

11.15.2023

Titus – Making Things Right

Chapter 1 - (vs. 6-9)

We come to this wonderful epistle in which we are setting things right. The phrase that is used in verse 5 is “to set in order”. If you were to take the Greek, it refers to putting things right side up, upright. The world clearly is upside down, isn't it? So, you can feel the necessity to do that. Crete is really a picture or metaphor so to speak of the world that has turned everything upside down and has caused people to worship that which is evil and destructive. So, when you look at Titus and Crete, you begin to realize that it is like the world because we rejoice in the things that are harmful and destructive in peoples' life and we perceive the things that are good to be an enemy so to speak. So, as we come to the book of Titus, we begin to turn things right side up.

The way that Paul will start is by establishing who we are following; who we serve; who is Lord. Clearly, in the region of Crete, there were a lot of different gods to choose from. It was kind of a smorgasbord of various kinds of gods. So, you can choose the one that just matches your desires. One of the problems is that man has a tendency, of course, you can go all the way back to the book of Judges and even before that, every man does what is right in his own eyes. So, why are there so many different religions? Well, a lot of people have so many different desires. So, that's why there are so many different religions. When you consider that man by nature doesn't really want to submit to any authority, especially if it goes against what he's wanting to accomplish; you realize that there needs to be somebody in charge that is a unifying force. There needs to be a right that is clearly defined. As we read in Proverbs, “there is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death.” So, once again, men begin to choose what they perceive to be as right. Even when you consider some of the false religions in our days in the United States, you have people like Charles Russel that started the Jehovah's Witness. All you have to do is go back and do a little research and you begin to see that he was a fraudulent guy. He was actually brought up in charges of fraud by the United States government and was convicted. So, these are the kind of people that are starting different faiths on their own because they didn't like the one that they were in. The same thing was true with Joseph Smith. He just could not seem to get along and of course, obviously, he wanted more than one wife. So, all you have to do is look at their character and you begin to realize, “Ok, that's not in accordance with godliness,” but unfortunately most people don't look at those things.

So, as he starts off, he goes, “We follow the one true God whose way is true and is according to godliness.” You can see the same thing mentioned in 1 Timothy where Paul will write the same thing to Timothy. Once again, there are a lot of different things that you can worship and a lot

of different people to follow. Jesus even says to His disciples, “A lot of people are going to be coming in My Name. So, be careful not to follow them. Just because they came in My Name doesn’t mean that I sent them.”

1 Timothy 6:3 says this very simple statement, “If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness”. You could rule out a lot of religions; all you have to do is look at what they do. The paragon that we have is our Lord Jesus Christ. So, what does “conforming to godliness” look like? Well, it looks like Christ who is the way, the truth and the life. So, he establishes that right at the beginning as he says “Paul, a bondservant of God, an apostle of Christ Jesus for the faith of those that are chosen of God and the knowledge of truth which is in accordance with godliness.” As it goes on, he begins to make reference to the fact that this God is the One who chose and established the order that He has ordained. So, Paul is an apostle. Then you begin to realize that he then affirmed or ordained Titus for this particular work. Now, Titus is responsible for doing the ordination. In other words, this was not somebody just going on their own, deciding to take honor to themselves. This is God ordaining and establishing. That’s why the church is so important because you’re going to have individuals, and I just mentioned two, that are going to start going out on their own and are going to basically say, “By the authority vested in me by me, I pronounce myself power and authority.” The church is a necessary ingredient for establishing and keeping; just like a home is a necessary ingredient for establishing and keeping children. A mother and father. Who thought of that idea? You begin to realize just how important the ordaining process is. So, what we have is God establishing His household. 1 Timothy 3 will reiterate this point in verse 14.

(1 Timothy 3:14) “I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;

(1 Timothy 3:15) but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church...”

Now, he’s establishing that the leadership that you have need to align with the way that God runs His house. I don’t know if you know what the test grounds are but it’s actually your family is a testing ground for ministry in the church.

(1 Timothy 3:4) “He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

(1 Timothy 3:5) (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)”

Why? Because it’s a household. So, he’s setting that standard. Here again, somebody might say, “Who chooses the standard?” God did and that’s where we go to the phrase “conforming to godliness;” going according to His standards. That’s what we’re going to be looking at specifically today. So, we’re going to do it God’s way. We’re serving God. He’s the one calling the shots. He’s the one doing the ordaining. He’s the one doing the choosing. Once again, I

think from time-to-time people might perceive “I think I might be better than that person that was ordained.” Well, that may be true. That was the argument against Moses, but God is the one that does the ordaining, and the church is the one that has the authority to do that. God has established that for that particular purpose.

Now, as we come to where he tells Titus, “I have left you in Crete to establish this order,” you begin to think “Ok, how do you do that?” It’s by establishing men with these standards; and he begins to list the characteristics and the standards that God has elevated to the place of leadership. In 1 Timothy 3 it talks about a man such as this must be above reproach. Now, we’re going to see that a lot of the words being used are going to have the letter “alpha” in front of them; which usually means a negative. So, “alpha” would be “not.” In this case, “above reproach” would have the letter “alpha” in front of it and then the next phrase would be “accusable.” So, meaning there are no accusations that you can throw against them. Now, that doesn’t mean that the person is not going to be reviled by people because clearly, Christ was reviled, right?

One of the books that I often enjoy reading again and again is Peter. In 1 Peter 3:16 it talks about the fact that men are going to revile us. In fact, it says, “they revile your good behavior,” but that’s the point. If they’re going to revile you, they don’t have anything bad to say. They can only say, “Man, that guy always seems to love God,” or “It just makes me so mad because he always does the right thing,” and you’re going, “Guilty!” So, the accusations are in that setting.

1 Peter 4:4 says that they are surprised that you don’t participate in the same dissipation that they participate in.

1 Peter 4:14 says that you will oftentimes be reviled for the name of Christ because you represent Him well.

So, it’s not saying that you’re not going to be reviled. It’s not saying that people are not going to throw accusations against you. It’s saying that they’re not going to throw bad accusations against you. You won’t be accused of doing something bad. Of course, Christ on the cross was reviled in many ways, “but while being reviled, He did not revile in return.” In other words, even when He stands before Pilate who says, “I find no guilt in this man. There’s nothing that He has done wrong. I have no accusation to throw against Him for doing something that would be nefarious.” Look, even the world knows what is wrong. They don’t like to admit it when it comes to them, but they’ll be really quick to admit it when it comes to you. It is bizarre when you think about it. I remember the first time I had it thrown at me. I did something that I shouldn’t have done. I don’t even remember what it was, but somebody said, “I thought you were a Christian. You guys don’t do that.” I go, “Ok, different standard.” It’s true, but you and I should not be in that position. It’s interesting to me that the setting in which it starts off because you begin to realize that we’re actually dealing with the household first. Of course, that’s one of the things that he stated to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3, “If a man does not know how to manage his own household, then how can he manage the household of God?”

So, what are the qualifications that He's looking for? What are the standards that He is setting forth that have to be met in order for somebody to fill this office of overseeing a household of God? You begin to realize that he's going to start right in the home. If you look in the passage with me, it starts this way in Titus 1:6, "namely, if any man is above reproach..."

Meaning that they are not guilty of any accusations of wrongdoing.

"...the husband of one wife..."

Now, we know that one of the things that was happening in Crete was a lot of polygamy. So, having just one wife was an amazing thing to happen. It also has the connotation that takes it beyond that which is fundamentally that "this man is faithful to his wife." He's faithful. Now, she might not be faithful and by virtue of that, there might be problems that ensue down the road; but he is a faithful individual. Of course, Scripture says in 2 Timothy 2 that it's required of this man that he be found faithful as a steward. It is interesting that the word "steward" is going to be mentioned within the text, and wouldn't you know that the word that is used, "*oikonomos*" is referring to the household. So, when he uses the word "steward," it's referencing a head of a household.

If you look within the passage, it reads this way in verse 7, "For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward" or God's head of household. What we're going to be dealing with is how this individual relates to his wife and how he relates to his children because those are going to be the standard qualifications at the very beginning of this. So, however he deals with his wife is going to be how he deals with the different people in the church as well as how he deals with his children. How do you handle things? I've often thought about 1 Peter 3 where it says, "Live with your wives in an understanding way." There's no Scripture that I know of that says, "Wives live with your husbands in an understanding way." Don't you think that's interesting? You won't find it because it's the responsibility of the husband to do it. So, it's the husband that not only has to be faithful in spirit towards his wife, but he needs to be the one according to Ephesians 5, that is going to be sacrificial on behalf of his wife. In other words, he doesn't force his wife to submit to him; he inspires her to submit to him. That's why Scripture says, "by the washing of water with the word." (Ephesians 5:26) What is he talking about? By virtue of the fact that you've lived this life of Christ in front of her, it causes a cleansing in her and a desire for her to submit to you. When it says, "wives submit yourselves to you husbands," that's on her volition; that's not on you demanding it. It's a very interesting dynamic within the text. So, it's always on the guy to create that atmosphere of trust within the household. It's on him. Now, once again, I'm not saying to the women of the household that you don't have to be sweet or loving or kind or Christ-like or anything like that, but I'm saying that the responsibility is with the husband. So, right away, it establishes that fidelity and devotion that he has to his wife. When somebody lives in that way, you begin to realize that because he's faithful to his wife, he is going to be faithful to the church. You read in Romans 12, "Be devoted to one another in love." Unfortunately, a lot of times people use it as an excuse, "I'm devoted to my wife. Therefore, I don't have time to be devoted to the church." No, that's preparation for you

to be devoted to the church. So, it's all part of the process of coming to this place in which you can be an overseer within the body.

So, it starts off in Titus 1:6, "namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife..." Then, this is a very difficult text to fully grasp. The phrase goes this way, "having children who believe." Now, we know that the receiving of Christ as Lord and Savior is a matter of free will and a matter of one's individual decision. Yet, it seems the way that the phrase is going is saying you better have children who believe because if you don't, you're not going to be an overseer. So, I can just see some people reading this going, "Ok, so kids, whether you believe or not, just raise your hand." It's talking about the fact that they are believing because you have created an atmosphere of believing by virtue of your life. This is a very interesting dynamic that we're going to see as it goes on in the passage. You're creating the atmosphere because who are we judging at this juncture? The overseer. So, the qualifications are on him, not on his kids; but he lives a life that is so real and so true that once again, like with his wife, it inspires the children to believe the same God and to think "Obviously, my dad's God is real." Now, they in and of themselves may have difficulty in working through it, but they're convinced of the realness of God by virtue of their father and the way that he lives his life. That is why it's so important.

We're actually going to take this a little bit beyond because we're going to see that the father needs to be hospitable. I've often thought about that, and I know I'm jumping ahead, but "hospitable" means that you're entertaining strangers in your house. I know that for a lot of people it's really easy to be really nice to people outside of their home for a short time, but you move somebody into your house, now they're watching how you live. Now your whole household is under the microscope. Scripture is saying that you're able to live that life in such a way that you're thrilled to open up your house and have people come in and live and see. It in many ways if you think about it rules out the disingenuous. Would you be happy to have somebody come live and watch how you talk to your wife and children; how you handle particular situations if they were there all the time?

A book that I've oftentimes mentioned that was read to me when I was a kid just stuck in my head and that's "If Jesus came to your house". Every page was "If Jesus came to your house...would you clean up your room?" or "would you yell at your brother?" It goes all the way through, but it makes a big difference. In many ways, that's what hospitality does.

As it starts off it once again talks about the relationship you have with your wife and kids and the fact that you're inspiring your kids to believe; and that's probably the best way to read that; that your life inspires them to believe. Then it goes on and is still dealing with the kids in this, "not accused of dissipation;" which is a very interesting word when I consider that because "*asōtia*" has an "a" in front of it. Now, the "a" is "not," right? I bet some of you know what that word is, "salvation;" soteriology. So, the phrase is "not savable." So, the way that it's worded is "not accused of dissipation," but the exact translation would be "not savable." Now, the best way to describe that would be an incorrigible child. The reason why it would define it as the child is not savable is because you can't talk to them; he won't listen. You can't sit him down.

So, he's not savable in that sense. Thus, the word "incorrigible" would probably be the best way to describe what that word is denoting. Once again, you can sense that something has probably happened in that child's life to cause that sense of plugging up his ears and "I'm not listening to you anymore." Something has caused that and we're going to talk about that as we go, but the child is such that he has shut off everybody and literally at this juncture is not savable. So, not a child such as that or the other word is dealing with "rebellion;" which fundamentally means that he's not going to obey. So, "unwilling to obey" would be the phrase that is used.

When we go into this, we see traits that are being found in Crete. Titus 1:12 says, "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'"

If you back up into verse 11, "who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain."

We're going to be talking about that. These are all the negative characteristics of people who are rebellious that you would have to ask yourself, "Where did that come from?" In some way, he's saying that it was fostered in the home because there wasn't an overseer. So, it's conveying what an overseer does. Now, we would naturally perceive that an overseer goes around saying, "No, stop that. Don't do this." Like he's in charge and he's sitting on his king chair, but actually the overseer according to Scripture is somebody that is living the life and so he becomes an example. So, once again, he's inspiring. It doesn't mean that he doesn't correct, but the emphasis is more on the inspiration than it is on the correction. So, he's establishing this format for the house.

So, "having children who believe" or "are inspired to believe" means that they're savable in the sense that they're not somebody that is disobedient to the things that are being said or unruly.

Then when you go to verse 7, it's almost like he starts over again. The reason why it feels that way is because the beginning was the establishment of the home. Now, this is going to focus more on the individual. In other words, how did that play out at home? Well, he's going to be judged according to that and it's going to be the foundation. Now, we're going to talk about the individual himself and what that looks like in him. So, once again, it will repeat that phrase "the overseer must be above reproach," meaning not accusable, "as God's steward." So, it's almost like it's affirming what it just dealt with, "in God's household." As he has been faithful in his house, therefore he can now be faithful in God's house.

There is an interesting passage in Ephesians 6 dealing with fathers and their rules with their kids. The wording that is used within this passage is interesting and there is a parallel text found in Colossians. So, if you'll read with me in Ephesians 6. We'll just start at the very beginning as we establish the household there.

(Ephesians 6:1) "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

So, we're turning things right side up by the way.

(Ephesians 6:2) “HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise)”

Which once again, is something that is basically upside down in this world. I know that it goes without saying, but that verse doesn't have any qualifiers to it. In other words, it doesn't say “honor your father and mother if they are really nice people.” It says, “Honor your mother and father” and you would say, “Why?” It's because God says so and that's enough. It doesn't matter who they are or what they did, you give them honor.

(Ephesians 6:3) “SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.”

(Ephesians 6:4) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger...”

There are a lot of things that you would think that he would tell us like the “parental guidance” type thing because we have big seminars on how to be a really good father; but this verse doesn't go very long, does it? “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Ok, that pretty much sums it up. The very fact that it has that negative in there, “do not provoke your children to anger;” “provoke” has that anger in it, but it also has a prefix; which is “*para*”. Now, the prefix to the word “anger” makes reference to coming alongside; which is really telling us that by virtue of what you do you're teaching your children how to be angry. So, their provocation is not as much that you poked them in the eye or something; but the provocation is that by virtue of the way you lived in front of them, you have called them alongside of to encourage. We use the word “*parakaleo*” for encouragement. Well, “*para*” is now dealing with anger and you're calling them alongside to be angry like you are. So, you're really establishing a pattern. When you look at Proverbs, this is conveyed in many respects. If you look there with me in Proverbs 22:24, just to give you a few verses.

(Proverbs 22:24) “Do not associate with a man given to anger;
Or go with a hot-tempered man,

(Proverbs 22:25) Or you will learn his ways
And find a snare for yourself.”

What is that telling you? It tells me that if the father is an angry person; if he has a tendency to lose his temper, then the child is going to learn how to be angry, and that's how the child is going to deal with his situations. You're calling the child alongside you and whether you know it or not, more is caught than taught, and they begin to see how you live your life. Then they begin to take on those particular qualities in that nature as well.

Proverbs 15:18 says, “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,
But the slow to anger calms a dispute.”

All you really need is a hot-tempered father and it's not long before strife is in the home.

If you look with me in Proverbs 14, I know we sometimes read this being focused on the woman of the house, but if you understand the whole context of Proverbs, the emphasis of the women in Proverbs is that she is the one that can cause a man desire. So, whatever kind of woman a man desires really defines who he is. Proverbs 7 talks about the foolish young man that goes by the house of the women of the streets, not thinking.

(Proverbs 7:7) “And I saw among the naive,
And discerned among the youths
A young man lacking sense,

(Proverbs 7:8) Passing through the street near her corner;
And he takes the way to her house”

Obviously, he’s thinking wrong to begin with.

(Proverbs 7:9) In the twilight, in the evening...”

Which seems to be in a stealth way.

“... In the middle of the night and in the darkness.

(Proverbs 7:10) And behold, a woman comes to meet him,
Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart.”

What kind of woman are you looking for?

So, you have the harlot, and then in Proverbs 8:1, “Does not wisdom call,
And understanding lift up her voice?” So, there’s the voice of the woman of the streets; she’s calling out, and then there’s the voice of wisdom and she is calling out. Who are you desiring? That’s why you have this interesting back in forth in Proverbs; because the woman is the one that is creating desire in the man. So, when you look at Proverbs 14, “The wise woman builds her house,” the question is, what woman did the man invite into his house? If in fact his desires are selfish and self-consuming, then it’s going to create strife and anger within the home. If in fact it was wisdom that he embraced, then the house will be built.

(Proverbs 14:1) “The wise woman builds her house,
But the foolish tears it down...”

So, it talks about the woman in many respects being the metaphor of a man’s desires. What kind of home are you going to have? A home of strife or a home of peacefulness?

If you look in Proverbs 17:1, “Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it
Than a house full of feasting with strife.”

The point of the matter is what’s causing the strife? Well, it’s the husband's decision. When a husband has a house that is full of mayhem, what’s the problem? He is. What happened? He went after his desires. His desire wasn’t to do things the right way or to follow Christ. I don’t

know what his desire was. Maybe he had a longing for this or a longing for that. He just goes after that and quite frankly, gets mad at anybody and everybody that gets in his way because they're upsetting what he's trying to get. This is what causes the anger and the problems. So, this is what we're going to see as we come to this passage.

Now, that parallel passage in Colossians is interesting, and I already said it was so I'm going to have to follow through on that. Colossians 3:21 says, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart." Now, it's actually two different words. In fact, in some it will almost use the same phrase as Ephesians 6:4, remember "Fathers do not provoke your children to anger"? Then in this particular passage, "do not exasperate your children," but this particular word is dealing with arousing or stirring up a sense of quarrelsome debate. One of the statements that is made to Timothy is "an overseer must not be quarrelsome." Once again, in a household, strife and contention can exist. For instance, a husband starts having quarrels with his wife; guess who is learning how to quarrel? The father starts quarreling with his children and getting hostile about things. Well, guess who's learning? So, in that particular setting, it's not as much calling alongside of, but it's actually causing quarrels and strife. I've oftentimes heard children say, "I thought I had done something wrong when I heard mom and dad arguing." Another big problem that oftentimes happens is when a father doesn't back his wife in front of the children. That causes a lot of division within the household, and you really see contentions, strife, quarreling and criticism. If the husband is critical, it's a kind of strife that he's creating. So, fathers, don't exasperate your children or bring in those debates. I would say that if the father argues with his wife, it's going to exasperate the children and cause them to lose heart because they're not going to feel loved or be in a home of love. If the father continually criticizes his kid and is contentious with them, it's going to cause them to lose heart. So, there are different ways to do that. It's interesting that if the father is an angry person, he's literally calling alongside of, and the kids are now following that; as well as if the father is contentious in the household. So, the passage is making reference to the fact of why your children are accused of dissipation and rebellion. There would only be one answer for that; the overseer has been giving wrong patterns in his household.

In Titus 1:7, "For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward..."

Obviously, if in fact his household is run well, then you have to come up with one conclusion; he's not a selfish father. If in fact his household is not run well, he is very selfish, and we will use the phrase "self-willed." See the phrase there? "For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed." So, he's dealing within the passage with somebody that is not seeking his own. We oftentimes use the passage in Philippians that makes reference to Timothy saying that everybody else looks out for their own interest, but not Timothy. It's one of the things that we're constantly looking for in men. Do they have the interest of the body at large or are they just looking out for their own interest? Usually if they're looking out for their own interest, I can see certain patterns. They begin quarreling and criticizing; they're always finding fault. They are usually in the mix of some sort of argument or debate. It's not somebody that is

pursuing peace, but it's somebody that is actually causing mayhem in the realm. So, you're looking for who is causing, what are they causing, and how they are living their life.

- Somebody that is not "self-willed."
- Somebody that is not seeking their own desires.
- Somebody that is not pursuing their own selfish will.

What is the next phrase in verse 7?

"Not quick-tempered."

So, the fact that they're not quick-tempered would somehow connect to self-willed. I have found that every time I am thinking selfishly, I'm more prone to be angry in that regard. So, not quick-tempered, not prone to being angry or demanding your own way so to speak.

Here again, you go back to the kids; what would make a kid incorrigible? They're looking at the patterns. For instance, you tell somebody they're wrong, and they go, "Am not." What do you think the kid is learning? There is no respect for authority. I've heard, "I don't know why kids don't respect authority." I don't know. How do you talk about authority in your house? Your kids can come back with some horror stories about how bad their teachers are, and there are probably some really bad ones. We had some really bad ones, but my parents never let me say anything bad about the teachers. They would just say, "We're not going to listen to you." Then I would say, "Yeah but what...what..." They would respond, "Get along with them. Submit to the authority." It's just like Peter when he says, "You have an unreasonable boss..." Well, what are you teaching your kids? "Go rebel against the authority. Whoever your authority is, wherever you work, you go rebel against them. Don't let them get away with that." When you start talking against them in the household, it's very destructive.

So, "not self-willed" and "not quick-tempered." Certainly, as our God is slow to anger, so we should be.

"...not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine..."

Now, the phrase actually is "not given to wine" or if I want to get more specific about it, "not lingering with wine." The point of the text is not that he's an alcoholic. The point of the passage is that he is driven by an appetite or by a longing more than he's driven by a caring or a serving. In other words, if his appetites get in the way of serving, then it becomes a problem. It's fundamentally the passage in Proverbs 31. In the passage, the mother is talking to her son who is king, Lemuel. If you'll look there with me, we will just pick out the phrase here, "Do not give your strength to women..."

Then it says in verse 4, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine..."

What's wrong with wine? Nothing. It's just not for kings. Why? It's because a king can't be a judge or a leader when he's driven by his own desires. He'll begin to not think about his subjects. If your appetite is what's motivating you and moving you, then you'll tend to say, "After I have this drink." We're spoiled in America. So, there's a lot of problems with this one. When your appetite is so strong that you put off justice, righteousness, and serving because you begin to think "My pleasure is more important than your need." Well, that's a problem and that is why the passage says, "It is not for kings to drink wine, Or for rulers to desire strong drink,

(Proverbs 31:5) For they will drink and forget what is decreed, And pervert the rights of all the afflicted."

Once again, "pervert the rights of all the afflicted" is talking about the mindset of "I'm not really concerned about your need. All I'm concerned about is getting my pleasure." So, the passage is talking about a lingering or more specifically, that wine becomes something that is a priority in somebody's life. I have found that if somebody has a hard time giving up wine, there is something wrong with their priorities. Once again, it's not that it's bad in and of itself, but we're asking for a servant. So, we're asking that servant if the ones that they're ministering to are worth giving it up for. Clearly, in the context of our day and age, we know that it could have some negative connotations by virtue of if I were just in the wine category at the grocery store, and somebody saw me picking up a bottle. Instantly, I wouldn't be above reproach. The phrase is really dealing with pleasures are motivating you more than service, and you can't let that happen. That's that perspective of the lingering within the text.

So, being self-willed is thinking, "I'm going to get what I want, and if I don't get what I want, I'm going to get angry about it. It's all about my pleasure." Every one of those is dealing with selfish desires. Then, you're dealing with "pugnacious," which is somebody that is contentious and argumentative. "Why are my kids argumentative?" I don't know. Are you argumentative? You actually create that. The passage ends with "not fond of sordid gain." I think the King James puts in there "filthy lucre." The emphasis is that you love money. It's not just talking about you pursuing it in the wrong ways; it's saying that money has become a priority in your life. In 1 Timothy 6 you can see the same thing. There are prooftexts that really explain these passages. So, you don't have to do a whole lot of guessing on what the meaning behind it is.

We know there are people that pursue ministry as a means of great gain. That's 1 Timothy 6:5, talking about people "deprived of the truth."

(1 Timothy 6:6) "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

(1 Timothy 6:7) For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

(1 Timothy 6:8) If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

(1 Timothy 6:9) But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare..."

So, it's the wanting to get rich that actually causes it to be "filthy lucre," just like how "you can't serve God and wealth." (Luke 16:13)

So, once the riches become the desires of your heart, now it's filthy.

(1 Timothy 6:9) "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

(1 Timothy 6:10) For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith..."

Why? It's because you love it more than you love God. This is why it was so important when Jesus was choosing the men, He goes, "Are you going to follow Me?" and they go, "Yes." Then they just drop their nets. What you're looking for is somebody that's willing to drop whatever they value at a moment's notice for God. If you can find those kinds of people, hang onto them because those are good men. They are few and far between. I've yet to find very many of those. It's quite a rare thing and something to rejoice over when you see that.

- Not quick-tempered
- Not addicted to wine or not "lingering over"
- Not contentious
- Not fond of sordid gain

Now, it goes into the positive. So, we now pick up in verse 8, and we begin to see on the positive end, "hospitable;" which is the opposite end of "selfish." The word that is used means "to entertain strangers." That's why we've been looking at 3 John. In 3 John 1:5, it says, "Beloved you're acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers;

(3 John 1:6) and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

(3 John 1:7) For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.

(3 John 1:8) Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth."

Once again, the emphasis isn't necessarily that you're taking anybody and everybody off of the streets, but if you see somebody desiring to follow the Lord, you're going to be supportive of them in any way that you can. Oftentimes, these are going to be people that are very strange to you. You're going to find yourself opening your home to people that you're going, "Wow, they're bizarre compared to the way I think." Do they love the Lord? Do they want to follow the Lord? If there's a resounding "yes", then you should support them and help them. Here again, your ducks better be in a row if in fact you open your home to people to live in it and see what

is going on in your home. Every time we have done it, we've tried not to put on airs. I'm just basically who I am when I'm with you. So, I'm not very entertaining sometimes, but it is important that they understand that I love my wife. I would hope that I talk to her kindly all the time. I suppose there are moments. We don't remember them, do we? Phew. We'll talk about that later. Your hope is that the way you interact with everybody within the home is just as constant. Once again, you're not putting on airs; you're not trying to act more gracious than you are. Obviously, I'm not a very gracious person, but there shouldn't be anything that is accusable by the way you deal with matters in your home. For instance, "he's not understanding", "he's oppressive" or "he's critical"; and you can go down the list, right? You can't have any of that within the home if you open your home and are hospitable.

The next phrase in Titus 1:8 is "loving what is good." That is to say, loving what is virtuous or even honorable. Those are the things you love. There's a lot of things that people pursue and things that they love, but maybe loving what is honorable is not their greatest desire.

"Sensible" comes into play here within the passage. When it's dealing with "sensible" it really is dealing with a sense of a sound mind. Now, it actually uses the word "mind" within the text, but it goes into the sense of the sound mind being somebody that is able to curb his desires. Have you ever seen anybody get upset because they didn't get their way? Well, that's because they couldn't curb their desires. If you look in the book of James, it will give you a picture of this. Like I said, you can find prooftexts for all these things.

(James 3:13) "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom."

Obviously, there's no quarreling there.

(James 3:14) "But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition..."

There's that "selfish ambition". "You know what I want?" I need to remember that one; especially when somebody takes my favorite drink out of the refrigerator or something.

"But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

(James 3:15) This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

(James 3:16) For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing."

Why are homes in disorder and disarray? It's because there is selfish ambition. If everybody was looking out for the best of the other person, there wouldn't be that within the household.

Then it says this in verse 17, "But the wisdom from above is first pure..."

“pure” would be a sense of not only holy in the sense of no debauchery, but it would have the connotation of single-mindedness. That is to say, my first and only desire is to please God. As Paul would say, “This one thing I do.” It’s that focus.

“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle...”

Do you see the word “reasonable”? Write off to the side “willing to yield”. So, guys, sometimes your wife is upset, and you should be willing to yield; be considerate towards her. The first one to apologize should be you.

“... full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering...” Oh, and here’s the clencher, you actually have to be genuine about it.

(James 3:18) “And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

I don’t know if you caught that or not, but if you’re sowing righteousness in your house, what are you producing? Once again, children are going to have their rebellious moments. There’s no doubt about it. Parents are going to have to take their stand and be consistent in doing that. If in fact you want your kid to eventually come around, you be the kind of person you need to be. God will bring them around and He will do the healing. It’s wonderful to know that to be true. God works on our behalf, doesn’t He? If you’re looking at this passage, it’s all on the overseer to be living this way. This is what creates the atmosphere for a good home. If in fact he can create the atmosphere for a good home, then he can create the atmosphere for a good household of God.

(Titus 1:8) “but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible...” Which we just reiterated; somebody who’s able to curb his desires. Then he uses the phrase “just” which is fair and equitable. Once again, if you want anger in your household, just be unfair or expect something of them that you don’t expect of yourself.

“Devout” is dealing with righteous, but it also has the connotation of “merciful”. So, it’s an interesting play of both sides of that.

Then, how does it end? “Self-controlled.”

Now, if you look specifically in verse 9, it states this, “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching.” That phrase all goes together. So, you’re “holding fast to” (another way of putting it would be “cleaving to”; sort of like marriage, “leave and cleave”) the faithful word, not in accordance with how you see it. That’s very important that you see this. I often tell people and I don’t think they fully believe me, but I really don’t have an agenda. I just want to make what is being said real and true. The value of a church should be that when the word of God is taught, you’re being taught what is meant rather than how you feel it should be meant. Believe me, the heart of man is desperately sick, right? Scripture says that. It’s very easy for you and me to twist things into the way that we want it to say. Once again, this is one of the

great importance of discipleship because discipleship comes in and you have somebody discipling you. Believe me, if they're discipling you, they're not looking for trouble; but they are looking to be correct and to help you do the right thing. So, you may come to the table with an agenda, but the one discipling you is not. So, they're going to be telling you things that you're not going to like and is not going to go down easy, whatever, the same thing from the pulpit, but that's God talking to you. So, you don't want to be incorrigible, unsavable; you want to listen. The text is saying that you need to find a person that holds fast to what is being taught; not what he thinks it says, but what is being taught. That's part of that subjection to the church; to the body of Christ. We've often told people this too, "Look, if somebody is teaching heresy, don't stay there; but if they're teaching truth, then do what it says." That's pretty simple, isn't it?

"Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort..."

"Exhort" means calling alongside and encouraging somebody else.

"...in sound doctrine and to refute..."

Now, that word "refute" goes into the realm of actually pointing out specific problems in that person's life. What is the responsibility of an overseer? To oversee. You want to encourage; there's no doubt about that, but you have to be able to point out things that are wrong within a person's life. If that person will receive that correction wisely as Proverbs says, "even rejoice" or as the psalmist says, "I was glad when I was afflicted." What a great sign that is because it really shows the heart that is wanting to do the right thing. However, if a person is fighting all the way, that's not the kind of person that you want in office. It's like anything else, if somebody can take orders, you don't mind them giving orders; but if they don't know how to take it, then how can they be good at giving them? They won't consider the other people as well.

"...that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

So, the passage is dealing with the character traits, but more specifically, the standards that God has for somebody to rule the household of God. These qualities have to be his. Once again, 1 Timothy 3 has a similar list,

(1 Timothy 3:2) "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach."

The "able to teach" is not as much about academics as it is because of his character that he is able to teach. The thing that puts him in the category of "able to teach" is that he has been an example. It means that every time in Scripture. Here again, none of the men that Jesus called were really educated. The thing that makes you able to teach is that you are above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, faithful and all these things.

(1 Timothy 3:3) “not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.”

(1 Timothy 3:4) “He must be one who manages his own household well...”

You’ll see the same thing when Scripture is talking about deacons in verse 8.

It’s also interesting that when you look in chapter 5, and I’ll close with this; but 1 Timothy 5 is dealing with the widows in the house too. I can’t over emphasize this because to me one of the worst things that are happening today is people are just throwing away their parents. They’re just discarding them.

The passage reads this way in 1 Timothy 5:3, “Honor widows who are widows indeed;

(1 Timothy 5:4) but if any widow has children or grandchildren...”

So, I would say, parents, you need to teach your children to be willing to take on responsibilities.

“...they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.”

Then, drop on down to verse 7, “Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach.”

So, if they’re not taking care of them then what are they? They’re not above reproach.

If you look in the passage, “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

How do you think kids become unsavable, incorrigible, and not believers? “...must first have children who believe.” What causes a child not to believe? He doesn’t see the reality in the household of a father caring for his own parents. Do you see what I’m saying? If the child sees that going on, then that begins to tug at his heart and when he’s old he won’t depart from it. It’s a very interesting passage as it begins to establish the household. The question is if you have a place that’s out of order, where do you start? Well, you start at the top and you want to make sure that the foundation is Jesus Christ, according to His standards. The thing I love about these lists, if I could put it this way, is that there are really no academics involved, but it’s all about character, the heart, and the true example that is being conveyed. So, we’re talking about a life lived out in the way that it should be and the huge impact that it makes. What kind of overseers are you looking for?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word, and we just ask that we would follow what You say. You've given us these wonderful pictures of what it looks like in a very real world and how it influences our families and the church at large. We realize that in many respects, you're using our family to help prepare us for the ministry. So, Lord, help us to take these things seriously. In Jesus' name. Amen.