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THE CONCEPT, BASIS AND CALL TO GODLINESS IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

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ABSTRACT: This article will focus upon the concept of godliness in the Pastoral Epistles. The actual term *eusebeia*, “godliness,” is used ten times in the Letters, (1 Timothy 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Timothy 3:5; Titus 1:1) Beyond these Epistles the word occurs only once in Acts 3:12 and four times in 2 Peter 1:3, 6, 7; 3:11. Related words, as the adjective *eusebēs* “devout” or “godly,” the adverb *eusebōs* “godly” and the verb *eusebein* “to worship” or “show godliness” are also found. Wherever these words occur there appears to be no significant difference in meaning. This article will seek to explore the concept *eusebeia*, noting how it was used in the Greco-Roman society and the Hellenistic Jewish community. Considering the main texts where the term occurs in the Pastoral Epistles, we will examine how Paul has then adapted this concept to define for Timothy and Titus the Christian’s new existence in Christ, based on his mission, an existence reflecting devotion to God and the consequent manner of life which follows, whether one is in leadership or otherwise.

KEY WORDS The Greco-Roman environment, the Christ-event, ungodliness, the scope of the believer’s intercession, leadership and witness in Ephesus and Crete.

Introduction

As early as Genesis 4:26; 5:22-24; 6:9 it is recorded that people began to “call upon the name of the LORD”² and there were those as Enoch and Noah who were said to have “walked with God.” Testimony to the privilege of fellowship with God enjoyed by many of God’s Old Testament

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2 Quotations in this article are taken from the ESV.

people is recorded in Hebrews 11:1-14 - those “of whom the world was not worthy.” One term to describe this relationship with God in the NT, is the term *eusebeia*, “godliness,” which will now be the focus of this article.

The significant use of the concept

The concept actually occurs ten times in the Pastoral Epistles, (1 Timothy 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Timothy 3:5; Titus 1:1).³ Outside these Epistles the word is found once in Acts 3:12 and four times in 2 Peter 1:3, 6, 7; 3:11. Related words as the adjective *eusebēs* “devout” or “godly” are found three times, (Acts 10:2, 7; 2 Peter 2:9), and the adverb *eusebōs* “godly” twice, (2 Timothy 3:12; Titus 2:12); the verb *eusebein* “to worship” or “show godliness” also occurs twice, (Acts 17:23; 1 Timothy 5:4). In our focus upon godliness, we will consider particularly the references to the word *eusebeia*, in the Pastoral Epistles. The other references do not need separate treatment as their meaning is not really distinct from how *eusebeia* is used.

Towner⁴ who focused upon *eusebeia* in the Pastoral Epistles, highlighted the use of this concept in Hellenistic ethical thought, and specifically its use in the cult of Artemis. In Greek culture it expressed an attitude of reverence towards persons or things (ancestors, living relatives, rulers, i.e., respect for the various orders within life), all under the care of the gods. The Roman equivalent to *eusebeia* was *pietas* which referred to the same range of objects commanding respect. While he has pointed out the use of the concept in the Greco-Roman environment and especially the connection with Artemis, for Towner, it is the concern in Hellenistic Judaism with the Diaspora Jewish community to interpret its faith for

3 Aspects of the meaning of the word “godliness” were first highlighted in my exposition of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus in my book, H. Moore, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus: Missional Texts from a Great Missionary Statesman*, (Belfast: Nicholson and Bass, 2016).

4 P.H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus, The Goal of our Instruction: the Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, 34, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 171-175.

contemporary non-Jewish society which is important. They used this concept as expressing in Greek the interrelationship between the knowledge of the one true God, the fear of the Lord and the resulting conduct which flows from this. For Towner, this is what determined its meaning in the NT. At its basis is the concept of knowing God and the behaviour that ought to follow from this knowledge. This alone, for Towner, is authentic Christianity, in its inward and outward aspects. This godly lifestyle is set over against *asebeia*, (1 Timothy 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:16; Titus 2:12), “un-godliness.” He affirms, “What his opponents presented to the churches as “godliness” Paul exposed as being superficial and empty of a genuine knowledge of God, despite their assertions to a better knowledge of the divine.”⁵ Because of the extensive use of *eusebeia* in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus it becomes clear that Paul is responding to how the word was popularly employed in Greek and Roman ethics and in the cult of Artemis. For him, contemporary culture needed to face the challenge of the Christian gospel that, in fact, this prized cardinal virtue was attainable only through the true knowledge of the only God (1 Timothy 1:17), by faith in Christ, the only mediator, “who gave himself as a ransom,” (1 Timothy 2:5-6) and through the power of the Holy Spirit, (2 Timothy 1:7).

Marshall⁶ in his commentary on the Pastoral Epistles also has a full discussion of the word *eusebeia* in Excursus 1 and arrives at basically the same view. He is attracted to Quinn’s⁷ conclusion that the occurrence of the *eusebeia* word-group in these Epistles reflects “the attempt of Roman Christians to identify themselves in terms of the society in which they lived, a city that had temples to personified Pietas ... The values grounded on *pietas* in pagan Rome offered a point of departure for showing what Christians meant by *eusebeia*.” He suggests that the word-group:

5 Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 174.

6 I H. Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary, eds. J.A. Emerton, C.E.B. Cranfield, and G.N. Stanton, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999, 135-144.

7 J.D. Quinn, “Paul’s Last Captivity,” in Livingstone, E. (ed.), *Studia Biblica 3* (JSNT Sup 3, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1980), 289.

May have been chosen because it provides a contact point with pagan society (Greek or Roman) ... Ironically, it may well have been the currency of the language in Graeco-Roman thought that delayed and then limited its use in the early church's vocabulary.

Note his conviction here that this use in Greek and Roman society may have been the reason why the word *eusebeia* does not occur in Paul's earlier Epistles. He concludes, as Towner, that Paul, now writing to Timothy and Titus, as his apostolic delegates in Ephesus and Crete, employed the term *eusebeia* to express "a strongly Christian concept of the new existence in Christ that combines belief in God and a consequent manner of life." Therefore, here in the Pastoral Epistles Paul can take a word neglected or likely avoided in his earlier Epistles and now affirm for the society and culture in Ephesus and Crete *the true eusebeia*, i.e., what Christianity meant as a response towards God, lived out in a Christian lifestyle based of what God has done in Christ.

In light of the above, what then does Paul have to say about "godliness" as expressed in the Pastoral Epistles? We will discover that the word "godliness" is used by him to describe elements of a lifestyle of devotion that is truly Christian. But first let us consider:

The true basis of godliness

True "godliness" has the Christ-event as its basis. 1 Timothy 3:16 states "Great indeed ... is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen of angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory." The term "mystery" is a common word for something previously hidden but now unveiled. Here what is revealed is the plan of God centered in Jesus Christ, his person and work, all he has accomplished. When the text says "He was manifested in the flesh" this will include the purpose of his incarnation, his saving death as a ransom, which has already been emphasised in 1 Timothy – see 1:15; 2:5. Note how Christ is further revealed; first, "vindicated" in his victorious life and resurrection by the enabling and action of the Spirit, "seen by angels," on many occasions, (Matthew 28:1-7; Luke

2:13, 22:43, 24:4; Mark 1:13; Acts 1:10-11), “proclaimed” in the mission of God, “believed on in the world” through the spread and success of the gospel, and finally, “taken up in glory,” likely a description of the status of his glorification “conferred in and through exaltation.”⁸ All of this has made the “godliness,” which Paul will encourage us to form as a Christian lifestyle, possible. Therefore, these events are “great indeed.” Does Paul recall the cry of Diana’s worshippers who shouted for two hours, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians,” (Acts 19:28, 34) and so, by way of contrast, he affirms “Great ... is the mystery of godliness”?

The second text we should note is Titus 2:11. “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age ...” It is not that the grace of God came into existence when Christ came – God has always been gracious – but his grace appeared visibly in Jesus Christ. It is seen in Jesus’ birth, life, but above all in his atoning death. Take note of how Paul also personifies this grace. Grace the saviour became also grace the teacher. This revelation of grace finds its “teaching power” as it exhorts us (negatively) to renounce our old life, “ungodliness and worldly passions,” and to live (positively) our new life, one of self-control, uprightness and godliness. Paul is therefore affirming here in the Pastorals that it is the coming and cross of Jesus which truly lie at the foundation of a godly lifestyle. Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ “gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous of good works,” (Titus 2:14). Here, Paul is emphasising that Christ came not to save us from hell but from a life of lawlessness or sin! God’s design in sending his Son for us was not just to deliver us from condemnation or the wrath of God, but to bring us to faith and then into purity, to be godly in life, always committed or ready to serve others. To emphasise again, the whole basis of this is the coming and particularly the cross of Jesus. Here we have a completely new insight into what is basic when one speaks of *eusebeia*.

8 Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 284.

The sad contrast to godliness

The “godliness” of which Paul writes is set in contrast to the false teaching, the ungodliness in the present culture and the unworthy motives seen in the lives of the false teachers who were opposed to Paul, (1 Timothy 1:3-7; 4:1-5; 6:3-5). The apostle had been involved in mission as he travelled in the east after he had been released from house arrest in Rome, (Acts 28:30-31). Titus and he had been in Crete, (Titus 1:5) and he had travelled to Ephesus with Timothy where they discover the false teachings which were now in danger of undermining the whole church. Apparently, Paul had excommunicated the two ringleaders, Hymenaeus and Alexander, (1 Timothy 1:19-20), but because he had to press on to Macedonia in his mission ministry, he left Timothy to stop the influence and spread of such teaching, (1 Timothy 1:3). Therefore, Timothy was to stay at Ephesus in order to challenge the false teachers, who were actively teaching (Paul uses the present tense) a “different doctrine.” For this different doctrine, Paul uses *heterodidaskaleō*, which is found only here and again in 6:3 in the NT. Paul largely defines the meaning of *heterodidaskaleō* by his comments here in 1:3-7, 4:1-5 and 6:3-5 concerning the false teachers who advocated “a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching that accords with true godliness,” (6:3).

In preaching this different doctrine, Paul accuses the false teachers of teaching the law wrongly, focusing upon “myths,” *muthos* and “endless genealogies,” *aperantos genealogiais*; “endless” in the sense of only producing constant argument, stressing that they are useless and bring no results, (1 Timothy 1:4). Note that “genealogies” identifies the content as being concerned with OT characters and even possibly OT family trees. Paul had also identified them as “teachers of the law” (1:7), a term used elsewhere of regular Jewish teachers (Luke 5:17; Acts 5:34). But what about the use of the term myths? The two descriptions can be combined, “myths and genealogies” and we can find the same problem highlighted in Titus 1:14, where we again find false teachers teaching “Jewish myths.” The heresy also appears to have had some influences from early

Gnosticism (see 1 Timothy 6:20, where their teaching is referred to as that which is falsely called “knowledge” *gnōseōs*; also, the fact that they “profess to know God,” Titus 1:16).

In this we do not have fully developed Gnosticism which would affect the dating of these Letters,⁹ but what seems to have been Jewish in nature, (Titus 1:10 mentions that the deceivers were “of the circumcision party” and Titus 3:9 identifies their disputes as “quarrels about the law”). The teachers were taken up with useless speculation, involving fantastic stories about famous figures and their genealogies i.e., they were wasting their time in all kinds of fanciful tales regarding ancestors from the past.

We learn something further of the content of the false teaching in 1 Timothy 4: 1-5. “In later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.” The time frame is referring to the Christian era between 1st and 2nd coming of Christ with the emphasis being that the doctrinal departure that is part of the moral and theological deterioration prophesied for the last days had already be-

9 Knight, after a reasonably full discussion remains a little uncertain as to what the terms “myths and genealogies” refer to, but is clear about some things. Genealogies do not refer to the Gnostic systems of aeons as they were never so-called; if this was intended, Paul would have gone more fully into the content, not simply refer to them with a passing allusion. Gnosticism in any clearly developed form (he refers to E. Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*, London, 1973), is later than the NT. G.W. Knight, 111, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC, ed. I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids; The Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1992), 73-74. See also B. Witherington, 111, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, Vol.1: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, and Nottingham, Apollos, 2006), who in “A Closer Look,” 341-347, discusses the opponents of Paul. He stresses the importance of not reading later Gnostic ideas into the text as the false teachers appear to be more like those in Colossians 2 than those dealt with by Irenaeus and others in the second century. This of course, will affect our whole interpretation of the Epistles – here we are dealing with first-century documents and not a second-century church situation.

gun.¹⁰ The false teachers were turning people away from “the faith,” the term that sums up the Christian way. On the surface here we have human agents – certain teachers, probably elders, who were speaking erroneous things, with some people listening to them. But beneath the surface we have the real source of the false teaching. People were devoting themselves to a heretical message which had its origin with “deceitful spirits,” with the content of the false teaching identified by Paul as the “teachings of demons.”¹¹ The false teachers were teaching a false asceticism i.e., they “forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving,” (4:3). Note also 2 Timothy 2:17 which refers to the claims of the false teachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus, that “the resurrection has already happened.” The suggestion is that they had a low view of the material world and the human body (Gnostic views) and held that there was no need for marriage as in some sense believers were already resurrected and in their “glorified state.”

Taking all these references into account, the situation seems to be that Paul’s Ephesian opponents were involved in some kind of “spiritual” exegesis of OT stories, and in the case of Genesis, there appears to be a call to a return to pre-fall patterns of living. The ideas of living in the resurrection era, with paradise or Edenic conditions to be restored, would make it clearly possible for the false teachers to influence some to believe that they could, and in fact should, anticipate it already in the here and now. All this would help explain the use of the Genesis account in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 to counteract the false manipulation of Genesis materials, also the reference to “childbearing” in 2:15, the teaching here in chapter 4 and how Paul encourages the younger widows to remarry in 5:14 (see

10 Knight points out that Paul writes of a present situation (4:3-5) and urges Timothy to instruct the church members in this matter (4:6), “here and now,” Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 189.

11 Stott writes, “The bible portrays the devil not only as the tempter, enticing people into sin, but as the deceiver, seducing people into error.” J.R.W. Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, (Leicester: IVP, 1996), 111.

also where an elder or deacon will be “the husband of one wife,” 3:2, 12). The message stated in 1 Timothy 4 is to recognise the basic goodness of created things, everything God has created; food, the world of nature, marriage, sexual fulfilment, family. The kind of lifestyle which the false teachers were advocating was very far from the godliness that would be pleasing to God.

Regarding Paul’s opponents, their real motive was gain. In 1 Timothy 6:3-5 Paul focuses again upon the false teachers, who were in his mind throughout the whole Epistle. We find his final condemnation of them in this Epistle here. He exposes the character of the false teachers and of the false doctrine itself. He also links their conduct to a misunderstanding of godliness and shameful financial motives. First Paul claimed that these false teachers have *deviated from the truth*. They were preaching, “a different doctrine” that “does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness,” (6:3). Paul once again calls the false teaching *heterodidaskaleō* (cf. also 1:3) where *heteros* means “other,” or “different,” because it strays from apostolic instruction. They have not attached themselves to or adhered to the “sound words ...” here *hugiainousin*, where Paul uses medical language for the healthiness of the apostolic teaching. This is the first use of the phrase in Timothy – it is found yet again in 2 Timothy 1:13. The combination “sound doctrine” or “sound teaching” is more common, (1:10; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1 and again, Titus 2:8 “sound speech”). The healthy teaching actually consists of “the sound words of the Lord Jesus Christ,” for Towner¹² he is the origin and also the authority behind the teaching. Therefore, to agree with Paul is to agree with the authoritative words of Jesus. This teaching is also *kata* i.e., it “accords with,” meaning either it is teaching which “leads to” or is “in accordance with” godliness, a reference to its content. It is teaching which is designed to promote or produce godliness in those who submit to it. To engage in other teaching and thus disagree with the apostolic teaching is to teach something which is not healthy, since

12 Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 394.

it does not produce spiritually healthy or godly living; promoting such doctrine is to be conceited and to understand nothing, (6:4).

The false teachers have also *caused division in the church*. They are divisive. “He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words,” (6:4). The false teacher here has an unprofitable or unwholesome¹³ interest in mere speculations or trifles. The word “controversy” suggests that which goes beyond the stage of a useful exchange of ideas¹⁴ leading to word battles. These lead to other sinful activities, in fact Paul lists five moral defects, “envy” (the resentment of another’s status and a desire to replace them), “dissention” (the spirit of contention), “slander” of other teachers, “evil suspicions” (the undermining of the possibility of trust on which relationships are based, thinking the worst of each other) and “constant friction” (the disputations that result from the former vices). These are the sins of men “depraved in mind” (the perfect tense of the participle¹⁵ indicates a settled condition of the mind), the organ of rational discernment where the gospel is processed and grasped. Therefore, their rejection of the apostolic doctrine has robbed them of the truth. Their teaching is not an altered gospel; it is a message that is wholly another. In fact, in contrast to apostolic doctrine, they consider that godliness is a means of gain, a matter of the pocket and not a matter of the heart.¹⁶

So, Paul accuses them of unworthy motives i.e., *They are devoted to money*. Their only interest in their work is if it is financially rewarding. We do know that Ephesus enjoyed great opulence - see the problem with

13 The word used by Paul is “sick” *nosōn* – only here in the NT. It usually describes spiritual or mental illness; now he uses it here as a contrast to the “sound” teaching of v3.

14 Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 395.

15 Knight quotes 2 Corinthians 4:4, “The God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving,” claiming that the perfect passive here also has the devil in view, Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 252.

16 D. Guthrie *Pastoral Epistles*, (Leicester; Inter-Varsity Press; Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 124.

the traders in the past when Paul's teaching began to hit their pockets, (Acts 19:23). Paul himself had to make clear that he was not guilty of such a charge, (1 Thessalonians 2:5). Timothy must withdraw himself from them, reject such ungodliness and follow a different path. At this point we need to look more at what is necessary to allow godliness to be present in the Christian community and to grow.

The prayerful path to godliness

Paul explains that godliness can flourish in the lives of believers when through prayer "for all people" peace ensues. "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people ... that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way," (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Paul in 2:1 is emphasising the universal scope of our responsibility as we come to God in prayer.

We should begin by asking the question whether Paul is still saying something about the problem of the "law teachers" at Ephesus? The word "then" would suggest this. These false teachers may have been influenced by an elitism in which the gospel was restricted to a privileged number, or only the initiated. But Paul has stated that Christ came "to save sinners," not just Jewish sinners, (1 Timothy 1:15). Now we find that four times in 2:1-7 Paul stresses this point. Prayers are to be offered for all people. God will have all people to be saved, (2:3-4); Christ gave himself a ransom for all, (2:6); Paul was a teacher of the faith for all the Gentiles, (2:7). We should understand that the above statements simply continue the theme of universality in the passage. It is the gentile mission (v7) which is in mind. Paul is indicating that the breadth of God's will or his salvific purpose includes the non-Jewish world.

How We Are to Pray (v1).

The Church must pray. Paul writes, "first of all," meaning not primacy of time but primacy of importance.¹⁷ The term "supplications" carries the idea of intercession about particular needs, needs that are critical and

¹⁷ Guthrie *The Pastoral Epistles*, 79.

deeply affect us. Also, the verb from which the noun is derived has the idea of having an audience with the king! While “supplications” may suggest needs that are more urgent or related to specific or difficult situations, “prayers,” will be the exhortation which concerns the bringing of those general needs which are always present. We are urged to bring them as petitions into the presence of the Lord. Again, “intercessions” are specific prayers for individuals. We recall Acts 12:5, where the church prayed particularly for Peter. The Holy Spirit does this for us, (Romans 8:27); again, Jesus our High Priest, (Hebrews 7:25), “ever lives to make intercession for us.” They must do this for others. Next is the “thanksgivings.” Here is thanksgiving or gratitude for what the Lord had done for them already. He owes us nothing. He is saddened by ingratitude, as with the healing of the ten lepers, when only one returned to give him thanks. (Luke 17:17).

Who We Are to Pray for (v1-2). “for all people, for kings...”

The reference to praying “for kings” is quite remarkable since at the time there were no identifiable Christian rulers in the known world. We are reminded of Jeremiah’s encouragement to the people carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon, “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare,” (Jeremiah 29:7); also, Ezra 6:10 which makes the appeal, “pray for the life of the king and his sons.”

The term “king” was used of the Roman emperor in the Greek speaking world; here it can be just a generalising reference to Roman emperors or Roman client kings. “All who are in high positions” will refer to any kind of lower official, all holding imperial positions throughout the empire. Tertullian stated, “We pray also for the emperors, for their ministers and those in power, that their reign may continue, that the state may be at peace, and that the end of the world may be postponed.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Tertullian, *Apology*, translated by T.R. Glover, (Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, 1931), 39.2.

Tertullian's point about bringing peace to the state is exactly what Paul's exhortation has in mind. He is writing that the outcome of this type of praying is, as we noted, so that God's people can live "a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way," (2:2). He is thinking first of freedom from war and civil strife, like the Hellenistic ideal. So, in the gospel or mission context of 1 Timothy 2, seeking God for "all who are in high positions" can lead first to circumstances that make witness possible i.e., peaceful conditions which would facilitate the preaching of the gospel. Prayer to God can affect the situation – see also Jonah 3:5-10; Daniel 2:46-49; 3:28-30; 4:34-37. But secondly, that the result of the effective prayers of believers for civil leaders is not only peace and stability, but so that God's people can live a life "godly and dignified in every way."

What does the text mean to live in *eusebeia* and *semnotēs*, in "godliness" and "reverence" or in a "dignified" way? We noted that for Towner¹⁹ as far as *eusebeia* is concerned, at its basis is the concept of knowing God and the behaviour that ought to follow from this knowledge. Regarding *semnotēs* and its word group, the meaning in secular Greek and among Hellenistic Jewish writers and Judaism is outward dignity, seriousness, respectability, reverence in conduct and speech, behaviour that is deserving of respect. Such a possibility of a society where peace ensues, in which believers can live godly lives, serve and witness can be realised as we cry to God for all people, especially for kings, for those in other positions of authority. What a responsibility and what a possibility! We should now note that Paul also goes on to employ these related words in these Epistles to describe the conduct of leaders in the church, (1 Timothy 3:4, 8, 11) In fact, in the Pastoral Epistles generally Paul calls repeatedly for a godly lifestyle to characterise people of every standing in the Christian church, leaders, old men, young men, women, and Timothy and Titus themselves, as apostolic delegates. This is where everything has been leading up to, namely:

19 Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 171-175.

The vital call to godliness

“Godliness” in the Pastoral Epistles is the lifestyle which the Christian is called to pursue. Thus, they can be a witness in an alien culture.

First, *The Elders*. We should first note that the churches in Ephesus and on Crete are to be led by godly leaders, (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). Actually, in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 the most important aspect for fitness to be chosen as a leader is spirituality. In 1 Timothy the elder must have a favourable testimony from three groups, church members, the family and outsiders. None should be able to point the finger. He must be “above reproach.” Note that the adjective *anepilēmpton* describes a person who not only is “above reproach” but is deservedly considered to be so.²⁰

The statement “above reproach” can, as Hendriksen explains,²¹ be taken as a type of heading for all the eleven items which follow. The elder is required to be entirely faithful to his wife at all times, an example of strict morality, literally, “one wife’s husband,” (1 Timothy 3:2). This is an important statement because the false teachers had forbidden marriage, (1 Timothy 4:3) and sexual promiscuity was common, (2 Timothy 3:6). The emphasis is the same for deacons, (1 Timothy 3:12) and in Titus 1:6 this exhortation concerning elders in Crete is placed first there also, suggesting for Mounce²² that the lack of marital faithfulness was a serious problem in the churches.

Positively, the elder must be clear-headed, demonstrating balanced, sober thinking. He will be self-controlled, a master of himself, in his behaviour, emotions and impulses. “He must not only talk well but walk well.”²³ He will be respectable or honourable – that which causes a person to be respected by others, having an outward demeanour stemming from the inward quality of self-mastery – and hospitable (a practice in

20 J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on The Pastoral Epistles*, HNTC, (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 80.

21 W. Hendriksen, *1 & 11 Timothy and Titus*, 119.

22 W.D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentaries, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 170.

23 King, *A Leader Led*, 59.

fact, required of all believers, (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9), because of the dangers of travel and economic uncertainty). Then “able to teach,” the only ministry gift listed here among aspects of character which involves having the ability to give guidance and instruction to those who require it, (cf. also Titus 1:9f.).

Negatively, the elder is “not a drunkard.” The word occurs again in Titus 1:7 of elders. It is usually a reference to excessive drinking, one who lingers beside his wine. The same stipulation is repeated for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8, and of older women in Titus 2:2. That it is stressed on these separate occasions, points to the fact that such drinking was a serious problem for the churches in Ephesus and Crete. Later we learn of Timothy and his total abstinence, (1 Timothy 5:23). Linked to the first prohibition here and in Titus 1:7 is another Greek word *plēktēs*, again found only here in the NT, making clear that such drinking leads to violence. Elders were not to be violent as drunkards can be; not primed for a fight or ready to intimidate people – even verbally. They must not be greedy for financial gain but gentle, not quarrelsome, “making allowances for slowness, awkwardness, even rudeness in others,”²⁴ prepared to tolerate a lot. They show reasonableness, or forbearance – a Christ-like quality, (2 Corinthians 10:1). An important contrast when it comes to the false teachers is the reference to financial gain, “not a lover of money.” This was a common vice in the Greco-Roman culture. All in leadership, (3:8; Titus 1:7) need to be warned. We have seen this vice highlighted in 1 Timothy 6:5f. The opponents were teaching not because of the needs of the people but just in order to get money. This was the real motivation. Here, with faithful leaders, the opposite is clearly implied, i.e., not characterised by greed but rather, prepared for self-sacrifice as far as others were concerned.

Paul now writes of godliness in those who lead, when it comes to family. A man must evidently be able to govern his family/children graciously and command their respect, maintaining his personal dignity in the process, before he takes on the management of the church, the family

²⁴ King, *A Leader Led*, 61.

of God. Hendriksen²⁵ has noted that the very first and the last of the requirements describe the elder's relationship to his family. It is similar when we come to deacons (3:12). This must have been regarded as of great importance. Such management must be carried out "with all dignity," here, *semnotētos*.

Concerning the family, in these references Paul is referring to "children" who are still in the home i.e., minors. In Titus 1:6 the requirement is that the elder must have *pista tekna*, faithful children, "not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination." The question is should "*pista*" be understood as "believing" or as "faithful"? It is used in both senses in these Epistles. Here, the context, with the parallel in 1 Timothy 3:4-5, provide some important pointers as to interpretation. The qualifying statement here "not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination" emphasizes behaviour and seems to explain what it means for *tekna* to be *pista*. Likewise, 1 Timothy 3:4 speaks of the overseer "keeping his children under control with all dignity." Knight²⁶ makes the point:

In both cases the overseer is evaluated on the basis of his control of his children and their conduct. It is likely "having faithful children" is virtually equivalent to 1Tim.3v4. If that is so then *pista* here means "faithful" in the sense of "submissive" or "obedient," as a servant or steward is regarded as *pistos* when he carries out the requests of his master.

Mounce²⁷ notes the use of *prostēnai* "manage" in 3:5 which can mean to govern or to lead. The second idea is expressed when it comes to the cognate *prostatēs* which means "protector." Accordingly, here we have the idea of the father's role as not being dictatorial but rather of caring and

25 Hendriksen, *1 & 11 Timothy and Titus*, 127.

26 Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 290. We have followed, as elsewhere, the ESV translation, "not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination," but must also point out that the translation in spite of this commences with, "his children are believers ..." Such a translation has led to many godly men to actually step back from leadership because some family members remain unconverted.

27 Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 178.

protecting his children. Likewise, in the church he must not be autocratic but be a caring leader who serves. This is clear when Paul links the concept with *epimelēsetai* again in 3:5 “to take care of” God’s church.

Regarding godliness, we should note how Paul often emphasises his concern about the opinion outsiders will have for the witness/testimony of the church (1 Timothy 5:14; 6:1; Titus 2:5, 8, 10; 3:2, 8; 1 Corinthians 10:32; Colossians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:12). Such outsiders often know more about the person since he is among them every day living in the local community or work situation. If the leader does not have the respect of outsiders, it will prove a stumbling block for the gospel. This witness was concerned with the effectiveness of the church’s mission in the world. To fail in any of the qualities Paul has outlined could result in a loss of credibility.

What does Paul mean by “the snare of the devil”? Is it that the individual may consider that his bad conduct has not hindered him in achieving success so he will attempt to get away with more, falling into the devil’s trap and under the devil’s power? The elder who guards himself in these matters saves himself and the church from falling into disgrace and a complete loss of credibility. The word *oneidismos* “reproach” carries with it the idea of bringing reproach upon themselves, i.e., extreme disgrace.

Another way²⁸ of presenting the qualifications Paul is asking Timothy to seek to find in prospective elders are as follows:

- *His marriage* v2 a one-woman man, fidelity.
- *His self-mastery* v2 temperate, self-controlled and respectable/honourable.
- *His openness* v2 hospitable –*philoxenon* literally, “a love of strangers.”
- *His gifting* v2 “able to teach.” The elder must be a student of the word and competent to teach it to others either from the pulpit or one to one in a counselling situation.

28 These summary descriptions were gleaned partly from J.R.W. Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, 92 f/n. 3.

THE CONCEPT, BASIS AND CALL TO GODLINESS IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

- *His temperance* v3 not snared by alcohol.
- *His temperament* v3 not violent or quarrelsome – including verbal abuse - but gentle.
- *His handling of money* v3 See the testimony of Samuel at the close of his life's ministry, (1 Samuel 12:1-5) and Paul's past witness to the Ephesian elders, (Acts 20:33-35).
- *His family life* v4-5 respected and loved at home.
- *His servant heart for God's people* v5 – caring for the church of God.
- *His spiritual maturity* v6 there is need for true humility and experience to serve as an elder.
- *His public testimony* v7 there must be evidence of reality, stability, and a genuine confession before others. If an elder does not display qualifications of a godly testimony to his neighbours how will the church be effective in their mission to reach them?

In Titus 1 we have similar teaching concerning the character and conduct of elders. We can highlight with additional comments a few other descriptions and emphases in the Cretan situation. As in 1 Timothy 3:2 the overall requirement for elders is stated i.e., they must be “blameless” or “above reproach,” as failure here will affect the reputation of the church in the local situation and greatly hinder the witness.

Paul again begins at home. An elder must be “the husband of one wife.” This should not be understood as ruling out the unmarried or those who have married again, but the unfaithful and even the polygamous. Paul is simply writing of the usual situation in life and that marital and sexual fidelity are required of any leader. Again, any children should manifest evidence of being “faithful” or under their father's authority in an ordered home-life.²⁹

29 Note the discussion of this in 1 Timothy 3. The suggestion there was made that it should not be read as “believing children.”

Paul lists five negatives (all using *mē* in the accusative) regarding the character of the overseer.³⁰ The elder must be master of himself; he must not be self-willed, which would manifest itself in stubbornness or arrogance. At the root is a fundamental selfishness putting others down to promote oneself.

Leadership brings prestige and power; some may be tempted to misuse such, becoming proud of their promotion, hence increasing their own vanity. They are above listening to criticism or advice, will lord it over others and become headstrong, autocratic, or as v7 states, quick-tempered (“peppery”) (*orgilos*, only here in the NT, but see Proverbs 21:19; 22:24; 29:22). Self-control rather is important since they may have to minister to difficult and demanding people. It is clear that an “explosive” lack of self-control renders one unfit for leadership in the church.³¹

They must not be “a drunkard,” addicted to drink, which, as was mentioned earlier, must have been a real problem in the culture of Ephesus and Crete since it is mentioned in all the lists (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7; also 2:3). Although people in leadership usually have a forceful disposition, they will not be “violent” but gentle and not ride roughshod over people. Again, they must be motivated by service, not “greedy for gain” or seeking to profit, again an emphasis in all three lists of qualifications. The word *aischrokerdēs* “greedy for gain” is sometimes used of those who take from others, even though they already have in abundance what they desire to take.³²

30 Note the switch from “elders” in v5 to “overseer” in v7. This is still the same person – with a similar pattern in Acts 20:17; 20:28 and in 1 Peter 5:1-2. The second use here of “overseer” is about the function of the elders. Mounce points out that the force of *gar* “for” is easily overlooked. It ties the discussion together and argues against the suggestion that the overseers are distinct from the elders, Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 390. See also Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 149, 160.

Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 688.

31 Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 688

32 Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 291.

Contrasting (*alla* “but”) the five negatives, there are six positives, largely self-explanatory, with a seventh outlining a ministry responsibility. As was noted in 1 Timothy 3, the elder must be “hospitable,” since in the setting of Crete it would be vital that one’s home be open for worship and to receive those involved in the spread of the gospel, what with the dangers of travel and the poor reputation of inns. The elder also must love what is good i.e., his desire for the believers must be that they manifest the good qualities God wants them to have (cf. Philippians 4:8). He must be sensible in judgement, “upright” in his dealings with people, also “holy” toward God and “disciplined” (*enkratēs* has a sexual connotation in 1 Corinthians 7:9). The last few here do not appear in the list in 1 Timothy 3 and may reflect a more immature Christian community still struggling to put behind it depraved patterns of behaviour.³³ Then in the final virtue, a transition is made to ministry.

Paul moves from home and family, character and conduct, to their grasp of the truth. They must clearly be faithful to the true message, “the teaching” of the apostles, the identifiable body of instruction now bequeathed to us in the NT. This teaching must be “held firmly,” and requires the unreserved personal adherence of the elder to and acceptance of the word he has heard. The *hina* purpose clause outlines the real outcome of all in which he has been grounded. He is not simply to enjoy a grasp of the truth itself, but he has been equipped to be involved in the work of the kingdom! He is to engage in a two-fold ministry, indicated by the repetition of *kai*, “both ... and,” a ministry of instructing and rebuking. The first points to the fact that he is to urge or exhort his hearers to accept the sound doctrine and respond to it – it will produce spiritual healthiness – and the second carries the meaning of not simply just contradicting but actually overthrowing the arguments of those who speak against the truth. It is clear that such a man has been called essentially to a teaching ministry that necessitates a teaching gift. It can be maintained that here the requirement of 1 Timothy 3:2 “able to teach” is being elab-

³³ Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 165.

orated upon. Mounce³⁴ makes the point that if elders are not devoted to Scripture, then they are not fit to serve or take this office.

Not only elders were to be godly but also *Deacons*. In 1 Timothy 3 Paul moves on in his instructions to Timothy to deal with this other group i.e., the deacons. The guidance given to Timothy for the appointment of deacons has, as with the elders, mainly to do with character. Deacons must also be “above reproach,” (3:10) – the word is *anekklētos*, which, only used by Paul in the NT, is a synonym of *anepilēmptos* in 3:2. An initial positive quality “dignified” *seminous*, is followed by three negatives which together can present someone whose manner of life is irreproachable, which is finally summed up in the term “blameless” (3:10). Further requirements follow in 3:11-13. Mounce³⁵ helpfully points out that six of the characteristics are directly parallel to that of an elder. Again, most of the requirements stand in opposition to the opponents’ behaviour.

Both the office of church leader and the office of church worker require the same type of person: a mature godly Christian whose behaviour is above reproach. Stott³⁶ again is helpful here in the way he sets out the qualities of those who serve as deacons and to his outline I have added some additional comments.

In 3:8 he writes about *self-mastery*. The four words in this verse form a natural grouping, sincere in their behaviour, truth talkers, in control of themselves as far as wine and money are concerned.

The word *dilogos* is found only here in the NT and literally means “double-tongued.” It can be explained as to say one thing while thinking another or saying one thing to one person but another to someone else. Guthrie³⁷ points out that it also can be translated as “talebearer” suggesting the danger of being a gossip rather than understanding the need for confidentiality. The reference to “addicted to much wine” is in the present tense and suggests a habitual consumption of alcohol.

34 Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 393.

35 Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 195.

36 Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, 100.

37 Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 95.

“Not greedy for dishonest gain” the subject occurring again here in this passage (see 3:3) suggests that Paul is particularly concerned about the new church workers having the right attitude as far as money is concerned, probably because of the past experience with the covetous false teachers who were no longer among them. In any ministry in the church the leaders must not be motivated by financial gain, but rather by a willingness to spend and be spent for others. Here the deacons probably had responsibility for the church’s finances and were involved in the day-to-day needs of the poor, (cf. Acts 6:1-3).

Paul explains in 3:9 that they must have *orthodox convictions*. The word “mystery” here will stand for the sum total of the revealed truths of the faith i.e., the mystery, which is the faith. Unlike the false teachers who had rejected the voice of conscience (1:19) and even “cauterized” it (4:2) by continually disregarding it, they must maintain a clear conscience (1:6) holding on to God’s revelation with sincere and strong conviction. Paul was insistent that any who were appointed as deacons would hold firmly to the truth or the doctrine which had been delivered to the church. The word *echontas* here means “holding to, possessing,” and expresses solid unreserved commitment to the faith; holding it, rather than teaching it, which was the elders’ responsibility. They must not make shipwreck of the faith, as others have done, (1 Timothy 1:19). In summary, with the mention of “conscience” it is clear that deacons are to live according to the ethical principles of the revealed faith. Here is true godliness.

Finally, Stott points out that they must be *tested and approved*. They should have a period of time – note the temporal *prōton*, “first” to prove their worth and for the church to see the emergence of their gifts and the type of service that they can render. We have almost the concept of probationers. Certainly, here we have the parallel of instructions to Timothy in 5:22, 24-25 where the theme is the care necessary to be taken in the appointment of elders. Was this examination for the prospective deacons to show that they were without reproach? It is here that one finds the reference to deacons being “blameless” – a term mentioned above. Regarding

anenklētoi Towner³⁸ claims that the word is used with the legal sense of the term still in the background, and so “it means to be free of any charge of civil or domestic impropriety.” It is used again of elders in Titus 1:6-7.

Then we have v11. *A Commendable Home Life*. Is Paul now moving to the home life of the deacon in this verse or rather in the next (v12)? Notice how v11 begins, The AV translates it “Even so must their wives be...” Also, NKJV and ESV has “wives.” It is strange that the wives of elders are not mentioned, if this is the meaning. AV margin has “Women in like manner must...” Note NIV text = “Deacons’ wives;” NIV margin = “deaconesses.” The word here is *gunaikai* or the singular *gunē* and can be translated “wife” (3:2, 12; 5:9; Titus 1:6) or “woman” (2:9, 10, 11, 12, 14). So, is the reference to deacon’s wives or deaconesses?

Knight³⁹ advocates that here we should see the deacon’s wives and supports this view with several arguments. For example, would Paul, who was always wise concerning sexuality (cf. e.g., 2:9; 5:11, 15; perhaps 5:6) suggest women as deacons’ assistants, rather than their wives? Again, there is no reference if women were in view for them to be “the wife of one husband,” as there is for elders and deacons and in the qualifications for older widows, (v2, 12; 5:9). Also, if wives are in view, one understands the point that the qualifications of a deacon also involve his wife’s qualifications i.e., he could be disqualified from service if his wife is not worthy! Finally, he makes the point that it is not said of the women that they be “beyond reproach,” “because it is not they, but their husbands, who have been elected to and put into office.” These women, be they wives or church workers, are to live so that they are worthy of respect; like the deacons, they are to have control of their tongue and tell the truth, “not slanderers,” (the word actually is *diabolos* the same term translated “devil” and suggests the spreading of lies) and be trustworthy in everything, showing complete reliability (v11). But godliness must not just be evident only among the leaders and their wives. Paul calls for it to mark:

38 Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 265.

39 Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 171-173.

The Whole Church What was expected of the leaders was expected of all, (Titus 2:2, 7). This is the Christian witness which was needed for the contemporary society. Therefore, as far as the Pastoral Epistles are concerned, “godliness” is crucial to describe the true Christian lifestyle expected from every part of the church, a godliness which is absolutely vital to influence the local community. Again and again, we mentioned earlier how are warned in these Epistles of the damage which can be done by local believers not living as they ought. Whether in leadership or simply local members, both old or young, the message is clear. As we highlighted, in the choice of acceptable elders, they “must be well thought of by outsiders,” (1 Timothy 3:7). Again, older widows should have “a reputation for good works” and the younger must “give the adversary no occasion for slander,” (1 Timothy 5:9, 14); wives will so live with their husbands “that the word of God may not be reviled,” (Titus 2:5). Also, slaves must so respect their masters “that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled,” (1 Timothy 6:1). The younger men in Crete by life and lip must so live that “an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us,” (Titus 2:6). We noted earlier that in Titus 2:11-12 Paul reminds Titus, “the grace of God appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age,” Therefore, for those among whom Titus is ministering, grace exhorts them to (negatively) renounce our old life, “ungodliness and worldly passions,” and live (positively) a new one, a self-controlled, upright and godly life, i.e., devoted to and living in touch with God, manifesting godliness. Therefore, they should live as Paul had outlined in the earlier verses of Titus 2. These new believers are reminded by Paul that Christ came not just to deliver them from the things of the old life, but to live a changed life. This was the purpose of his coming! Paul having guided the elders, the deacons and their wives, and the whole church regarding the vital need for godliness, lastly, urges this of his younger colleagues.

Timothy and Titus Concerning both, Paul also is expecting them to be godly. In 1 Timothy 4:6-10 in contrast to the false teaching of his oppo-

nents, Paul's theology of creation (*tauta* "these things") must be set before the believers by Timothy. In this way he will be a good minister or servant of Jesus Christ – "good" in the sense of approved by God. Paul also calls upon him "to train yourself for godliness," (v7), true godliness, rather than the asceticism of the false teachers. In teaching as Paul commands, Timothy will show how he has been trained in the truth of the faith. The verb is *entrephō* "to nourish," a word which has in its background the image of feeding or bringing up children. Regarding Timothy, the present participle suggests a continual process, the hearing/reading and inwardly digesting of the truth, first described as "the words of faith" i.e., the body of doctrine of the Christian faith; also, as "the good doctrine" in contrast to the false teaching. So, the truthfulness of the apostolic gospel is stressed when compared to the "doctrines of demons." Paul makes clear that Timothy in contrast to the "some" of v1 has carefully "followed" the true teaching, the verb *parakolouthēō*, here in the perfect tense, suggests following a path begun in the past and continuing or persevering into the present (see also 2 Timothy 3:10).

Having commended Timothy for the path he was following, Paul now using the imperative, calls upon him to "have nothing to do" or "reject" (see also the use of the word in 1 Timothy 5:11; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:10) this false teaching described under two terms; first *bebēlos*, meaning "irreverent," "lacking any sacred character" and *graōdeis muthous* meaning stories characteristic of old women, ESV "silly myths," a sarcastic label which was often used in philosophical polemic.⁴⁰ The word "myths" convey the idea of a tale fit only for children but also reminds us of the first use of the word in 1 Timothy 1:4 for the "myths" of the false teachers where the OT was overlaid with absurd legends and bizarre symbolism. So, Paul is also interested in a good spiritual diet, but it involves this rejection of the junk teaching of bad doctrine, partially influenced by early Gnosticism, as we noted, and rather, feeding upon the true doctrine. Its source is the true knowledge of God revealed in the gospel and involves commitment to the truth, the teaching that "accords

40 Knight *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 195.

with godliness,” (Titus 1:1; 1 Timothy 6:3-6). Paul is making clear that his mission is to bring people throughout the world to the knowledge of the only true Saviour-God and his salvation, (v8-10) which can lead to the godliness he writes of.

In all his service in Ephesus Paul encourages Timothy, “train (yourself) for godliness,” (1 Timothy 4:7). The pursuit of godliness involves discipline, and in v8 Paul contrasts the value of godliness with that of “bodily training.” Physical exercise is valuable for this life, but godliness has value not only in “the present life” but also in “the life to come.” This is one of Paul’s trustworthy sayings found in the Pastoral Epistles, (1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8).⁴¹

How is Timothy to train in godliness? In the context this training would appear to include study of and appreciation of the truth of God in his word and in the gospel. As Stott⁴² writes, “we cannot become familiar with this godly book without becoming godly ourselves. Nothing evokes the worship of God like the word of God.” This godliness must be continually cultivated in the life of the Christian. Hence, in 1 Timothy 6:11, Paul charges Timothy to “pursue” godliness. The charge is to “flee” the false doctrine and materialism of the false teachers, and to pursue six qualities – righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness and gentleness. If ungodliness is paired with sinful living, (1 Timothy 1:9), godliness is paired with righteousness (*dikaiosunē*), used here in its ethical sense as the practical result of justification in the life of the believer, (see also 2 Timothy 2:22). Therefore, godliness, among other aspects, is being defined as an attitude of devotion to God, and righteousness is the lifestyle that flows from it. We found the same pairing in Titus 2:12, (“upright and godly lives”), emphasising the internal and external aspects of true Christian experience. Here Paul has described Timothy as an example of

41 These should not be taken as early creedal statements, but rather, they are there to call for the confident acceptance of certain theological and ethical affirmations, over against the errors of the false teachers.

42 Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, 117.

true godliness. But this was also to be true for Titus as Paul writes to him in Titus 2:6-8.

Earlier Paul has presented Titus as first of all, *His Spiritual Son*. In Titus 1:4 we learn that Titus was converted through Paul – he calls him “my son,” not by any blood relationship or legal adoption, but his son spiritually. As a Gentile he was accepted as part of Paul’s missionary team, note without circumcision, Galatians 2:3-5; cf. v10, but through the same means of faith (“common” here means “shared”) as Paul a Jew. He had been assigned *An Important Ministry*. (1:5). “I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you.” Note the *egō* “I” of apostolic authority, “I directed (commanded) you;” Titus has full apostolic authority to appoint the required elders, who were to silence by their teaching the false teachers, (1:11). So just as Paul placed Timothy in Ephesus to challenge the false teaching there, so Titus is left in Crete. As Knight explains, there was still “unfinished work.”⁴³

Now we learn that Titus was to be *A Godly Example*. Note in Titus 2 how Paul focuses upon the young men as he has the other groups in the Cretan fellowships - see “likewise,” (2:6). Titus is to urge them - a strong appeal - to develop one quality - self-mastery. This is really the key term of the section, (used of the older men and the women, (2:2, 5), which really can be understood in a comprehensive sense taking in the others that have been stated, especially if we take the “all respects” *peri panta* to refer to the preceding appeal. As the older women were examples for the younger, so Titus was to be to the young men. They are to be encouraged by the consistent godly example of Titus, as Paul now writes directly to him. We are imitative by nature and need models to give us direction, challenge and inspiration. Titus should influence them first by being “a model of good works.” This emphasis on being a model or example is found often in Paul (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; Philippians 3:17). Titus also was to be a *tupos*, a mould into which

43 Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 287.

others can be impressed,⁴⁴ not as the false teachers who were unfit examples (Titus 1:16). The theme of “good works” is important throughout the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, especially in Titus (Titus 2:14; 3:1, 8, 14; 2 Timothy 2:21; 3:17), although it is made clear that such works do not save (Titus 3:5; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; 2 Timothy 1:9).

He is not only to be a godly example in his service but in his teaching which ought to have three qualities. It is to be marked by “purity” or “integrity,” taken as a reference to Titus’s character, i.e., the pure motives he had. Also “seriousness” is a clear indication of the manner of teaching. He should be serious in preaching, aware that the eternal welfare of his listeners was at stake. Lastly, there is a focus upon the content of his teaching – it was to be in soundness of speech that cannot be condemned. Titus is to preach the truth, the apostolic doctrine, with clear motives and in seriousness, so that the outsiders will have nothing of substance to say against his preaching. It is of course clear that the apostolic doctrine will be condemned by some. The idea here is that no charges can justifiably be brought against the preaching of the word. Towner suggests that the Epistle gives evidence of the fact that the Jewish-Christian teachers were a dominant threat to the Pauline mission and here the singular “one who opposes” is most likely a reference to them or to a ringleader among them.⁴⁵ Paul’s aim is that “shame” will fall upon these men since Titus’s integrity will mean that they will be discredited. Nothing bad can be said about “us” – note Paul uses the plural and thus includes himself, possibly all who preach.

We have seen that in these Epistles to both Timothy and Titus Paul has called for godliness of life to be manifest in elders, deacons and their wives, the believers generally, and finally in his younger colleagues. All must exhibit a godly lifestyle, so that through it the witness of the gospel can be maintained and the kingdom furthered. Now we must ask, where the power comes from to manifest such a lifestyle? We recall another reference to the false teachers. These false teachers had “an appearance

⁴⁴ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 413.

⁴⁵ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 733-4.

of godliness,” but were denying “its power,” (2 Timothy 3:15). In other words, they have an outward appearance of reverence for God, but there is no reality behind it – their hearts are far from devoted to Him! The truth was that their lives lacked any real power. Paul does not openly explain what he means by the “power” of godliness. Marshall⁴⁶ sees an implicit reference here in the word “power” to “the vital power for Christian living, *given by the Holy Spirit to believers*,” (italics mine). The false teachers have no experience of God’s grace in the gospel, and therefore have no impetus towards godliness and no empowerment from the Holy Spirit; however, Christians do. Devotion to God in a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit, manifesting righteousness and sacrificial service is what God is looking for in us.

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