

Discussion Guide

Week of May 25, 2014

Titus 3

Passage Overview: For many of us, Paul's letter to Titus is something that we don't study often, and when we do, it's a bit difficult to know how to apply—there's a lot of personal and specific guidance for Titus and his situation is different than ours. However, in another sense, Titus and the church that he pastored on the island of Crete are not so different from us at all. They struggled with immorality and error among church leaders; they strived to live as Christians in a culture hostile to the gospel; they needed encouraging about the basis and motivation of their lives; and they needed detailed teaching about proper Christian living. In other words, though their physical and cultural circumstances were quite different, their spiritual lives are very similar to our own.

Understanding God's Word—Read Titus 3

- Read vv.1-3. As the Cretan Christians relate to the world around them, what kinds of things should mark their behavior?
 - How does this behavior contrast with what they were once like (and presumably what their neighbors are still like)?
 - Which of these areas of life is particularly difficult for you? Why?
- In order to gain a feel for how vv.3-7 flows, fill in the following summary. Complete each phrase and briefly explain it in your own words: (1) We were once . . . (2) But God . . . (3) not because . . . (4) but according to . . . (5) by the . . . (6) so that . . .
- Read vv.4-14. In their relationships with each other as a church, what should the Cretan Christians avoid? Why?
 - Given that not all disagreements are wrong, what are some ways of deciding whether something is a pointless controversy or an important argument (vv.9-10)?
 - What does it look like to be devoted to good works (v.14)?
 - Do you think others would describe your life like this?

Living and Applying God's Word

- How might this understanding of the Christian life (vv.3-7) affect our prayers? What would it lead us to pray for?
- Why do some people find the message of God offensive? What is it about the message that gets under people's skin?
- Why should being born again make you truly humble rather than arrogant?
- Is your life marked by "perfect courtesy toward all people" (v.2)? What would it look like to repent in this area?
- As we relate to our world, what things make it difficult for us to be submissive to authorities, to be gentle, and to avoid quarrels?
- Why do we find controversy and argument so attractive?
- What issues today might fall into the "unprofitable controversy" category?
- What does v.14 teach us about the purpose of good works?

Prayer: Thank God for giving you/us new birth in spite of what you/we were once like. Ask God to equip you to be able to discern between important arguments about the truth and foolish controversies. Pray also for one another.

Announcements

- Memorial Day Picnic (May 26 from 11am-3pm; at Flat Rock Park)
- Sunday morning classes (June 8 - July 27)—from 9-10am
- Mid-Week Fellowship (July 9, 16, 23, 30)—Dinner at 5:45; Teaching from 6:30-7:30