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Lessons from the **Book of Titus**

By Ken Raggio

Greet Your Friend With A Blessing

In the same manner that Paul always opened his epistles to the Churches, he also greeted Titus personally; that is, with a prayer and a blessing. Our secular culture would smother out our spiritual conversations if possible. We sometimes feel too intimidated by godless people who invade our space in public, and we hesitate to speak spiritually to each other, but that should not be. We should sincerely greet one another with a blessing.

Titus 1:4 - "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Ordain Elders In Every City

Timothy was ordained by Paul (2 Timothy 1:6) and presbyters, that is, elders (1 Timothy 4:14), by the laying on of hands, and presumably a prayer of ordination. Later, when Paul sent Timothy to Crete to set the ministry in order, he instructed him to ordain elders there in similar fashion. Today, every minister should be ordained by presiding presbyters, or ministering elders, laying hands on, and praying for him.

Titus 1:5 - "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."

All Christians Should Be People Of Prayer

The qualifications for Church elders and bishops are meticulously detailed in

Paul's letter to Titus. It seems conspicuously strange that among those qualifications, Paul never mentioned prayer. Should not an elder or a bishop be a man of great prayer? Why did he not impose that qualification? Perhaps we should assume that prayer is such a universal expectation for ALL Christians, that the requirement goes without saying. I think so.

Titus 1:7 - "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre."

Cynics and Skeptics

What's wrong with cynicism and skepticism? Cynics trust nobody. They think everybody's motives are only selfish. Skeptics don't believe anybody else's facts, religion or character. Neither wants to be convinced of anything but their own ignorant or bigoted opinions. God abhors that mindset. He loves open-hearted, open-minded faith.

Titus 1:15-16 - "...unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Revelation 21:8 - "But the... unbelieving... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

Use Faithful Words And Sound Speech, No Unruly Talk

Paul gave Titus several rules about how to speak. Men of God must "hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught," and be "able ...to convince the gainsayers." He warned that "there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, ...whose mouths must be stopped, ...teaching things which they ought not." "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine," and use "sound speech, that cannot be condemned." "These things speak, and exhort." "Speak evil of no man." Strive to say only the right things, and never the wrong things.

Titus 3:9 - "Avoid foolish questions, ...and contentions."

Amen

The Epistle to Titus concludes with, "Grace be with you all. Amen." We may not have noticed that it was a prayer if Paul had not concluded with "Amen." Amen means the same in the Old Testament Hebrew language as in the New Testament Greek. It means, "So be it; truly; firm; trustworthy; surely." More than seventy times, it is translated "verily." Jesus said, "Verily, I say..." which means, "truly, or surely, I say..." An "Amen!" signals your agreement with the preaching - "Truly! Surely!" It ends a prayer with "so be it!"

Titus 3:15 - "Grace be with you all. Amen."

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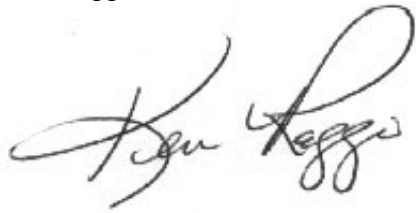
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