

DOING GOOD: "Two Strikes and You're Out"

INTRODUCTION

- **Main Idea:** Doing good requires **church discipline**.

"An undisciplined church membership is a non-disciplined church membership." (Jonathan Leeman)

- Not everyone should be welcome in your church. Some people ought to be rejected.

A PIVOTAL CONTRAST (TITUS 3:9)

- **But (3:9):** a sharp contrast being drawn between those things which are "excellent and profitable" (v.8) and things which are "unprofitable and worthless." (v.9)
- **Application:** Life is full of choices. We are the accumulation of our choices.

A PRACTICAL CONCERN (TITUS 3:9)

- **"But avoid" (3:9)** - Paul is concerned that the church keep the gospel the main thing and not get sidetracked into speculation and strife.

"The main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things."

"Never stop the plough to catch a mouse" (C.H. Spurgeon)

- The word **avoid** is a strong word which means to "go around", "to stay clear of".

Things to Avoid in the Life of the Church (3:9):

1. **Foolish Disputes:** Literally "moronic disputes" which are a waste of time. A warning against being drawn up into theological tangents and discussions on doctrine that haven't been solved for a millennia. (e.g. "Left Foot Baptist Church")
2. **Genealogies:** It seems that some of the false teachers were making issues over genealogy as a means of establishing superiority over Gentile believers.
3. **Contentions:** Stay away from fights and feuding over secondary issues and preferences. "There are people who can fight with their own shadow."
4. **Strivings about the Law:** There were some who wanted to bind Christians to the ceremonial law of Moses.

A PASTORAL CAUTION (TITUS 3:10)

- **"Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition" (3:10)** – this describes someone in the church who has been given to "foolish disputes, contentions, and strivings about the law." (3:9)

The Practice of Church Discipline (Matthew 18:15-17, Romans 16:17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-11):

1. **The Reason** – Discipline can be enacted when there is unrepentant sin in the areas of sexual immorality, doctrinal denial, fostering disunity or unresolved personal conflict.
2. **The Rebuke** – We enact church discipline when the person in sin is unresponsive to admonishment and rebuke. "after warning him once and then twice" (3:10)
3. **The Reticience** – There is no rush to judgment. Leaders are not to be trigger-happy on the issue. The purpose of church discipline is to bring restoration ("to gain a brother" – Matthew 18:15).
4. **The Recognition** – "They are self-condemned" – it becomes clear that this person is warped and sinful.
5. **The Removal** - "have nothing more to do with him," (3:10). A formal process whereby a person is excommunicated from church membership. Treat them as an outsider, not as a brother.

Sermon Application Questions

September 15, 2019

PERSONAL RESPONSES

1

Titus 3:9-11 deals with the subject of church discipline. Pastor Philip taught us that “Authentic biblical discipline is not an elective but a necessary and integral mark of an authentic church.”

Why do you think that Paul ends this epistle with instructions on church discipline? What happens to a church when church discipline is not part of the body life of the church?

2

C.H. Spurgeon observed that “A Society of good Christian people will split into pieces over a petty quarrel, or mere matter of opinion, while all around them the masses are perishing for want of the Gospel.”

Remember: Pastor Philip gave an example of this type of “foolish disputing” when he recounted the story of “Left Foot Baptist Church”.

How can we as Christians keep the gospel the main thing and not get sidetracked into speculation and strife? What are some examples of contentious disputes that Christians can be drawn into today?

DIGGING DEEPER

1

Take some time and reflect on some of the key passages related to this week’s sermon. Ask the Lord for help in making application of these truths to your life.

Matthew 18:15-17

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father’s wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

Romans 16:17-18

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naïve.

2 Timothy 2:14

Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

Titus 1:11

They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.

Read Titus 3:1-15. Note the “pivotal contrast” being made between the excellent and profitable things in 3:1-8 and the unprofitable and worthless things in 3:9-11.

- 2 Reflect on all that we have learned in Titus chapters 1-2. List some of the “excellent and profitable” things that have been named throughout this epistle. What are some practical ways that we can be devoted to what is excellent? What are some practical commitments we need to make to avoid what is unprofitable?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

1 Pastor Philip exhorted us as a church to “Stay away from fights and feuding over secondary issues and preferences.” He mentioned that there are people who are so argumentative that they can fight with their own shadow.

At times it is necessary to engage in theological debate, but the godly man and woman does not relish such controversy. How would you evaluate yourself in the following character areas? What are some ways that you can grow in Christ-likeness?¹

- Temperate** – I have self-control with my emotions and a balanced judgment when dealing with the complex issues of life. I am free from debilitating excesses or rash behavior.
- Prudent** – I have self-control particularly as it relates to keeping an objective perspective in the face of problems and disagreements. I am sound-minded, discreet and sensible.
- Not pugnacious** – I am not a fighter and I do not relish controversy. I am not bad-tempered, irritable, or out of control with my anger. I am not physically, emotionally, or verbally violent.
- Gentle** – I am forbearing with the faults of others and kind in my demeanor. I am known for my magnanimous and gracious spirit. I am willing to yield and patiently make allowance for the weaknesses and failures of others.
- Peaceable** – I hate division and fighting and will proactively be the one to initiate peace, even if I am the one who has been wronged. I know how to turn away a harsh word with a gentle response. I am forgiving.
- My Application:** _____

2 When Charles Spurgeon was a boy, one of the members of his grandfather’s church was neglecting church, to the grief of his pastor. Spurgeon went into the public house and said to the man, “What doest thou here, Elijah! Sitting with the ungodly, and a member of the Church, and breaking your pastor’s heart. I’m ashamed of you, I wouldn’t break my pastor’s heart, I’m sure.” The man’s conscience was aroused and the man sought God’s forgiveness and vowed he would never grieve his pastor any more.

Is there any one in your life that could use your loving admonishment? How will you pursue that person in love?

¹ Definition of character qualities is adapted from Biblical Eldership by Alexander Strauch.