

“A Closing Word on Relationships”

Titus 3:9-15

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I. Introduction

- A. Two porcupines in Northern Canada huddled together to get warm, according to a forest folktale. But their quills prickled each other, so they moved apart. Before long, they were shivering, so they sidled close again. Soon, both were getting jabbed again. Same story; same ending. They needed each other, but they kept needling each other.
 - 1. The same is true in the church. We need each other, yet we keep needling each other.
 - 2. The church is made up of people, and wherever there are people, there will be problems.
 - 3. The book of Titus is a call to be sound in belief and behavior, living lives that “adorn the doctrine of God” (Titus 2:10).
 - a) To do that, we must have strong churches built on sound doctrine (or God’s Word, which is truth).
 - b) We must also have sanctified relationships, or God’s love, which is the fruit of the Spirit.
 - 4. Paul closes his letter to Titus by mentioning three important categories of personal relationships within the church.
 - a) For the pastor and the people

II. False Teachers (Titus 3:9)

- A. Titus tells us to avoid foolish or profitless controversies.
 - 1. Contrast with verse 8, Titus was to “affirm sound doctrine which is good and profitable.”
 - 2. Now, he is to avoid unsound doctrine for it is “unprofitable and vain.” (v.9)
 - 3. The things he was to avoid
- B. Foolish or profitless controversies (v.9)
 - 1. This is not a prohibition of all theological controversy.
 - a) Illustration- Jesus Himself was controversial and in constant debate with the religious leaders of His day (Titus 1:9-11)
 - 2. Not all controversy is banned—only “foolish controversies”
 - a) Illustration- Joel Osteen on Larry King Live
 - b) We must “earnestly contend for the faith which was once and for all delivered unto the saints.”
 - 3. Don’t waste time on profitless controversies or speculations.
- C. Genealogies (v.9)
 - 1. Jewish (1 Timothy 1:3-4)

- D. Avoid contentions or arguments (v.9)
- E. Quarrels about the Law (v.9)
 - 1. It's unprofitable and vain.
 - 2. It's the same today.
 - 3. Illustration- Baptisms, the proper day to worship, church music, proper dress, etc.
 - a) Methods rather than spiritual realities
 - b) What kind of juice to use for Communion
 - c) Other theological nitpicking
 - 4. Let's remember the essentials in unity.
 - a) The Bible
 - b) Jesus Christ
 - c) Salvation
 - 5. In non-essentials (liberty)
 - 6. In all things (love)

III. Factious People (Titus 3:10-11)

- A. Titus is here to discipline contentious people.
 - 1. Illustration- A newspaper item captioned "The Principle of the Thing" told how stubbornness had caused a split in Japan's Stubbornness Club, formed a year earlier by 20 people who considered themselves obstinate but who wanted to be constructive members of society. Their monthly meetings became so clamorous that the vice-president resigned to form a more discreet Society for the Preservation of Stubbornness.
 - a) Sad to say, the church has always had stubborn and contentious people.
 - 2. Paul called them "heretic" (v.10)
 - a) Literally a "sect" or "party"
 - b) It came to mean one who is factious, contentious, divisive, or quarrelsome.
 - c) A person determined to go his own way and form parties and factions
 - d) Probably false teachers in verse 9
 - e) Believe as I believe, no more, no less; That I am right, and no one else, confess; Feel as I feel, think only as I think; Eat what I eat, and drink what I drink; Look as I look, do always as I do; And then, and only then, I'll fellowship with you.
 - 3. People in the church often turn into a "Diotrephes"
 - 4. "Loves to have the preeminence (3 John 9) and "loves to be first"
 - a) Do it his way
 - 5. Illustration- A.T. Robertson once wrote an article on Diotrephes for a church magazine, portraying him as one who wants to control a church according to his own whims. Subsequently, 20 deacons from various parts of the country wrote the editor to cancel their subscriptions because of this "personal attack" made on them.

- a) Carnal Christians who have their own agenda
- 6. How do you handle a factious person?
- 7. Three steps (v.10)
 - a) Warn them
 - b) Warn them again
 - c) Reject them
 - 1) Is it excommunication or social ostracism?
 - 2) We don't know, but both are taught in the Bible
 - 3) The purpose is always restoration, purity, and unity in the church
 - 4) It is important (v.11)
 - 5) "Such a man is warped, sinful, and self-condemned"
- 8. Three reasons for discipline in the church
 - a) Teaching heresy
 - 1) (1 Timothy 1:20)
 - 2) Liberal Christian denominations
 - b) Scandal or sin
 - 1) (2 Corinthians 5)
 - 2) Professing Christians living in sin
 - c) Schism (Titus 3:10)
 - 1) How it often happens
 - 2) Remember our enemies—world, flesh, Devil
 - 3) The problem of gossiping
- 9. What about when we offend one another?
 - a) If you are the offender
 - 1) (Matthew 5:21-26)
 - b) If you are the offended
 - 1) (Matthew 18:15-17)

IV. Fellow Servants (Titus 3:12-15)

- A. Titus is to join Paul at Nicopolis (v.12)
 - 1. We do need each other
- B. Titus is to send Zenas and Apollos on their way (v.13)
 - 1. Help others serve the Lord
 - 2. "See that they have everything they need."
- C. Titus is to teach God's people to live productive lives (v.14)
 - 1. Live to be a blessing to others
- D. We are to love the brethren (v.15)

V. Conclusion

- A. In an old monastery in Germany, two pairs of antlers interlocked may be seen, said to have been found in that position many years ago. The deer had been fighting with their

antlers which got jammed together and could not be separated. They died with locked horns.

B. Let's not be

1. False teachers
2. Factions

C. Let's be

1. Fellow servants working together for the glory of God
2. It's grace that teaches us how to love and live.