Eternity Daily Bible Study No. 269

To subscribe or to read other bible studies go to: http://www.aibi.ph/eternity/

We urgently need a new computer monitor! If you have been blessed by these studies please help support our ministry: http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/donate.htm

---

TITUS 2:1-10

1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: 2that the older men be
sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; 3the older women likewise, that they
be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- 4that
they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5to be discreet,
chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be
blasphemed.
6Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 7in all things showing yourself to be a pattern
of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8sound speech that cannot
be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.
9Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not
answering back, 10not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of
God our Savior in all things.

This homely advice about respectable day to day living may seem rather "unspiritual" at first – everyone going around being sober and reverent and never gossiping and being just plain honest good folk. Frankly "just plain honest good folk" aren't noticed until they are missed – until you live somewhere with a high crime rate and a tough neighborhood where everything gets stolen and the politicians are on the take. It is then that you realize that "just plain, good, honest folk" are a product of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The concepts of "reverence and respect" run right through this passage (verses 2, 3 5, 7, and 9) and to "sound off a little" they are shocking absent from much modern culture and spirituality. As someone said - "attitude sells" and smug, sneering, defiant insolence is now cool and sells jeans. Reverence and respect are now seen as weak-kneed and out of date. But you cannot run a school, a family or even a corporation on defiance and insolence. Creativity and productivity are unleashed when there is deep respect for each other and a reverence for the ethos and values common to the group – and especially for God.

Paul's advice to older women to keep the younger women in line seems quaint and unliberated: "that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. " Why would Paul issue such direct and almost offensive instructions? One answer may because of the low state of Cretan society and the average level of family life and ethics. It seems from Paul's description of Cretans in Titus 1:12 that Cretan society was similar to and as dishonest and degraded as the England of Wesley – or later of Booth. The Wesleyan revival took women, soaked in gin and sin, got them saved and then emphasized clean living, education, home-making and family virtues. This provided real "redemption and lift". Many rescue ministries working with drug addicts and alcoholics emphasize such virtues today. The fact that Paul has to instruct both elders and older women to be "not given to much wine" may indicate widespread alcoholism in the community.

So we seem to be looking a society which needs rebuilding from the ground up and liberation from lying, laziness, alcoholism and gluttony (Titus 1;12, 2:1-10) , in fact Crete had quite a reputation and gave us the Italian word “Cretino” for its citizens which became later became our English word “cretin”. (I am sure Cretans are not like this today!) So Paul is giving instructions here, which are useful for broken people, drug addicts, alcoholics, and those who need a total rebuilding of their conscience and their moral structures. (And of course which also have something to say to us all.)

Titus is not spared: ”in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, [8]sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.” The Christian worker is to be a template for godly living – a pattern for good works that others can follow. The Greek word is tupos –from which we get “type” as in typology and typography – the imprint, representation, or example. As we might say that the tabernacle is type of Christ - so Titus is to be a type of good works, showing them forth so people can both learn and believe.

Titus is to be solid – showing integrity, reverence and incorruptibility – no appointments of family members, no bribes, no funny accounting, no use of church property for personal use, no pandering to the rich, no deviation from the impartiality proper to a servant of God. God’s workers must “walk humbly with their God” in reverence, honesty and integrity – not in showmanship or in greed. Titus is to have sound speech that cannot be condemned; outbursts have ruined many ministries. Words are powerful – particularly when spoken in public or from a pulpit – and must be chosen with great care and wisdom.

Reverence, respect and honesty are to extend even into the workplace: “Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, [10]not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” In the Philippines having a “helper” is quite common and people still look for these four virtues in a good helper – that the person be obedient, that they are pleasing in their attitude, that they do not answer back and that they can be trusted with money and o not pilfer from the employer. Such a helper is highly prized and will be a good witness in the home and an adornment to the gospel.

Example is everything and the spiritual aspects of honest, reverent and respectful living are uppermost in Paul’s mind. Such virtue is “proper for sound doctrine” (v.1) prevents the faith being maligned: “that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” (v.5) and “that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.” (v.9) and finally it promotes the gospel: “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” (V.10) To be a good witness you have to have these virtues – for they are universally recognized as proper and fitting Christian virtues. Can you imagine a drunken elder or a pilfering servant having any credibility with unbelievers? We are the only bible many people read and they look at our actions and our character first of all.

Being a good Christian example at home and at work and in community is hard work. But we are all representatives of the faith we profess and believe. Being solid, good, reverent and respectful people who are a pleasure to work with and live with is a life-long achievement. It is much easier to be loud and insolent and “cool”. But that is not the path of wisdom or the Way of the gospel.

Blessings,

John Edmiston johned@aibi.ph

Were you blessed by Eternity Daily Bible Study? To subscribe just send a blank email to: eternity-dbs-subscribe@strategicnetwork.org

Visit the Eternity Daily Bible Study Archives - http://www.aibi.ph/eternity/

Study at the Asian Internet Bible Institute- Free online non-formal, in-service, bible and ministry training: http://www.aibi.ph

This ministry is supported by donations from those who have been blessed. To donate online go to: http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/donate.htm