

Brent Alderman
240.818.3053

brent.alderman@capitolcom.org

PROFILE OF A GODLY CHARACTER – PART 1 (Titus 1:5, 6)

Christian philosopher Blaise Pascal once said, “The virtue of a man ought not to be measured by his extra-ordinary exertions, but by his everyday conduct.” We can be Impressed by the lofty accomplishments of a person, but it is true that their real character is shown by who they are in the daily motions of life.

Think back to someone in your life who you would consider to have strong character. It might be a parent or a teacher or a minister – anyone. Do you want to emulate them? Do you ever shape a decision based on what they would have done? Would others think of you as a person of character, worthy of emulation?

Last week we began a journey through the little book of Titus, a letter the apostle Paul wrote to a younger colleague who was given a specific assignment. It wasn't an easy assignment either, but one in which a strong, godly character would be needed and taught.

Here's the beginning of Paul's assignment to Titus:

Titus 1:5, 6 - This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.

So the biggest issue we see first is that Titus is left on the island of Crete to set the churches in order that had been established by Paul. His problem, though, is that Crete is fairly well-known for producing Cretans. Literally. So as he appoints elders in the churches, he must find leaders of character who can faithfully serve and model to everyone what it is to have godly character. The verses that follow give a solid list of qualities that we all should try to imitate. We'll cover three here and cover the rest of the list next week.

A PUBLIC REPUTATION IN ORDER (v. 5)

Maybe you've heard it said that character can take a lifetime to build, but can be destroyed in a moment. Our text mentions that the leaders of the churches in Crete (and anyone of character) had to be above reproach, or blameless.

This word gives the idea of the absence of a charge or accusation against that person's character. This person is beyond legitimate accusation in their public or private life.

The importance of this trait cannot be lost on public servants who have so many opportunities to violate ethical practices. Let me encourage you to keep yourself and others in the political community in prayer, to be careful in all areas of temptation that could render you less than blameless. This is for the good of those you serve, but more importantly, it honors the God to whom you are ultimately accountable.

Those who teach by their doctrine must teach by their life, or else they pull down with one hand what they build up with the other. — Matthew Henry -

People of godly character remember that they are constantly being watched. This is a theme in the New Testament when church leaders are mentioned.

*Hebrews 13:7 - Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and **imitate their faith.***

Titus had a huge job before him in a place that had the reputation for greed, gluttony, and laziness. In that mess of a culture, Paul made it clear that leaders had to be above reproach, which was no small task.

A MARRIAGE IN ORDER (v. 6)

A strong home life also marks the person of godly character. This doesn't mean absolute perfection in every moment of the marriage relationship (there will always be disagreements that have to be worked out) but it does mean that this spousal relationship is given priority.

The Greek phrase is more literally interpreted as "a one-woman man" or "a one-woman husband." This refers to a man's faithfulness to the woman who is his wife and implies inner, as well as outward, sexual purity.

God intends and expects marriage to be a lifetime commitment between a man and a woman, based on the principles of biblical love. The relationship between Jesus Christ and His church is the supreme example of the committed love that a husband and wife are to follow in their relationship with each other.

- Biblical Counseling Foundation -

With so many varying ideas about what constitutes a marriage in today's world, we can still trust the design the Creator gave from the very beginning. Marriage was his plan for the moral underpinning of society from the start. We cannot improve on that plan with other family constructs. Marital fidelity to one person shows ascent and submission to that design.

A FAMILY IN ORDER (v. 6)

Along with the basis of a strong family in a marriage, deep godly character will show up in the lives of a person's children. Obviously, each child has her own choices to make in life, but a godly parent will point children in the right direction and with God's help, will see positive fruit as a result.

This means seeing that children are brought up knowing the Scriptures and given the opportunity to respond to the gospel. A godly parent will not leave this crucial task undone.

Our text says that the children in this type of home will not be "open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination." Another translation says that they are "not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient." This makes clear the importance of leadership in the home that results in children, once they have matured, who are not characterized by chronic irresponsibility or have a problem recognizing authority.

The reason for this is clear – if one cannot lead at home, then how can they lead in other settings? A home is a place to show a parents' character and the lives of children will always be a barometer of how that parent can be given more responsibility to lead elsewhere.

The family was God's first earthly institution. Before there was a government, and long before God instituted the church, He ordained marriage and the family as the basic building block of society. The more the family is threatened, the more society itself is in danger of extinction. We're living in the last days, and nothing shows that more graphically than the deterioration of the family. – John MacArthur -

As we start moving through this list of qualities of a person with godly character, it's good to be reminded again of God's standards versus the standards set by mere men. We are not without good instruction here and need to take these principles to heart.

Let's end with these words from Samuel Logan Brengle, an early commissioner in the Salvation Army: "The final estimate of men shows that history cares not an iota for the rank or title a man has borne, or the office he has held, but only the quality of his deeds and the character of his mind and heart."

BIBLE STUDY

Legislators and Staff (During Session)

Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.

Room 153, House Office Building