

“Relationships”

Titus 3:12-15

December 25, 2016

VIDEO: **“Jesus Is The Light”**

INTRO:

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY the "yours truly" of Paul's letter to Titus. The churches on Crete, where Titus was serving, had faced oppression by unbelievers and infiltration by false teachers. Now Paul closed his letter with some very personal, practical matters.

REVIEW:

A.	God's	Word	(ch.1)	TRUTH
B.	God's	Work	(ch.2 – 3:8)	LOVE
C.	God's	Wisdom	(3:9)	WARFARE
D.	God's	Worship	(3:10)	WARFARE
E.	God's	Witness	(3:11)	WARFARE

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. - John MacArthur Commentary

¹² *When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.*

- Paul the sent one is sending others...
- See the flow of discipleship...
- Note the sacrificial & relational love...
- See the discipleship dynamics:
 - Sr. & Jr. discipleship relationship!
 - Both disciples able to replace Titus
 - Acts 1:8 discipleship!

VIDEO: *“How Discipleship Works”*

¹³ *Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing.*

- Our best is always expected by God!
- Zenas & Apollos
 - Likely delivered this letter to Titus
 - Another Sr. & Jr. partnership (2X2)
- *“see that they lack nothing”*
 - Requires prioritizing “mission”
 - Requires sacrificial love

God has ministered to us through others! Now we have many opportunities to provide for their needs, and we are to do it gladly from our hearts. We are not to force them to be beggars. It is our privilege to provide for their needs.

VIDEO: **“Cute Kids”** (Samaritan’s Purse)

- *“see that they lack nothing” = Lottie Moon!*

¹⁴ And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

- *“let our people learn”*
 - *“our people” = faith family!*
 - *“learn” = discipleship!*

VIDEO: **“Stickman Discipleship”**

- “learn to devote themselves”
- “devote themselves to good works”
 - “these things”
 - The Great Commission
 - Crete
 - Nicopolis
 - Local, Regional, Global!

"Learn" is another present imperative and is related to our word for discipleship.

"Devote" or maintain speaks of a consistent pattern or a lifestyle of good works.

In v. 14 the Greek phrase rendered “doing what is good” (“doing good works,” *kalōn ergōn proistasthai*) is identical to Paul’s insistence in v. 8 that Christians “be careful to devote themselves to doing *what is good*”

"Good works" is a reoccurring theme throughout this short letter. The phrase occurs six times in a letter that is only 46 verses, driving home the point that though we are not saved by faith plus works, we are saved by a faith that does work (Eph 2:8-10; Titus 3:5).

- “to help cases of urgent need”
 - Little boy hearing video
 - Blind sisters in India
 - Spiritually blind, deaf, & DEAD!

VIDEO: *“IMB Mission Experience”*

- “and NOT be unfruitful”
 - Discipleship = fruitfulness
 - Discipleship prevents unfruitfulness!
 -

¹⁵ All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

This final verse is a farewell statement from friends to friends.

It is all encompassing. The word "all" is used twice, at the beginning and the end of the verse.

***Love and grace:** Those whose lives are characterized by these twin towers of the Christian life are the persons qualified*

- “All who are with me” = missional faith family!
- “send greetings to you”
- SHARE THE LOVE with those who love us...
- Note the filtering out of the liars...
- Remind the family that we are a family!

VIDEO: *“IMB Thank-You!”*

We are saved and we serve by the grace of God.

Let's Pray

“Relationships”

Titus 3:12-15

December 25, 2016

The Blessed Bond of Love

"When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen" (3:12-15).

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY the "yours truly" of Paul's letter to Titus. The churches on Crete, where Titus was serving, had faced oppression by unbelievers and infiltration by false teachers. Now Paul closed his letter with some very personal, practical matters.

The Apostle **Paul** planned to spend the winter in Nicopolis and **was sending this message by Artemas or Tychicus.**

Titus was to meet him in Nicopolis and provide for his needs there. It is obvious that Paul's friendship with Titus went very deep.

Paul mentioned Zenas the lawyer, the only time a lawyer is mentioned by name in the Bible.

There may have been some legal things required and **Zenas ministered to Paul in that way, just as Luke the physician ministered to him medically.**

Apollos, also to be brought to Nicopolis, was a bright young preacher and teacher.

We may look at this paragraph and feel it has very little to do with us today. However, **there are three very significant and practical things in these verses for us.**

GRATITUDE

"Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them" (3:13).

The Apostle **Paul was saying, "You Christians in Crete be sure to send them on their journey lacking nothing." Their gratitude to God for the ministry of these men would lead them to make provision for them.**

In God's Word there is strong emphasis upon taking care of those who give us spiritual leadership. We cannot even casually read through the New Testament without being aware of this responsibility. In fact, **we are told that we should take care of those who minister to us out of gratitude to God.**

It is God who has called them, sent them out, given them a message, and helped them minister to our hearts. In [1 Timothy 5:18](#), Paul quotes [Leviticus 19:13](#) and [Deuteronomy 24:15](#) — "the laborer is worthy of his reward." We should provide for the ones who minister to us graciously and joyfully.

God has ministered to us through others! Now we have many opportunities to provide for their needs, and we are to do it gladly from our hearts. We are not to force them to be beggars. It is our privilege to provide for their needs.

GENEROSITY

"And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses." Paul was simply declaring that we need to work very hard to pay our bills, but also to have enough to help someone else. This is the grace of generosity, the spirit that should be seen among the people of God so they can minister to those in need. We ought to maintain good works that are healthy, wholesome, and encouraging.

"Continue to love each other with true brotherly love. Don't forget to be kind to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! Don't forget about those in jail. Suffer with them as though you were there yourself. Share the sorrow of those being mistreated, for you know what they are going through" ([Hebrews 13:1-3](#), TLB).

We are to have compassion for one another. We are to develop the grace of generosity and hospitality. Earlier Paul declared that the bishop is to be a lover of hospitality. **We can tell a lot about our Christianity by how generous and gracious we are. Do we willingly share what God has entrusted to us?**

This does not mean that the church is to become a social welfare agency. But **there should be no Christian beggars.**

The churches in the first century were instructed to provide for the needs of the saints. When a Christian was hungry, they fed him. When a believer had no place to stay, they opened their homes to him. When a brother or sister had a need, they ministered to that need. Somehow we have lost something of that in our day. We must learn to make provision for each other's needs.

If we are generous, our works will not be unfruitful but will bear gracious, mature fruit.

GRACE

The last word of this epistle is the word for "grace."

God's wonderful, saving, and sustaining grace.

The grace of God was an amazement to Paul as he looked at his own life and considered that he was chief among all sinners. Yet God in his grace saved him and called him to preach the unsearchable riches of salvation.

God never chooses any of us except by his grace. No man preaches because he is good, effective, or talented. He preaches by the grace of God. None of us serves in a position of responsibility in the church or assumes a place of spiritual responsibility because we are talented or deserving, but because of the grace of God.

We are saved and we serve by the grace of God.

Paul said three things in this final verse.

"All that are with me salute thee." That means to wish well, to say "God bless you," "go with God," "we are wishing you well and praying for you." It was this spirit of greeting that they sent.

It is a warm spirit of prayer that is suspended from the heart of one group of people to the heart of another. We should build that kind of spirit among God's people. We are so competitive among the churches of our communities that we lose sight of such gracious, compassionate concern for the welfare of others.

We are to "greet them that love us in the faith." Most of us would be impossible to love any other way. We are just not lovely or lovable. But **in the faith there is love, a love that transcends barriers. The love of God binds our hearts together.**

God's love can bridge ALL gaps!

The world desperately longs to observe God's people loving each other as they should. **The tie that binds our hearts together is an indescribable blessing and delight in the faith.**

Paul concluded by saying, "Grace be with you all." God's sustaining, ever-powerful grace is what we need.

The deeper the valley we walk, the more the grace of God is poured out on us. As we greet each other in love, God's grace will be with us.

- Titus: Patterns for Christian Living.

Farewells and Final Arrangements

Paul's plans in [verse 12](#) reveal a couple of things. First, he was free to travel, so his writing was taking place prior to his second Roman imprisonment. And second, Nicopolis, a city on the western coast of Greece, wasn't exactly an ideal place to spend the winter. However, it *was* a spot where numerous travelers from various places found themselves forced to stay due to the storm season on the Mediterranean. This fact suggests that Paul intentionally went where groups of people were so he could minister even while traveling was restricted.

Paul had worked with Tychicus ([3:12](#)) and spoke highly of him on numerous occasions ([Acts 20:4](#); [Ephesians 6:21](#); [Colossians 4:7](#)). Nothing more is said of Artemas in the Bible.

Apparently, Paul was sending one of these men to Crete to minister for a while, allowing Titus to take a break and meet him in Nicopolis.

Before leaving, however, Paul requests Titus's help for Apollos and Zenas, who were traveling through the area. **Scripture identifies Apollos ([3:13](#)) as a spiritually discerning and devoted church leader ([Acts 18:24-28](#); [1 Corinthians 1:12](#); [3:5](#)), but this is the Bible's only mention of Zenas.** His title of "lawyer" might have meant one of two things: If a Jewish reference, it would mean Zenas was trained in the law and had been a rabbi.

If a Gentile reference, it would suggest that he was a person of high standing in Rome who had converted to Christianity.

Although the culture of Crete had a propensity for laziness (1:12), Paul challenges the believers to provide for their daily necessities (3:14). This devotion to doing good could then be spread to people like Apollos and Zenas, who were doing God's work full-time and could benefit from the help of fellow Christians.

In closing, Paul does not identify who is with him, yet he sends everyone's greetings and prays for grace for Titus and all those with him (3:15).

Take It Home

In closing this section, Paul twice names pairs of ministers (3:12-13) where one was a prominent and proven leader and the other a relative unknown. This suggests a mentor-protégé relationship during spiritual training. Have you ever benefited from the wisdom and attention of a spiritual mentor? If so, have you passed along that wisdom to a younger Christian who is seeking maturity? **Spend a few minutes identifying people who might help you continue to grow spiritually as well as those who might appreciate your help in their own spiritual journey.**

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GREETINGS ([3:12-15](#))

[3:12.](#) As usual, Paul ended his letter with some personal allusions. Though it is not known where Paul was when he wrote this epistle, he was planning to winter at **Nicopolis** on the Adriatic coast of Greece. **Paul exhorted Titus to do his best to join him there as soon as Artemas or Tychicus arrived.** Evidently Paul intended to send one of the two to relieve Titus in Crete. Of Artemas nothing is known. (On Tychicus, see [comments](#) on [2 Tim. 4:12.](#))

[3:13.](#) Zenas the lawyer is mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament, and nothing is known about him, not even whether he was Jewish or Roman. But **Apollos** was a familiar fellow worker. **The apostle's instructions seem to suggest that both Zenas and Apollos were in Crete and that Titus was in a position to see that they have everything they need.** Servants of Christ who are called to travel from place to place have always received support from the churches (cf. [3 John 6-8](#)).

[3:14.](#) Paul had been stressing the need for good works, not to earn salvation but to serve others, and he pointedly reiterated it here.

He expressed the same thought to the Ephesian congregation ([Eph. 4:28](#)).

3:15. It is not known who was included in the phrase **everyone with me. Those who love us in the faith obviously excluded the false teachers who opposed Paul.**

The closing greeting, *grace be with you all*, is similar to that in both **1 and 2 Timothy.**

The plural word you indicates an awareness on Paul's part that he was addressing a broader audience than just Titus.

- The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Personal Directions and Closing Salutations

3:12 In accordance with his usual custom, Paul ended this letter with some personal directions, comments, and greetings. He first indicated future plans concerning both Titus and himself, stating: *“As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there.”* Although Paul was still undecided about whether to send Artemas or Tychicus to Titus in Crete, he was planning for Titus to join him in Nicopolis for the winter months. This is the only reference to Artemas in the New

Testament. It is likely that Tychicus referred to Paul's traveling companion ([Acts 20:4](#)), "dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord" (cf. [Eph 6:21](#); [Col 4:7](#)), and his personal representative to churches ([2 Tim 4:12](#)). **Either Artemas or Tychicus would be sent to Titus (*pros se*) presumably for the purpose of taking his place in Crete. Upon his replacement's arrival, Titus was directed to "do your best [i.e., "make every effort," NASB] to come to me at Nicopolis."**

Although Nicopolis ("city of victory") was not an uncommon city name in the ancient world, Paul probably referred to the Nicopolis in Epirus located on the Ambraciot Gulf of the Adriatic Sea.

The geographical location of this Nicopolis fits well as a place to "winter" and would be a natural starting point for Titus's subsequent trip to Dalmatia ([2 Tim. 4:10](#)).

Paul himself had not yet reached Nicopolis as indicated by his use of "there" (*ekei*). His assertion "I have decided to winter there" reveals that he was a free man, not imprisoned as he wrote. Concerning Paul's intention to winter in Nicopolis, Barrett observes: "It would be natural for Paul to confine his longer journeys to the summer, and to use the winter to consolidate work in an important centre; but it must be admitted that we have no definite evidence to prove that this was his regular practice, and [2 Cor 11:25f.](#) suggests that he took risks."

3:13 If Zenas and Apollos were presently on Crete (as seems likely), they probably delivered this letter to Titus.

This is the only reference to Zenas in the New Testament; however, the additional description “the lawyer” reveals a common Pauline literary trait (cf. “Luke, the doctor,” [Col 4:14](#); also [Rom 16:23](#); [2 Tim 4:14](#)). The term “lawyer” (*nomikon*) in this context indicates that Zenas was either an expert in Jewish law (e.g., [Matt 22:35](#); [Luke 7:30](#)) or perhaps a Roman civil jurist.

Undoubtedly, Apollos was the converted Alexandrian Jew known from [Acts 18–19](#) and 1 Corinthians.

Paul instructed Titus, “*Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way.*”

Using the same Greek verb *propempō* (“help send forward,” author’s translation), this appeal for Christian aid along the journey is found in [Acts 15:3](#); [21:5](#); [Rom 15:24](#); [1 Cor 16:6, 11](#); [2 Cor 1:16](#); and [3 John 6](#).

Titus was also to “*see that they have everything they need.*”

Supplying the needs of those who traveled from their homes to proclaim the gospel was a reasonable and evidently honored expectation among Christians.

Even though Paul specifically placed the obligation to help Zenas and Apollos upon Titus (“do everything *you* can to help,” author’s emphasis), his example of this good work should be a lesson to other Cretan Christians.

3:14 Paul continued, *“Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.”*

In v. 14 the Greek phrase rendered “doing what is good” (“doing good works,” *kalōn ergōn proistasthai*) is identical to Paul’s insistence in v. 8 that Christians “be careful to devote themselves to doing *what is good*” (i.e., *kalōn ergōn proistasthai*).

This particular opportunity to help Zenas and Apollos would be a concrete example of at least one kind of good work. The final phrase in this sentence, “in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives,” applies to their assisting others with pressing needs.

“Unproductive” is literally “unfruitful.”

3:15 Paul frequently extended greetings from himself and those Christians with him to recipients of his letters,

“Everyone with me sends you greetings” (cf. **1 Cor 16:19–21**; **2 Cor 13:12**; **Phil 4:22**; **2 Tim 4:21**).

His concluding greeting, “Greet those who love us in the faith,” may suggest Paul’s deliberate exclusion of those persons who resisted his apostolic teaching (i.e., those who obviously do *not* love us in the faith). The phrase “in the faith” is literally “in faith” (*en pistei*). It may mean *in the faith*, thus referring to a common belief, or it may simply mean *faithfully*.

The closing benediction, “Grace be with you all,” is a prayer for God’s grace to be realized in each believer’s life.

The use of the plural “you” in the phrase “you all” suggests that although this letter was designated for Titus (**1:4**), Paul expected it to be shared with the entire Cretan church.

- New American Commentary

[Titus 3:12-15](#)

AS SOON AS I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. ¹³Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. ¹⁴Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives. ¹⁵Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

Original Meaning

PAUL'S FINAL REMARKS in [verses 12-15](#) include personal requests ([vv. 12-13](#)), a reprise of the latter part of [3:8](#) (which repeats the emphasis on doing good, [v. 14](#)), and finally greetings and a benediction ([v. 15](#)).

The Pastoral Letters are full of personal instructions, but the closing allows for the kind of specific instructions contained in [Ephesians 6:21-22](#) and [Colossians 4:7-9](#).

In comparing the conclusions of the three Pastoral Letters, Fee sees 1 Timothy and Titus more "all business," with 2 Timothy

"more personal in every way." This is certainly true and reflects the nature of each of these letters.

Paul intends to send either Artemas or Tychicus to substitute for Titus ([Titus 3:12](#)), whom the apostle wants to meet him at Nicopolis.

This was a good place for Paul to go for the winter. It was on the western edge of Greece on the Adriatic Sea, a little over fifty miles south of the present border of Albania and Greece.

Nothing more is known about Artemas, though Tychicus is well known ([Acts 20:4](#); [Eph. 6:21](#); [Col. 4:7](#)).

Since we know from [2 Timothy 4:12](#) that Tychicus had gone to Ephesus (and by that time Titus had gone to Dalmatia, [4:10](#)), we can assume that Artemas was the one who continued the necessary work on Crete. At this time Paul was apparently still ministering in Macedonia ([1 Tim. 1:3](#)).

In [3:13](#) Titus is instructed to do all he can to help Zenas and Apollos on their way. There is some difference of opinion as to whether "Zenas the lawyer" was an expert in Jewish law or Roman law. It is unlikely that Paul would have cited him as an expert in the former, and given the importance of Roman law, to be an expert in that field would have been a distinction.

Apollos is well known in the New Testament ([Acts 18:24-19:1](#); [1 Cor. 1:12](#); [3:4-22](#); [16:12](#)).

Regarding the verb *propempo* ("to send someone on one's way"), in ancient times wandering preachers were supported in various ways, frequently begging or in other ways trying to raise money. Paul was determined not to do this, but preferred to work with his own hands to support himself ([1 Thess. 2:5-9](#)).

Early Christian evangelists depended on those in churches already established to provide for their needs rather than on those to whom they were preaching. When a servant of the Lord went from one place to another, Christians in the location of origin would provide something for their journey.

The word *propempo* originally meant to go partway along with someone as they started out their journey. It later came to signify providing for someone's needs (without actually starting out with them). This is especially important in [3 John 6](#), where it shows the contrast between Christian and non-Christian itinerant preachers. This meaning of *propempo* is supported by the words "and see that they have everything they need."

Verse 14 picks up the latter part of verse 8, repeating the same words in the same order: "*to devote themselves to doing what is good.*"

This means believers not only providing for themselves in order to avoid being a burden to others, but, it may be assumed, also being fruitful in providing for others.

The closing greetings of [verse 15](#) are warm and all-inclusive as both senders and recipients. The simple words "grace be with you all" conclude the letter—one final reminder of the saving grace of God.

Bridging Contexts

EVERYBODY LIKES STORIES about people. *Reader's Digest* discovered this fact many years ago. The popular books in Christian bookstores often are those that are full of illustrations about people.

The Gospels contain narratives and parables about people. Thus, one almost has a feeling of relief when, **after the heavy instruction in this letter to Titus, Paul also talks about people.**

This closing section stirs the imagination. We like to think about the busy apostle preparing for where he will spend the winter. Did he plan to take any time for vacation? We wonder what Zenas the lawyer was like and why he and Apollos were the special objects of Paul's loving care.

It is in this paragraph that we find Paul spelling out what it means to do good, that is, to "provide for daily necessities" (or "urgent needs," NRSV). We always like to read his greetings to friends ([v. 15](#)).

Every instruction about doctrine, every warning about heresy, and every encouragement to holiness and good works is

effective only as it is realized in the lives of real people. Surely one of the joys of heaven will be to meet first-century slaves and their masters, medieval peasants and their lords, pilgrims, business people from India, school teachers from the Czech Republic, and computer scientists from Asia—all testifying to the grace of the Lord in their lives.

The Christian's joy in any age is to bring the love of Christ to people.

Contemporary Significance

MOST MISSIONARY LETTERS and magazines today contain vivid pictures or descriptions of the people whom that particular mission or missionary is reaching for Christ. Christian agencies make pictorial appeals to provide Bibles for the Chinese, to send missionaries to the remaining unreached people groups, and to support orphans. All this is good and can be facilitated by contemporary means of production and communication. Charitable organizations, such as those caring for children in deprived areas, must be sure to channel all the money possible from the donations received to those in need.

The conclusion to Titus also reminds us of the people right around us, people like Zenas and Apollos, who need encouragement along the way. It serves as a reminder to make that phone call or send e-mail to brighten someone's day. All this may sound folksy and trite in a commentary but it was not trite to the great apostle Paul.

- NIV Application Commentary

Conclusion (Titus 3:12-15)

In the closing verses...

Paul conveyed some personal information to Titus, and reminded him of the main theme of the letter: **Insist that God's people "learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives" (Titus 3:14, NIV).**

We know nothing about Artemas...

Tychicus we met in [Acts 20:4](#). He was with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment and carried the epistles from Paul to the Ephesians ([Eph. 6:21](#)), the Colossians ([Col. 4:7-8](#)), and to Philemon (cf. [Col. 4:7-9](#) with [Phile. 10](#)).

Either Artemas or Tychicus would replace Titus on Crete, and then Titus was to join Paul at Nicopolis.

It is possible that Zenas and Apollos (see [Acts 18:24ff](#); [Titus 3:13](#)) carried this letter to Titus.

Paul had sent them on a mission and Titus was to aid them all he could.

Paul ended the letter to Titus with a variation of his usual benediction (see [2 Thes. 3:17-18](#)): "Grace be with you all."

*Grace—and good works!
They go together!*

- Bible Exposition Commentary

Fellow Servants

When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them. ([3:12-13](#))

Turning to the positive side, Paul moves from condemning false teachers to commending church leaders who were genuinely being used by the Lord and who blessed his own life.

In an especially personal word, Paul asked two favors of Titus—first, to visit him and second, to care for two fellow servants.

Paul did not know **when** he would **send** a replacement for Titus or whether it would be **Artemas or Tychicus**. We know nothing at all about **Artemas** and can only surmise that, because Paul obviously had confidence in his godliness and leadership ability, he was a faithful pastor and teacher who was well qualified to assume direction over the Cretan churches.

Tychicus is mentioned a number of times in the New Testament. He accompanied Paul on the missionary journey from Corinth to Asia Minor ([Acts 20:4](#)), delivered Paul's letter to the church in Colossae ([Col. 4:7](#)) and probably the one to Ephesus ([Eph. 6:21](#)). In the first of those two references...

Tychicus is called "our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord" and in the second "the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord." That remarkable man of God had earlier

been sent by Paul to replace Timothy in Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12). That he must have done a commendable job in Ephesus is clear from Paul's confidence in him to take over the much larger task of administering and dealing with the problems in the numerous churches on Crete.

There were perhaps as many as nine cities in New Testament times that were called Nicopolis, which means "city of victory," so named by various military conquerors to commemorate a decisive victory.

The **Nicopolis** where Paul planned to spend the winter was probably on the west coast of Achaia, the southern province of Greece, and founded by Octavian (the first Roman Emperor, later named Augustus) after his great victory over Marc Antony and Cleopatra at the battle of Atrium in 31 B.C.

Paul probably wrote this letter to Titus from somewhere in Macedonia (northern Greece), perhaps from Philippi. The apostle obviously was still free at this time, but it is likely that he was arrested in Nicopolis and taken to Rome for his last imprisonment. It also was from that city that Titus later traveled to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10), in the general area of modern Croatia and Serbia.

Before Titus left Crete to join Paul, he was asked to **diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them.** As with Artemas, we know nothing about **Zenas** apart from this brief mention, which identifies him as a **lawyer**. Whether he was a Roman litigator or a Jewish expert on the Mosaic Law we cannot tell. The fact that he had a Roman name means little in this regard, because many Jews of that day, including Paul, were given or had adopted Roman names. Also as with Artemas, we can safely assume that **Zenas** was a godly believer in whom the apostle had great confidence and for whom he had great love.

Apollos, on the other hand, is mentioned numerous times in the New Testament, always favorably. He was an eloquent Jewish preacher of the gospel from Alexandria, Egypt, who "was mighty in the Scriptures" and who "had been instructed in the way of the Lord," was "fervent in spirit,... speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, [but was] acquainted only with the baptism of John" ([Acts 18:24-25](#)). When he came to Ephesus and "began to speak out boldly in the synagogue,... Priscilla and Aquila heard him... [and] took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he helped greatly those who had believed through grace" ([vv. 26-27](#)).

Although **Apollos** had not yet visited Corinth by the time Paul wrote his first letter to the church there (see [1 Cor. 16:12](#)), apparently some of his converts had come to that city and formed one of the factions about which Paul lamented. "For I

have been informed concerning you, my brethren," he wrote, "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'" ([1 Cor. 1:11-12](#)).

Whenever **Zenas** and **Apollos** were to arrive on Crete and wherever they may have been headed as they passed through, Titus was urged to help them **on their way so that nothing is lacking for them**. They were cherished partners of Paul and faithful co-laborers in the work of the kingdom. Paul doubtless sensed that his time of freedom would soon end and that, if he lived to carry on the Lord's work at all, it would be from a prison cell. It was therefore all the more imperative that the men he had trained and left behind be encouraged and supported.

That spirit of mutual support and care should always characterize Christ's church, especially its spiritual leadership. Under the sovereign Lord, leaders are interdependent, called and commissioned to trust and assist one another as fellow servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faithful Friends

([3:14-15](#))

In closing, Paul gives a last word on faithful friends. Like Titus and the other elders on Crete, the people among whom they ministered were also [to] learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs.

It is not possible for a pastor, or even a team of pastors in a large church, to meet all of the many **pressing needs** of a congregation. Not only is there not enough time for one man to do it all, but other believers in the church invariably have spiritual gifts and abilities that the pastor does not have, by which certain **good deeds** can be accomplished and certain **pressing needs** of fellow believers can be met.

Beyond that, a harmonious, loving, and serving church also will be a beacon to the world, attracting unbelievers to the light of salvation through trust in Christ.

*Paul's final word for faithful friends is love for others **in the faith**. His final word to faithful friends is **Grace be with you all**.*

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

Follow the Leader

[Titus 3:12-13](#)

[Verses 12-15](#) are Paul's final words to Titus. However, their close proximity to [verses 9-11](#), as well as the instructions we find in them, should give us pause. Do the words we find here amplify Paul's teaching on church discipline while at the same providing a farewell message? I think they do, and the counsel we discover is pastorally helpful in guiding us through the delicate and difficult waters of church discipline.

Good, godly leadership is absolutely a must if a church is to carry out the ministry of loving confrontation. Such leadership must be in place and evident to the congregation. This leadership will be visible among the elders as well as to the laity. Church discipline is no place for a lone ranger. Going solo in this arena is suicidal. It is also unbiblical. Following the leader means there is a leader. It means establishing credibility and earning trust. When you have that, you can act decisively and courageously. How does God want a church to respond to its leadership?

Listen to Their Advice ([Titus 3:12](#))

In the midst of great challenge and controversy, Paul stepped forward and made important decisions—decisions that affected numerous lives but decisions that would ensure the necessary ministries of the church would continue.

Paul would relieve Titus of his responsibilities on Crete by sending Artemas (of whom we know nothing) or Tychicus (of whom we know quite a bit). Haynes Griffin informs us that **Tychicus was "Paul's traveling companion ([Acts 20:4](#)), a dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord' (cf. [Eph 6:21](#); [Col 4:7](#)), and his personal representative to churches ([2 Tim 4:12](#))"** (Lea and Griffin, *1, 2, Timothy and Titus*, 331). Both men were capable of fulfilling Paul's instructions in [3:10-11](#), or he would not be sending them. This would free Titus to come to Nicopolis on the western coast of Achaia or the southern province of Greece (MacArthur, *Titus*, 167).

Paul would be going there for the winter to rest, strategize, and spend time with Titus.

Because Paul would be sending godly, spiritual reinforcements who could handle any troublemakers if more should arise, Titus could set aside this work and move ahead to a new ministry, a ministry that would soon take him to Dalmatia
([2 Tim 4:9](#)).

Lend Your Assistance ([Titus 3:13](#))

Church discipline should not be the primary focal point of the church's ministry. It should not require the neglect of other vital activities because of its necessity and practice. In fact I believe Paul envisioned it as a natural component of the fabric of what the church is and does, a painful but essential aspect of Christian discipleship.

Paul instructs Titus on the principles of church discipline while at the same time giving attention to other ministries needing to be carried out.

In all of this Paul needed the help of others, and others gladly lent their aid to their trusted leader.

He asked the church at Crete to "diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey."

"Zenas the lawyer" is the only Christian lawyer noted in all of the New Testament, probably a Roman jurist; and...

Apollos is the eloquent Alexandrian who came on the stage in [Acts 18-19](#) and was highly revered in Corinth (cf. [1 Cor 1:11-12](#)).

They were apparently with Titus on Crete or on their way to the island. If present, they had no doubt lent their assistance to him in the ministry of church discipline described in [3:10-11](#). Now their services were needed elsewhere, the discipline matters at Crete being under control. Titus should send them on quickly, making sure "they will lack nothing."

In all of this we see church discipline as a natural dimension of the multifaceted ministries of church life. It is not preeminent, but neither should it be an anomaly!

Maintain Good Works

[Titus 3:14](#)

"Good works" is a reoccurring theme throughout this short letter. The phrase occurs six times in a letter that is only 46 verses, driving home the point that though we are not saved by faith plus works, we are saved by a faith that does work ([Eph 2:8-10](#); [Titus 3:5](#)).

The presence and practice of these good works provide the context for the healthy practice of church discipline. Further, one of those good works we are to be doing is church discipline. What does Paul say here about good works?

Good Works Must Not Be Neglected

Paul once more reminds Titus of the importance of maintaining good works. He says, "*Our people must also learn to devote themselves to good works.*"

"Learn" is another present imperative and is related to our word for discipleship.

"Devote" or maintain speaks of a consistent pattern or a lifestyle of good works.

"Good works," including the good works of [3:9-10](#), are to be our habit of life. They are the norm and not the exception, for to neglect them is to function in a substandard way, below the bar God has set for the church.

Tony Evans is on target when he notes, "A church that does not practice church discipline of its members is not functioning properly as a church, just as a family that does not discipline is not a fully functioning family" (*God's Glorious Church*, 222).

Good Works Must Meet Needs

Good works are a good thing. God foreordained that we would do them as a display of His work of art, which we are becoming ([Eph 2:10](#)).

Good works serve a positive agenda: "for cases of urgent need." Good works have a negative function as well: "that they will not be unfruitful," "live unproductive lives" (NIV).

The good work of church discipline will meet the need and bear the fruit of the glory of God, love for the sinner, restoration of the wayward, purity of the church, protection of the fellowship, and witness to the world. It is a good work of duty. It is a good work of necessity. Avoiding the ever-present sins of legalism and judgmentalism, we testify to God, one another, and the world that holiness and purity matter. We proclaim through biblical discipline that love cares and confronts. It can be tender, but sometimes it also must be tough.

What it cannot do is stand by and do nothing when one of the family is ensnared by sin. **We do not discipline the world and have no intention of doing so. To them we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.** We practice the ministry of loving confrontation to ourselves. As the revivalist Charles Finney wrote, "If you see your neighbor sin, and you pass by and neglect to reprove him, it is as cruel as if you should see his house on fire, and pass by and not warn him" (*Lectures*, 45). Good works indeed meet urgent needs.

Enlist the Faithful

Titus 3:15

This final verse is a farewell statement from friends to friends.

It is all encompassing. The word "all" is used twice, at the beginning and the end of the verse.

And yet, subtly and just beneath the surface, we find two words of wisdom for the life and ministry of confrontation: love and grace. Those whose lives are characterized by these twin towers of the Christian life are the persons qualified for the hard task and difficult assignment

of church discipline. Paul addresses these Christian companions by means of a greeting and a prayer.

Express the Love We Share

All who were with Paul expressed their greeting and love for Titus. Like Paul, they knew the challenges he was facing, and they wanted him to know they cared, they stood with him, and they were on his side.

This could only encourage him in the tough task he was facing. As those of the same faith, they were one with him in the battle.

Pray for the Grace We Need

Bitterness is an ever-present enemy to those in the ministry.

This is especially the case when we are called to the ministry of confrontation and discipline. Paul's final words were not merely his customary practice; they surely provided great comfort to Titus: "Grace be with all of you."

Only God's grace will give us balance, self-control, wisdom, and endurance. **By God's grace and for God's glory, we will be equipped and enabled to stand and serve, even when the odds are against us and the battle seems all for nothing.** It never is hopeless, though, as long as the battle we fight is the Lord's! His amazing grace is what we need when the fire is hot or the water is deep. Such is often our lot in the ministry of confrontation. At such times only His grace will sustain us. Amazingly, we shall discover, it is all we need.

Conclusion

So, why do we practice church discipline? My friend Mark Dever provides five reasons: It is for the good of the person disciplined, for the good of other Christians as they see the danger of sin, for the health of the church as a whole, for the corporate witness of the church, and for the glory of God, as we reflect His holiness (9 Marks, 166). Ultimately, we must practice church discipline in submission to the word of God.

One might ask, "How do we begin to implement church discipline?" Let me be pastoral and practical in my response. First, we must teach the people in our church what the Bible says about church discipline. Second, we must begin to implement church discipline lovingly, wisely, gently, and slowly. Premature action is a certain formula for disaster. Third, we also must apply church discipline to areas like absentee membership as well as the specifics we find in the various lists

of Scripture. We will do this not to cause hurt but to bring about healing within the body of Christ.

Bryan Chapell is correct when he writes: [T]here is a difference between needing to divide and loving to divide. A divisive person loves to fight. The differences are usually observable. A person who loves the peace and purity of the church may be forced into division, but it is not his character. He enters arguments regrettably and infrequently. When forced to argue, he remains fair, truthful, and loving in his responses. He grieves to have to disagree with a brother. Those who are divisive by nature lust for the fray, incite its onset, and delight in being able to conquer another person. For them victory means everything. So in an argument they twist words, call names, threaten, manipulate procedures, and attempt to extend the debate as long as possible and along as many fronts as possible. Divisive persons frequent the debates of the church. As a result the same voices and personalities tend to appear over and over again, even though the issues change.

In the final analysis church discipline is a painful but necessary extension of Christian discipleship. We do it not because it is pleasant but because we must. We do it because overlooking sin is not gracious but dangerous. Confronting sin is not optional but essential. Dealing with sin is not judgmental but remedial. Correcting sin is not carnal but spiritual. Thomas Oden says, "Only those who take sin seriously take forgiveness seriously". Our Lord did both, and so must we, as we lovingly and faithfully follow the divine directions for church discipline.

- Christ-Centered Exposition

REVIEW:

A.	God's	Word	(ch.1)	TRUTH
B.	God's	Work	(ch.2 – 3:8)	LOVE
C.	God's	Wisdom	(3:9)	WARFARE
D.	God's	Worship	(3:10)	WARFARE
E.	God's	Witness	(3:11)	WARFARE

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.

- John MacArthur Commentary

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.

- New American Commentary