

**God Blueprint for a Healthy Church**  
**Living on Mission: Living Faithfully**  
**Titus 3:1-2**  
**August 13, 2017**

We are continuing our summer series, “God’s Blueprint for a Healthy Church” based on the New Testament book of Titus. The apostle Paul wrote this letter to one of his disciples, Titus, who assisted him in helping churches. So far we have looked at leadership in chapter one, discipleship in chapter two and today we start chapter three, Living on Mission by looking at what it means to live Faithfully in a non-Christian world.

**BI** – Living faithfully in a pluralistic world displays the new life we have in Christ.

In this chapter, Paul is concerned with how salvation leads to a new life (2:11-12) with a new purpose. Crete had been conquered by and were under Roman rule. In addition to this, Crete was along a major trade route and was a melting pot of people, ideas, and religions, very similar to Homer. Cretans were infamous for their immorality and rebelliousness. So, Paul gives Titus advice in applying the gospel to their public life in the communities they lived. Paul gives the churches instructions how to live faithfully in a faithless, pluralistic culture whose views are often contrary to ours as disciples of Christ.

First, honor governmental authorities. This is very relevant for us considering the last two administrations we have had. Paul tells Titus, “remind<sup>1</sup> them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, ready for every good work (3:1).” Paul knows we often need repetition and reinforcement before finally get some truths and obey them. Jesus said the mission of the church, making disciples, means teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Mat 28:20). Obedience is the goal; knowledge is the means to that end. I think that submissiveness was an issue in Crete, this being the third time (2:5, 9) Paul mentions it. There are few places in the New Testament that tell us to be submissive to the government (see also Mat 22:21; 1 Pet 2:13-14) but I want us to look briefly at Romans 13:1-7. Here we are told to obey the government because all ruling authority (both good and evil) is from God, in fact appointed by God (13:1). Then he tells us that those who resist these authorities resist what God has appointed and by doing so come under God’s judgement (13:2). He goes on to say that governmental authorities are God’s servants (13:3) and lastly, we are to pay taxes (13:6-7). The ruler at the time Paul wrote Romans was Nero, one of the most notoriously evil rulers of Rome. That tells us something about obeying our rulers. The only time we are to disobey the government is when it demands us to do something that contradicts Scripture (Acts 5:28- 29).

Second, he tells us to be active in the community by being ready for every good work (see 2:14). Sometimes when we get an attitude toward our government, we can withdraw from public life. Or, because we see the world as going to hell in a handbasket, we retreat. The bible tells us to engage the community, to be ready for every good work, making a contribution to the community. Good works are the fruit of faith. He is talking about contributing to the wellbeing of the community. But we do not need to necessarily start new works but can partner with organizations that are already serving the community.

After telling us to honor governmental authorities and to be active in the community, he addresses our relationships in the community, telling us to honor all people. We live in a pluralistic culture<sup>2</sup> which appears to be shifting towards being intolerant of a Christian view of life and values. That should not discourage us as we are told that those who follow Christ will face hostility (1 Pet 3:13-17). But how should we respond? Paul gives us some very practical advice. First, tells us to be careful in our speech, “do not slander anyone and avoid unnecessary arguing (2).” Just don’t say bad things about people. This does not mean we need to be naïve, but don’t let that lead to sinning against others by

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slandering them. Then don't quarrel, literally do not fight. Then he tells us to be tolerant of people. We see this when he tells us to be gentle or kind. He is telling us to be nice. We see this also when he says to be courteous toward all people (Phil 4:5; 1 T 3:3). Be nice, not hostile toward others.

Then briefly, he gives us the reason why we are to live this way, "for we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slave to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another (3)." In others words, we were once without grace, lost in this world and living foolish, deceived lives. Remember, we see the world so differently because of grace (2:11-15; 3:3-7). Grace in our own lives overflows in grace toward others so that they see the transforming power of the gospel. Jesus said you are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men so that they will see your good works and give glory to God (Mat 5:14-16). We are to live in light of the mission he gave us to make disciples. Titus tells us over and over again, we do this in part by living a life of good works, the fruit of the gospel and salvation.

