

“*The Believer’s Obligation*”

Penetrating a Dark World

Titus 3:1-2

Dr. Bruce Bickel

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Bruce: Good morning, men. How are you doing today?

Men: Okay!

Bruce: Good to be with you. Thank you for coming on a nice drizzly day. (*Laughter*) Don, do you want to set the tone so we can go into the presence of the Lord and know that He is God? Let’s just be quiet before Him. (*Music*)

Gracious and merciful Lord, it’s with great humility, but at the same time great expectation, that we sit at Your feet this day before the throne of grace, trusting that You will be pleased to open our eyes once again in Your faithfulness, to let us see the victory, the character, the beauties of Christ. And may it be so for Jesus’ sake. Amen and Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: We’re continuing our study in the book of Titus, Paul’s instruction to his young ministerial protégé on the island of Crete. We now come to chapter 3.

Just as a matter of quick review, you remember that chapter 1 dealt with orderliness in the church. Chapter 2 dealt with godliness in the home. And chapter 3 will begin with consistency in the world. Another way of looking at that would be that chapter 1 dealt with leadership, chapter 2 dealt with learning, and chapter 3 deals with lifestyle. That’s where we pick it up today—about lifestyle, consistency in the world.

When we begin to look at chapter 3, it can be divided up into three major categories. The first one, in the couple of verses we’re going to look at today, would be dealing with our civil responsibilities. It’s going to be what I call *the believer’s obligation*. There are certain obligations that we have as citizens of the Kingdom to live a certain style of life because of what we’ve learned in the first two chapters. Because of orderliness in the church and godliness in the home, it now translates into our practical pastoral life, of having certain obligations that we live by because of our consistency in the world.

The theme of this particular book I’ve entitled *Penetrating a Dark World*. And so it’s very logical that if you’re going to have orderliness in the church—correct leadership, the right people in the right positions with the right qualifications at the right time for the right reason—then you’re going to have an increase of godliness in the home. And when you have orderliness in the church and godliness in the home, you’re more likely to have consistency in the world. And that’s where we pick it up today.

So the divisions of chapter 3 would be *the believer’s obligation*, *the believer’s motivation*, and *the believer’s reaction and the believer’s response*. That’s how I would divide up chapter 3 of the book of Titus. So let’s begin with chapter 3, looking at verses 1 and 2, reading again from the English Standard Version.

“*Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.*” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

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Bruce: Amen and Amen. Now Titus’ ministry was to be one of organizing a church, organizing church leadership, silencing the false teachers, and instilling an appropriate Christian lifestyle, which we pick up in chapter 3.

Now in chapter 1 we saw the directions for the promotion of the spirit of sanctification in congregational life. Chapter 1 can be categorized as the *spirit of sanctification in the congregational life of the church*. Chapter 2 could be described as *the promotion of the spirit of sanctification in family and individual life*. And chapter 3 would be the promotion of *the spirit of sanctification in public life*. Notice how it goes: church life, family life, public life.

Now in the context of what we’re studying in the book of Titus, on the island of Crete, Christians were often looked upon with suspicion by the Roman Empire, especially on the island of Crete, because their conduct was so different and so out of character from the rest of Roman society. One of the things that they could not figure out was why they met in private meetings in homes. Why did they do that? You can read about that in 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 11-25. This produced some consternation on the part of the Roman Empire because the people were so different. And of course that’s one of the messages that Paul was teaching to young Titus, to make sure that the people were different in their conduct, especially on the island of Crete.

It was very important that the Christians be good citizens without compromising their own faith. Now that’s a tough thing to do. We need to be good citizens without compromising our faith. And that’s what we’re going to begin talking about today—the believer’s obligation and the believer’s motivation and the believer’s reaction in chapter 3, helping us to be good citizens without violating our faith.

You see, their pagan neighbors on the island of Crete would certainly disobey the law. But Christians must be submissive to the authority of the state, including the government of the Roman Empire. You can read about that in Romans chapter 13 to help us understand that all authority has been given by God.

Transcriber’s Note: Romans 13:1-7. *“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good and you will receive his approval. For he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer.*

“Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God’s wrath, but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes. For the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.”

Men, do you realize this, that the person to whom you report at work is a divine appointment in your life? Do you view your boss that way? The Scripture says in Romans 13 that all authority has been God-given. He or she may not know that they have

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that authority, but you know it, and therefore that is going to change the way that you and I respond to our authorities, because we know this, that he or she has a divine appointment in my life because of the sovereignty of God. And the issue is not how she treats me or how he treats me. The issue is how do I respond to her? How do I respond to him? That’s the spirit of what Paul is writing to Titus about the people on the island of Crete. It’s so applicable for us today.

The real issue for us in the workplace, men, is this. Do you believe that God is bigger than your boss? Do you really believe that God is bigger than your boss? That’s going to determine how you respond to your boss in any context that we have.

So Paul tells Titus to remind the people of certain daily obligations. And one of the great themes of the Scripture is the theme of *remembrance*. You’ll notice the number of times that Peter and Paul, when writing their epistles, say “Remind the people.”

Repetition is one of the great ways of learning. Remind them of certain things.

Now here are some important things about our daily obligations that we have as believers that we can pick up from the island of Crete and the people Paul is talking to through his friend Titus.

First of all, concerning our civil and social duties, notice this in verse 1. “*To be submissive to rulers and authorities.*” Now the Cretans were known as troublemakers. They were known as very, very truculent people, very, very aggressive people, as well as very self-centered people. So the message that Paul is teaching Titus to remind the Christians on Crete was the antithesis of what the nature and the culture of Crete was. At one time we’re told historically that the island was a haven for pirates. So the general attitude of the people of Crete would not be submissiveness. They were not going to be responding to authority. It was going to be a free-for-all. Just get what you can and grab what you can and take what you want.

That was the contrast. Paul was telling young Titus to teach these people, to remind them of certain obligations they had because they were members of the kingdom of God. As Paul had this manner of submissiveness in his mind, he wants to make sure that Titus teaches the Cretan Christians not to be troublemakers.

Just look at this very generically. He says, “Don’t be troublemakers when you go to work.” Don’t be the cause of civil unrest. Adopt a different outlook of life. And you do that because you understand the grace of God in your life.

We take into the workplace a wholly different attitude than anybody else. We’ve got to be the most diligent laborers, the most consistent laborers, the most ethical laborers, the most excellent laborers, because we represent Somebody other than ourselves. We’re not representing our culture. We’re representing the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords because we are followers of Christ. That’s why I call this the believer’s obligation. Men, there are certain obligations that you and I have to take into the workplace. Those are obligations we have because of what Christ has done to us and what He has done for us.

So the first quality is one of *attitude*. First of all it starts with how you think. It starts with our attitude. Our outlook determines our outcome. It’s one of attitude—submissiveness.

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The second is one of *action*. Attitude precedes action. Doctrine precedes conduct. It’s the same thing we’ve been teaching all along the last twenty-three years. Doctrine precedes our conduct. We must have the right attitude before we have the right actions.

It’s not enough just to obey grudgingly. That doesn’t work for us. We are to be willingly responsive to secular leaders without compromising our faith. There’s a dual responsibility. I have an obligation to go to work and not to be a troublemaker. I have the obligation to go to work and not to be the cause of unrest or unruliness or civil disobedience.

But at the same time I can’t let this environment impact or compromise my faith. And so Paul is going to give us some very good insight today about how one can do that. That’s why I call this *the spirit of sanctification in your civil and corporate life*. So Christians, in contrast to what Paul just told us about the Cretans, are to have some characteristics that they must take into the workplace.

We are to *obey*—Romans chapter 13 verse 1. Are we known for our obedience without compromising our faith? Do we pay our taxes—Romans chapter 13 verse 6—without compromising our faith? We are to honor our authorities—Romans 13 verse 7; 1 Peter 2:17.

Transcriber’s Note: 1 Peter 2:17. *“Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”*

Bruce: And we are to pray for our leaders. 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

Transcriber’s Note: 1 Timothy 2:1-2. *“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”*

Bruce: So we are to obey, pay our taxes, honor and pray for our leaders.

I was talking with a young friend recently who had still absolutely not gotten over the fact that Hilary lost the election. (*Laughter*) I mean she just can’t get over it. And she said, “Well, my best friend is a Christian, and she can’t get over it either.”

And my response was, “Well if your best friend is a Christian, then she’s doing exactly what I’m doing.”

And she said, “What’s that?”

I said, “Praying for your leaders, because if you don’t pray for him to be successful, we’re in deep doo-doo.”

Participant: Yep.

Bruce: We ought to be praying for our leadership. Men, there are some things going on even as we speak today that are going to change the world’s environment. We need to be praying for our leaders to make those wise decisions.

Now we may have elected somebody to be our president. But as long as Jesus Christ is on the throne of the universe, that’s where our protection and our comfort is.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: So we need to be praying for our leaders. That’s one of our responsibilities, men! It’s an obligation we have to our civil leaders, be they local, be they corporate, be they national, be they international. Pray for our leadership. Ask God to superintend and

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affect their minds, to bring the right kind of people around them so they will have the wisdom to make the right decisions.

You see, that’s the whole concept of leadership. In chapter 1 it was this: the right person with the right qualifications in the right position at the right time for the right reason. That’s how we need to be praying. That’s one of our obligations, one of our civil duties as followers of Christ, because we know this, that Jesus is the King of the universe.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: He’s the King of the universe. Somebody else may be our president, but Christ is the King of the universe.

Do we believe that God is bigger than our boss?

Participant: All the time.

Bruce: I believe that God is much bigger than President Trump, and so I pray for him.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Much bigger than that. So the first thing we need to do, men, is to understand our obligations.

Obedience is to be given not only to Christian leaders and Christian rulers but also to non-Christian leaders, without violating our faith. It’s also to pagan leaders, as in the case of Crete, and to unjust rulers, as I would say to the Pilates of the world, to the Herods of the world, to the Felixes, to the Sanhedrin, and to the Neros. Christians have an obligation to be submissive to authorities and to rulers.

The only exception to our obedience would be is that we are not to obey the laws of the land should they compromise or be disobedient to God’s laws. That’s the one exception.

Now you don’t rule your life on exceptions. People always say, “Well what about this?” Friends, very seldom is that going to happen to us. We need to work on the positive side or what we need to be, rather than worrying about the one exception when it comes along. When the one exception comes along, you’ll know what to do. You have to obey God and not the world.

Look at Daniel chapter 6 verse 10.

Participant: There you go.

Bruce: Or Acts chapter 4, verses 19 and 20.

Transcriber’s Note: Daniel 6:10, NKJV. *“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”*

Acts 4:18-20, NKJV. *“So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot be speak the things which we have seen and heard.’”*

Bruce: You see, you don’t run your life on the exception. Everybody is waiting for the exception. “What if?” Well don’t worry about the what if. That will come, and you’ll know what to do with it when it does occur. We run our lives by the regular things, not by the exceptions.

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Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Now here’s my position on this one. If we must disobey for the reason not to be disobedient to God’s law, then we should explain ourselves to our rulers and to our authorities why we’re going to be disobedient. Information beforehand is a reason. Information afterward is an excuse, and nobody likes excuses.

My boss is not going to be interested in my excuse for disobeying her. I need to give her information beforehand as to why I’m going to disobey her. And then I need to cheerfully accept the consequences for what I just said.

The real ministry does not come with the act of disobedience. The real ministry comes in the reception of the response to the act of disobedience when you suffer for Christ’s sake. That’s when the ministry occurs.

So what we do is we tell our boss that I cannot do that for this reason. And then you accept the consequences cheerfully and willingly.

You see, we need to be responsive to our leaders and our authorities without compromising our faith. But you don’t run your life waiting for that one exception to come along. We need to practice the sanctification process in responding to our civil authorities and being what Christ wants us to be in this world. We are salt and light.

Notice this. The second thing is-- Yes, Ted?

Ted: Don had his hand up.

Bruce: I’m sorry.

Don: Yes. I heard a few weeks ago of somebody in the Sudan who is a Christian who was being persecuted. He was in all kinds of prisons because of the Islamic government. Each prison that he went to was worse than the one before. He was starved for thirty or forty days. And yet he witnessed, and there were people who came to Christ as a result of that. So that’s what you’re saying about response.

Bruce: Absolutely. Yes, Ted?

Ted: You know, I was just saying that in our experience, Dr. Martin Luther King was our greatest example of explaining the disobedience and joyfully accepting the consequences.

Bruce: That’s correct. That’s our model, men. Information beforehand is a reason. Give her a reason for your disobedience, and then willingly accept the consequences. That’s the power of the witness of Christ. That’s the power of the witness that we have. Yes, please?

Participant: I think too, Bruce, that we’re to live peaceably. When we have a peaceful government then the gospel can go forth. And we’re learning, or we’ve learned by our past, that evil doesn’t want to coexist. It wants to take over.

Bruce: That’s right.

Participant: So what does it take for evil to prosper? It’s for good men to do nothing. So there is a responsibility for us as Christian men. We think that Christianity is just an option. It is *“the way, the truth and the life.”* And so we need to impose our thoughts and our beliefs on others because it is true and right.

Bruce: Absolutely.

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Participant: And therefore we will bring peace on earth if we live by God’s way. If we don’t, then chaos will rule.

Bruce: That’s right. That’s why we need to pray for our rulers.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: We need to do that. We pray for ourselves and each other when we go to work.

The second thing Paul tells Titus is this. Not only are we to be submissive to our rulers and authorities, but *“to be ready for every good work.”* The phrase *ready to do every good work* from verse 1 of chapter 3 of Titus means this: *cooperating in those matters that involve the whole community.* We need to be ready to be involved in good works with those issues that involve the whole community. Our heavenly citizenship—Philippians 3:20—does not absolve us from our responsibilities of being good citizens on earth.

Transcriber’s Note: Philippians 3:20-a. *“For our citizenship is in heaven.”*

Bruce: We are in the world but not of the world. We have certain obligations. And when you look at it historically, men, many of the great humanitarian efforts and reforms of the past have been led by Christian principles and people of Christian convictions. And we ought not to be spectators when it comes to being involved in our civic activities. We are not called to be spectators. We’re to be in the world but not of the world.

Christians are to be *“the salt of the earth”* and *“the light of the world.”* Therefore we have got to involve ourselves in the good causes of our government, provided that we do not compromise our convictions or hinder the work of the Lord. *“Be ready for every good work.”* And don’t compromise your faith.

Now the expression *ready for every good work* forms a natural bridge between the duties which believers owe to government and those which we owe to our neighbors. You see, we can apply the same thing to our neighbors. Are we good neighbors?

Are you a good neighbor? If you’re going to be involved in the civil activities of the community, where does it start? It starts on your block. It starts in your neighborhood. Practice in your neighborhood and see what the Lord does with you over the time of your involvement in the civil activities and the good causes of your community. Are we good neighbors?

Here is some advice from other passages of Scripture by Paul. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:58. *“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”*

How about Galatians 6:9? *“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up.”*

Ephesians 2:10. *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*

Men, we have obligations to be good citizens in our culture. And I would encourage us to start by being good citizens with our neighbors.

How about the third thing Paul tells Titus to remind the people of? Not only are we to be submissive and to be ready for every good work, but *“to speak evil of no one.”* This is an obligation we have in society, to speak evil of no one.

Now it stands to reason that believers should never revile anyone or speak ill of anyone. Now most of the time Christians don’t need that admonition or that exhortation

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or reminder. But oftentimes we do, because abusive language is surely out of place for anyone, certainly for believers. That should not be part of our lifestyle.

“Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.” If you want to know the spiritual condition you have in your life, listen to what words you say. Why did I say what I said? Why do I choose those words? You see, that’s a reflection of something more than just your words and your vocabulary knowledge. It’s a reflection of your heart.

Jesus said this. *“Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”* You see, we’re to speak differently than the rest of the world. We don’t engage in vulgar thoughts, vulgar activities, lewd jokes, things of that nature. We don’t do that because we’re to considerately *“speak evil of no one”*, and to guard our tongues.

Now as we were just talking a moment ago, some people think they can change things by arguments and being vindictive. Paul warns against that type of activity—spreading lies with evil intent and starting fights. Notice James chapter 1 verse 20. *“The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”* We are not to be argumentative. We are not to be vindictive. We need to watch what we say with our mouths because we are not to speak evil of anyone. We’re not going to accomplish anything for the kingdom of God if we act like the world. We need to be different from the world.

How about Ephesians 4:31? *“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”* Yes, Jim?

Jim: I’m thinking that, particularly in times of political elections and so forth, being Christians, that we use our mouths in the way we shouldn’t. But how do you speak truthfully without speaking evil?

Bruce: Let’s move on. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Can you help me, Bruce, with a *how* question? *(Laughter)*

Bruce: If I knew how to answer that question, I’d be rich. *(Laughter)* Ted, yes?

Ted: I know that having been involved with missions in Turkey, in Turkey the law is that you cannot speak against Turkishness. Now they interpret that to mean that because all Turks are Muslims, you don’t speak against Islam. So the challenge for missionaries is how do they present the gospel without pointing out the errors of the other side? So try to do that.

Bruce: Good point.

Ted: And I think that would be true. This last election was horrible for an evangelical Christian witness in terms of what was said about the other side. I had to rebuke a brother a number of times for sending out emails to me about the latest outrage of Hilary Clinton. And I said, “This is no witness. You’re a terrible witness. You’re sending this out to Christians and others.”

Bruce: That’s right.

Ted: It was a great expose of what a horrible person she was. If she’s a horrible person and she’s not regenerate, she can’t help herself, and even Donald Trump, if he’s unregenerate, can’t help himself. They can’t help themselves being horrible people. Yet we have no problem just blasting away. It was an awful election in terms of the Christian evangelical witness. Awful!

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Bruce: *“Speak evil of no one.”* One of the ways you can respond while not being argumentative is just to make a declarative statement, something like this. “That would not be the position that I would hold.” Sometimes I’ve said that when they would go after someone. I would say, “That’s interesting. That’s not the position that I would hold.”

Then if they asked me, “What position do you hold?”, now they’re inviting me to speak.

Participant: Yes.

Bruce: Now I can do that. And I can give them information beforehand. Yes, Don?

Don: Okay, Bruce. What about Ephesians 5, though, where it says that we’re to expose the works of darkness?

Bruce: Yes, we are.

Don: We’re not to keep them hidden. What about that?

Bruce: It’s true. *(Laughter)* Just a minute. How do we expose it?

Participant: By being the light.

Bruce: By being the light, by being ready for every good work.

Participant: That’s right.

Bruce: That’s how we expose it. That’s how we expose evil. We do that by being ready for every good work. That’s exactly the obligations we have. That’s how we expose things. That’s why people come after us. And so we expose them by being ready to do every good work that we can. Yes, Brian?

Brian: I think that we have to balance it. We can’t attack the person, but we can attack the position. And if you look at Jesus, if you look at John the Baptist, they had some fairly harsh words. I don’t have the answer to this, but I’m trying to figure it out. How can we not be sissies and stand back and be politically correct, yet be as bold as Christ, being as bold as some of the Reformers? There’s a both/and. I want to be loving, yet absolutely bold.

Participant: Don’t be politically correct, for one thing. We’re not called to be politically correct. We’re called to speak the truth.

Bruce: First of all, men, it starts with our spirit. It starts with the spirit of our response. The next thing we’re going to talk about is not being argumentative or not to be quarreling. We can speak the truth, but do it with a sense of salt that is palatable and draws people to us without being argumentative.

Now how do you do that? You have to trust the Holy Spirit. That’s part of our sanctification process. As the Scripture says in Matthew, “When they bring you up in front of the leaders, He’ll give you the words to say.” There is no black and white issue in all this. We have to trust the Lord as we can. But part of the issue is this. What is the spirit of my response when I share truth? Yes, Bishop Rodgers?

Bishop Rodgers: What it comes down to really is don’t talk if you’re angry. *(Laughter)*

Bruce: That’s right. I don’t mean to make light of this, but you know, people always ask me my life’s verse. You’ve heard me said that. It’s Exodus 14:14. *“I will fight for you while you remain silent.”* That’s exactly what Bishop Rodgers is saying. I need to make

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sure that when somebody stimulates something in me that’s less than godly, (*laughter*), which happens frequently, my first response needs to be this.

Transcriber’s Note: Bruce covers his mouth.

Bruce: Keep your mouth shut. And what do you do then? You think. You begin to pray. You begin to think, “How should I respond?” All of the Scripture comes back into our memory. But you have to do it right. You don’t want to respond out of anger. You respond with truth and not out of anger. Let’s see, who’s next? Yes, please?

Participant: Wasn’t Jesus our example in front of Caiaphas?

Bruce: Yes.

Participant: And also in front of Pilate? You know what I mean? In both of those examples He kept His cool.

Bruce: Yes. We’re going to get into that in a moment when we talk about meekness. Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is living according to the power of God. Yes, sir? Did you have your hand up or were you scratching your ears? Okay. (*Laughter*)

Participant: In regard to exposing the deeds of darkness, like you brought up, Don, I think we need to go on the offensive by being subject to civil rulers, being ready for every good work, speaking evil of no one, “*to avoid quarreling, to be gentle,*” and on down the line, because as we do that, that exposes the deeds of darkness all around us.

Bruce: Absolutely. Those obligations we have will expose the darkness. Yes, James?

James: It would seem that if we’re going to speak with somebody about the truth of the Word, that obviously you do it lovingly and with grace. But we’re concerned for their spiritual welfare if you know that they’re not saved. Maybe you present it in a way that you show that you care about them. You want them to know the truth. You don’t know how they will react. They may still shun you or whatnot. They may think back on it later.

Bruce: Who knows what’s going to happen? Go back to Ephesians 4:31. “*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*” Let’s talk about the spirit of your response. We need to make sure that the spirit of our response, whatever that is, whatever the Lord leads you to say, is a correct spirit devoid of these other things. We’re avoiding these other things.

How about James 4:11? “*Do not speak evil against another brother. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge.*” We’re not to be judges.

So however the Holy Spirit works in us to do this, men, these are some of the obligations we have. We don’t have any pat answers for all of these things. But that’s the Spirit of sanctification. It’s the process in which God is now conforming us to the image of Christ by the obligations we have. Yes, please?

Participant: When Jesus came with the money changers there was pretty much of a bit of a ruckus, and He really showed His overt physical strength. Do we ever get to that point?

Bruce: That’s the exception, not the rule, men. We’ve got to be careful. Don’t make that the rule. It doesn’t mean that you’ve got to throw hand grenades at the next church. (*Laughter*) It doesn’t mean that. It means that you live by the rule, which is what we are

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talking about. When the exception comes, then you have a different response. And that’s when you don’t violate your faith. But you don’t anticipate that now. You trust the Lord when that occurs. Grace comes at the moment of application, not contemplation. Sitting here and worrying about what’s going to happen when that occurs is of no value. When it happens is when God gives you the grace. And grace comes at the moment of application, not contemplation. Yes, please?

Participant: I was going to say that a lot of the times when Jesus or the apostles came really strongly against a group, it’s always the religious elite. He’s usually coming against the legalistic religious elite. Paul, for example, when he is speaking to non-Christians, or to people who weren’t religious, or to different sects like the Greeks, he was very gentle. There’s a big distinction there.

Bruce: Yes, Bishop Rodgers?

Bishop Rodgers: I was just thinking that one of the places where we can practice this behavior is in our marriages and with our kids. We get lots of opportunities to be offended, to be angry. If we can begin to cope and to practice it at home, so to speak, we’ll be much better at it if we’re out in society.

Bruce: Absolutely right. Chapter 2 comes before chapter 3. (*Laughter*) Godliness in the home, consistency in the world. How are you going to be consistent in the world? Start in the world of your home, with your wife and your kids! Start with them. Yes, please?

Participant: So to speak the truth in love, do I take the responsibility off of myself to be the Holy Spirit?

Bruce: Yes.

Participant: That I have to convince them? Then that takes the emotion out of it, and I can just speak in a loving way. Whether they accept it or not is between them and the Lord.

Bruce: You can’t be somebody’s Holy Spirit.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Don’t try to be that. We are proclaimers of truth. The Holy Spirit will do His work.

There’s another obligation we have, and that is *to avoid quarreling*. Avoid quarreling. Christians are not to be bellicose or belligerent, always looking for a fight. The more stringent requirement is the one which demands that believers are not even to be contentious or quarrelsome.

Look at 1 Timothy 3:3, where more than the absence of vice is expected here. It’s the attitude of the heart that we have. Our intention is to avoid quarreling.

Transcriber’s Note: 1 Timothy 3:3, NKJV. “*But gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous.*”

Bruce: Now in my marriage counseling sessions, when I had the privilege of marrying people, I had a nine week premarital course. One of the things I would teach is the difference between how to argue and avoid quarreling. You have to teach people how to argue. All an argument is is a presentation of facts. Quarreling is when you use your emotions behind the presentation of those facts. You want to teach people how to have

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fighters. But you don’t want to teach them how to be quarrelsome. You want to teach them how to present their facts, to present their case, but not to be quarrelsome about it.

Again, it goes back to the spirit of the person and how you communicate. We need to avoid being quarrelsome.

Look at James chapter 1 verse 19. *“Know this, my beloved brothers. Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”*

“The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” We have a responsibility, men, not to be angry in those situations. Now that requires an absolute trust in the Holy Spirit. That’s what I would call *replacement therapy*. The world is going to stimulate certain responses within you. But you don’t give them back what they stimulate within you. You give them what God has given you. And what is that called?

Participant: Grace.

Second Participant: Ministry.

Bruce: Ministry. Giving back to somebody else what God has given you is ministry. You don’t give them what they stimulate within you. You give them something other than that. You give them what God has given you. If you don’t know what God has given you, you have nothing to give to other people.

Participant: That’s right.

Bruce: Ministry is giving away to somebody else what God has given you. That’s why our definition of ministry is *who you are where you are*. You never know where that’s going to happen. But when you have the opportunity to give away to somebody else in a heated conversation what God has given you, that’s ministry, right in the midst of where you are. You don’t start a program. It occurs; it’s natural. Ministry is the most natural thing that ever happens because that’s what we’ve been designed to do. We’ve been designed to give away what God has given us. And that’s why ministry is who you are, where you are.

So showing some mildness toward all people is the last one. *“To show perfect courtesy toward all people”* is the last obligation we will touch on today. This is a summary statement. It is certainly reached with these words: *“to show perfect courtesy toward all people.”*

Look at 2 Timothy 2:25 as another reference. *“Correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.”* Do you realize that God is the One who gives repentance? Look at the word *repentance*. He gives it as much as He does salvation. He grants repentance. He gives repentance. And you and I need to be people who correct others with gentleness.

Now here’s something that’s very interesting. Showing some mildness toward other people may not be that difficult. But showing mildness to all people is going to be difficult. Showing mildness to some people may not be difficult. But that’s not the obligation. The obligation is showing mildness to—

Men: All.

Bruce: All people.

Participant: It’s hard.

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Bruce: That is not an easy thing to do. That is why we must be absolutely dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 5:14 and 15. *“And we urge you, brothers: Admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil. But always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.”*

Notice. *“I urge you: Admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil. But always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.”*

You see, the attitude of willing submission to authorities for the good of society is based upon the attitudes of the heart that God gives us. So we as Christians are to be taught to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, to show humility towards all people. This is not confrontational, nor is it the self-assertiveness of today. It’s the power of the gospel. It’s the beauty of Christ.

You see, men, when we have these obligations and we fulfill these obligations, we are demonstrating the Person and the work of Christ. We’re just describing all that Jesus is in all this. We’re giving Him away. And ministry, men, is this: giving away to somebody else what God has given you.

And the flow of the book of Titus is this: orderliness in the church, godliness in the home, and consistency in the world. May God give us the grace to help us to understand our obligations that we have because of God’s grace.

Now next week, when we get together, we’ll look at verses 3-7, which deal with the believer’s motivation. What motivates us to do what we just talked about in verses 1 and 2? What’s our motivation? That’s what we’re going to talk about next week—the motivation that we have, the believer’s motivation to fulfill the believer’s obligation. We’ll pick that up next week in verses 3-7.

Let’s pray. Father, You’ve given us a handful. Yet You are the Source of it, You’re the reason for it, and You’re the power of it. Father, we humble ourselves, confessing our sin in not fulfilling those obligations for Your glory. Father, help us to understand that You really are sovereign. You really are in charge of the world. And Father, we have the privilege of representing You wherever we may go. May it be so that we would develop some consistency in the world for Jesus’ sake. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen.” (*Applause*)