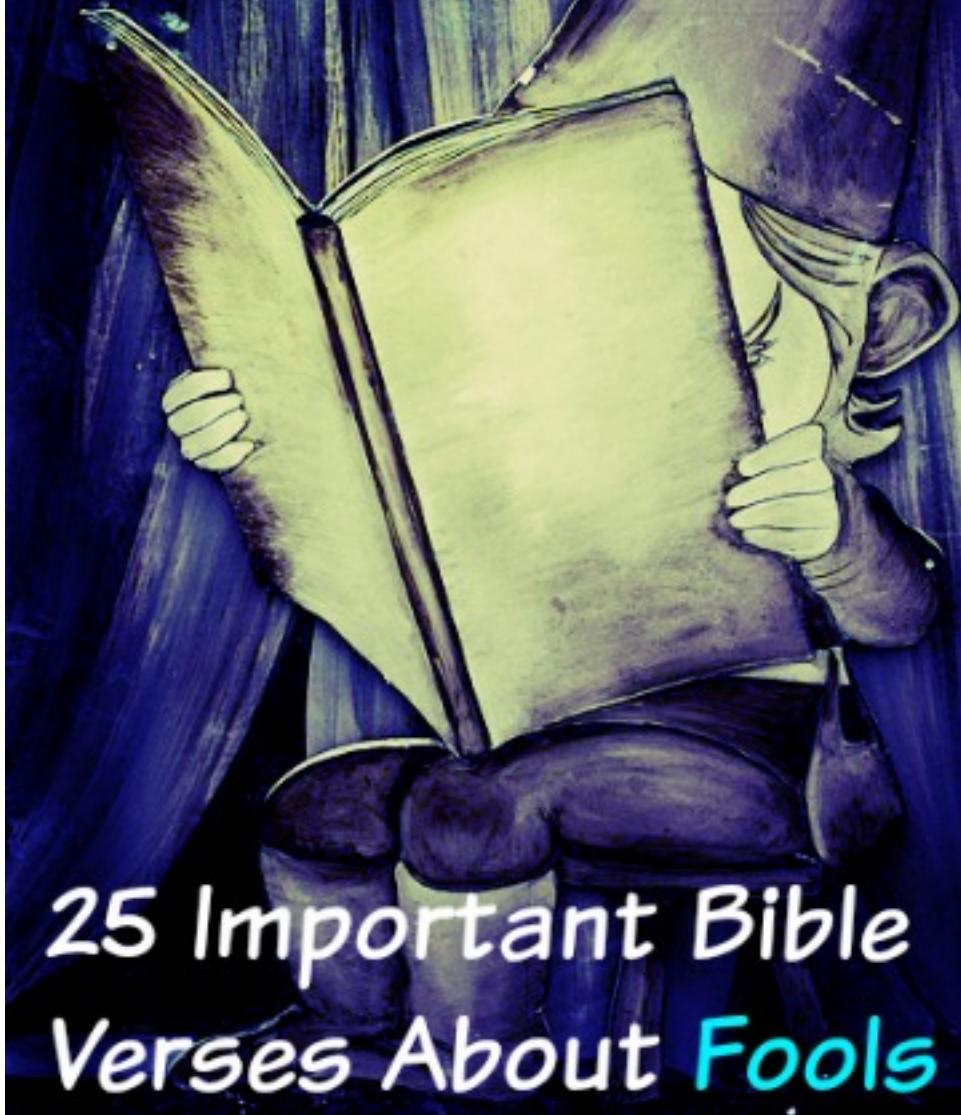
Kenneth Craig; Holman Bible Dictionary.

Bible verses about fools

A fool is someone who is unwise, lacks sense, and lacks judgement. Fools don't want to learn the truth. [They laugh](#) at the truth and turn their eyes away from the truth. Fools are wise in their own eyes failing to take in wisdom and advice, which will be their downfall. They suppress the truth by their unrighteousness.

**Any fool can know. The
point is to understand.**

Albert Einstein



25 Important Bible Verses About Fools

They have wickedness in their hearts, they are lazy, proud, they slander others, and live in repeat foolishness. Living in sin is fun for a

fool.

It's not wise to desire their company because they will lead you down a dark path. Fools rush into danger without wise preparation and thinking about the consequences.

Scripture keeps people from being foolish, but sadly fools despise the Word of God.

Quotes

“A wise man may look ridiculous in the company of fools.” Thomas Fuller

“Many have been the wise speeches of fools, though not so many as the foolish speeches of wise men.” Thomas Fuller

Wise men speak because they have something to say; Fools because they have to say something. Plato

Teaching them

1. Proverbs 18:2-3 Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their

own opinions. Doing wrong leads to disgrace, and scandalous behavior brings contempt.

2. Proverbs 1:5-7 Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. Let those with understanding receive guidance by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables, the words of the wise and their riddles. Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, **but fools despise wisdom and discipline.**

3. Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: **but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.**

The mouth of a fool.

4. Proverbs 10:18-19 He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

5. Proverbs 12:22-23 Lying lips are abomination

to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight. A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.

6. Proverbs 18:13 Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish.

7. Proverbs 29:20 There is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks without thinking.

8. Isaiah 32:6 For the fool speaks folly, and his heart is busy with iniquity, to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the LORD, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied, and to deprive the thirsty of drink.

9. Proverbs 18:6-7 Fools' words get them into constant quarrels; they are asking for a beating. The mouths of fools are their ruin; they trap themselves with their lips.

They continue in their foolishness.

10. Proverbs 26:11 As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness.

Arguing with them

11. Proverbs 29:8-9 Mockers can get a whole town agitated, but the wise will calm anger. If a wise person takes a fool to court, there will be ranting and ridicule but no satisfaction.
12. Proverbs 26:4-5 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him. **Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.**

Trusting them

13. Proverbs 26:6-7 **Taking a fool to convey a message is like cutting off one's feet** or drinking poison! A proverb in the mouth of a fool is as useless as a paralyzed leg.
14. Luke 6:39 Then Jesus gave the following illustration: "**Can one blind person lead another?** Won't they both fall into a ditch?

The difference between an intelligent man and a fool.

15. Proverbs 10:23-25 Doing wrong is fun for a fool, but living wisely brings pleasure to the sensible. Doing wrong is fun for a fool, but living wisely brings pleasure to the sensible. When the storms of life come, the wicked are whirled away, but the godly have a lasting foundation.

16. Proverbs 15:21 Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

17. Proverbs 14:8-10 The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception. Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.

18. Ecclesiastes 10:1-3 As dead flies cause even a bottle of perfume to stink, so a little foolishness spoils great wisdom and honor. A wise person chooses the right road; a fool takes the wrong one. You can identify fools just by the way they walk down the street!

Fools say there is no God.

19. Psalm 14:1 For the choir director: A psalm of David. **Only fools say in their hearts, “There is no God.”** They are corrupt, and their actions are evil; not one of them does good!

20. Psalm 53:1 1 The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none who does good.

21. Psalm 74:18 Remember this, O LORD, that the enemy has reviled, And a foolish people has spurned Your name.

Reminder

23. Proverbs 28:26 **Those who trust in themselves are fools**, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.

24. Proverbs 29:11 **Fools vent their anger**, but the wise quietly hold it back.

Titus 3:9-11 (NASB)

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

¹⁰ Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,

¹¹ knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

Titus 3:9-11 (ESV)

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

¹⁰ As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him,

¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

No Peace on Earth for THIS Lady!

Publication Information: "Police: Motorist Tried To Run Over Ex As He Put Up Lights," by CBS/AP, published Philadelphia CBS Affiliate KDKA, Channel 3, December 7, 2016

Publication Source: [Click here to view source](#)

ILLUSTRATION

CBS Affiliate KDKA Channel 3, Philadelphia, reports of an unusual Christmas disturbance.

Local resident Alan McCutcheon was busy putting up his Christmas lights on his home, when suddenly his ex-girlfriend, Mary Jo Smith, came barreling through his yard in her car. She made several tours through the yard screaming "Merry Christmas," all the while Christmas carols blasted from her cranked radio through her open windows. At one point, she even took aim (thankfully, unsuccessfully) to run McCutcheon over.

"She proceeded to do a pretty significant amount of damage to the outside of the residence," Stefani Lucas with Pennsylvania State Police told CBS Pittsburgh. "The Christmas decorations were damaged, the vehicle was damaged, property was damaged, the home itself [was damaged]," Lucas said.

So much for "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men!"



APPLICATION

When we consider the crazy stuff that happens every day, in and out of the holiday season, we understand why the heavenly host of angels didn't announce "Peace on earth to **EVERYONE!**" but rather, "On earth, peace to those on whom God's favor [grace] rests."

Peace isn't found in exacting revenge! Rather, peace is

found in a PERSON--Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Savior and Prince of Peace.

When we recognize that our sin separates us from God and from each other; when we recognize that we are incapable of pleasing a perfectly holy God with our half-hearted efforts; and when we recognize that God knew this and sent His Son to bear the death penalty for our sin, so His Father could declare us righteous, forgiven and free to forgive others--THEN, and only then, can we find that peace for ourselves. It's a gift we must receive and then we can share it.

Maybe as she awaits trial, Mary Jo Smith can find time to ponder the words of the Christmas music her car stereo blared as her spinning wheels tore up Mr. McCutcheon's yard.

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"
(Romans 5:1).

v.9

“BUT”

- Creates relational connection to 3:8
- Contrast is coming...
 - Insist on “these things”
 - BUT... “avoid _____”

“avoid”

- Intentionally stay away from...
- Exert effort NOT to engage in...
- Overtones of an “imperative warning”
- See the principle of “opportunity costs”
- Relate: “insist,” “avoid,” & “invest”

“foolish controversies”

- “foolish”
- “controversies”

“dissensions”

- **“*stife*”**
- **strife**, a general term that carries the ideas of all kinds of self-centered rivalry and contentiousness about the truth. (J.Mac)
-

“and disputes about the law”

“for” (because)

“they are unprofitable” (vs. 3:8 “profitable”)

“and (they are) worthless”

“Reject” / “have nothing to do with”

"Reject" is another present imperative. The NIV translates it as "warn." The Greek word for "divisive" gives us our English word "heretic." However, its first-century meaning referred to "a person who is quarrelsome and stirs up factions through erroneous opinions, a man who is determined to go his own way and so forms parties and factions" (Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, 75).

Reject. παραιτού. This word is rendered *excuse* in [Luke 14:18,19](#); *refuse*, [Acts 25:11](#), [1 Timothy 4:7](#), [5:11](#), [Hebrews 12:25](#) *avoid*, [2 Timothy 2:23](#); and *entreated*, [Hebrews 12:19](#). Its prevailing meaning, as used in connections like the one before us, is, to reject *in relation to an office*; that is, to decline appointing one to an office. It probably had a primary reference to that here, and meant that **a man who was given to making dissensions, or who was a factious person, should not be admitted to an office in the church. The general direction would also include this—that he should not be admitted to**

the church. He is neither to be owned as a member, nor admitted to office.

Comp. Matthew 18:17: "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

In regard to this passage, then, we may observe,

(1.) that the utmost limit which this allows is mere exclusion. It does not allow us to follow the offender with injury.

(2.) It does not authorize us to oppose one on account of his mere private opinions. The essential idea is that of a *factious, division-making man*; a man who aims to form sects and parties, whether on account of opinions, or from any other cause.

(3.) It does not make it right to deliver such a man over to the "secular arm," or to harm him in body, soul, property, or reputation. It gives no power to torture him on the rack, or with thumb-screws, or to bind him to the stake. It authorizes us *not* to recognise him as a Christian brother, or to admit him to an office in the church—but beyond this it gives us no right to go. **He has**

a right to his own opinion still, so far as we are concerned, and we are not to molest him in the enjoyment of that right.

(4.) It demands that, when a man is undoubtedly a heretic in the sense here explained, there should be the utmost kindness towards him, in order if possible to reclaim him. We should not *begin* by attacking and denouncing his opinions; or by formally arraigning him; or by blazoning his name abroad as a heretic; but he is to be dealt with in all Christian kindness and brotherly fidelity. **He is to be admonished more than once by those who have the right to admonish him; and then, and then only, if he does not repent, he is to be simply avoided.** That is to be an end of the matter so far as we are concerned. **The power of the church there ceases.**

The church has no power to deliver him over to any one else for persecution or punishment, or in any way to meddle with him. He may live where he pleases; pursue his own plans; entertain his own opinions or company, provided he does not interfere with us; and though we have a right to examine the opinions

which he may entertain, yet our work with him is done. If these principles had been observed, what scenes of bloody and cruel persecution in the church would have been avoided!

(*) "heretic" "a factious man"

(*) "reject" [Matthew 18:17](#)

- Barnes' Notes on the N.T.

"*a factious man*"
"*one who stirs up division*"

The true notion of the word is that of one who is a promoter of a sect or party. The man who makes divisions in a church, instead of aiming to promote unity, is the one who is intended. Such a man may form sects and parties on some points of doctrine on which he differs from others, or on some custom, religious rite, or peculiar practice; he may make some unimportant matter a ground of distinction from his brethren, and may refuse to have fellowship with them, and endeavour to get up a new organization. Such a man,

according to the Scripture usage, is a *heretic*, and not merely one who holds a different doctrine from that which is regarded as orthodoxy. The spirit of the doctrine here is the same as in Romans 16:17, and the same class of persons is referred to. "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have received; and avoid them." Romans 16:17. The word here used is defined by Robinson, (Lex.,) "one who creates dissensions, introduces errors-a factious person." It is not found in classic Greek, but often in ecclesiastical writers. See Suicer's Thesau.

- Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.

“after”

After the first and second admonition. Comp. Matthew 18:15-17. That is, do not do it hastily and rashly. Give him an opportunity to explain himself, and to repent and abandon his course. No man is to be cut off without giving him a proper opportunity to vindicate his conduct, and to repent if he has done wrong. If, after the first and second admonition, a man, who is undoubtedly doing wrong, will not repent, then he is to be cut off. The apostle does not say in what way this admonition is to be given, or whether it should be public or private. The language which he uses would justify

either, and the method which is to be adopted is doubtless to be determined by circumstances. The thing which is to be reached is, that his fault is to be fairly set before his mind.

- Barnes' Notes on the N.T.

“a first & second warning”

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 (ESV)

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.

² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

³ For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.

⁴ When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you

really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?

¹³ God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

v.11

“knowing”

“that such a person”

“is warped/perverted”

Knowing that he that is such is subverted. Literally, *is turned out; or, is changed*, i.e., for the worse. He has gone from the right way, and therefore he should be rejected.

- Barnes' Notes on the N.T.

“(is) sinning/sinful”

“and is self-condemned”

And sinneth, being condemned of himself. **His own conscience condemns him.** He will approve the sentence, for **he knows that he is wrong**; and his self-condemnation will be punishment sufficient. **His own course, in attempting a division or schism in the church, shows him that it is right that he should be separated from the communion of Christians.**

*He that attempts to rend the church,
without a good reason, should himself be
separated from it.*

(*) "condemned of himself" "self-condemned"

- Barnes' Notes on the N.T.