

# THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

## II. Titus: Church Planting Manual

### D. The Basis For Teaching Biblical Social Relationships To New Believers (Titus 2:11-15)

#### I. Introduction

- A. When the Gospel is proclaimed in a previously unevangelized area and people there trust in Christ, those new believers need to be organized into local churches for their nurture and for an abiding witness in their area.
- B. This task requires knowing how to plant a church, and Paul's epistle to Titus is a template for such a ministry.
- C. After directing Titus in Titus 2:1-10 to teach Biblical social relationships to new believers in newly planted churches, Paul gave the theological basis for this teaching in Titus 2:11-15, so we view it for our insight:

#### II. The Basis For Teaching Biblical Social Relationships To New Believers, Titus 2:11-15.

- A. In today's world of very dysfunctional relationships in society, expecting new believers in newly planted churches to adjust to Biblical social relationships **may seem humanly too difficult** for them to heed.
- B. However, there are spiritual dynamics in God's salvation and His discipling of **even new** converts that makes God's high expectations for such social adjustments completely rational. Titus 2:11-15 explains this reality:
  1. Introducing verse 11 with the conjunction "for," Paul backed up his directives in Titus 2:1-10 on having new converts live Biblically social relationships as arising out of God's gracious, great salvation in Christ:
    - a. God's grace, His unmerited favor, that brings salvation, has appeared to all men in the world, meaning it is "universally available," Titus 2:11; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 765. Christ appeared as God's Son, paying for man's redemption from sin at the cross that all men might be saved from sin and death through faith alone in Christ alone as a colossal expression of unmerited favor from God the Father Himself.
    - b. God's production of such a great salvation from sin and its effects instructs us that we believers in Christ are **obligated** to deny "irreverence" (KJV "ungodliness") and "overpowering attractions for the secular world" (KJV "worldly lusts") to live "sensibly, seriously" (KJV "soberly"), righteously and godly in this present world, Titus 2:12; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Titus 2:12.
    - c. Applied to social relationships, subordinates must not show irreverence toward their overseers, they must not yield to strong worldly lusts or live carefree lives, but function sensibly, seriously, righteously and godly in this present world in what marital, family, business, government or church roles they exist!
  2. In addition, Christ's salvation leaves us believers with the future goal of looking forward to the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Titus 2:13-14. Since every believer, including every new convert, should naturally desire to meet his Lord and be found upright in Him and gain His reward for godly life and service, beyond negatively turning from the ungodliness of the world as it applies specifically to our social relationships, we should be motivated to be upright and blameless when we meet the Lord in the rapture of the Church!
  3. Thus, the spiritual transformation that occurs for even a new convert is so vast in its scope and depth, and that change should so impact one's shift in thinking from the hopelessness of his former lost estate to his blessed future, heavenly destiny with Christ that God expects every believer to live a transformed life to the glory of God! In view of this reality, Paul told Titus to "(d)ecclare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you" as he shared these truths with believers on Crete, Titus 2:15 ESV.

***Lesson:*** *Since the change that occurs in a new convert to Christ is not just an outward mode of behavior, but a spiritually transformational new creation by the unmerited favor of God through the infinite work of the cross of Christ, even new converts to Christ in newly planted churches are expected to take advantage of the great spiritual resources available to them in Christ to live totally changed lives. This involves negatively turning from the former way of life in denying irreverence and an overpowering attraction for the secular world to live sensibly, seriously, righteously and godly in this present world. It also involves positively looking forward to one's future meeting with his great God and Savior Jesus Christ Who gave Himself for the believer to redeem him from all iniquity and to make him a peculiar person who is zealous of good works!*

***Application:*** *May we realize that Christian discipleship is not a mere exercise in behavior modification as practiced by the world. Rather, it is a process built on the spiritual transformation by which one becomes a new creation by God's grace through faith in Christ. Thus, may we set our expectations for changed living as high as God does.*