

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12



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FIVE FRIENDLY REMINDERS

By Andrew Dow

Paul expected Titus to remind the Christians on Crete to **“be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men”** (Titus 3:1–2). These reminders are as worthwhile today as they were when Titus was preaching. So, let me remind you of these things as well.

1. Be subject to rulers and authorities and be obedient. The two terms Paul employs—**“rulers”** and **“authorities”**—are sufficiently broad so as to address any number of situations. These words, therefore, may apply to either physical rulers and authorities (e.g., governments, employers, etc.) or spiritual rulers and authorities (e.g., God, the apostles, shepherds, etc.).

Whether the original referent is physical or spiritual rulers and authorities, our posture must remain unchanged: **“be subject”** and **“be obedient.”** Submit to and obey the government. Submit to and obey your employer. Submit to and obey the elders. This is an important reminder because one day your rulers and authorities may tell you to do something you do not want to do. Remember to be subject and obedient to them.

2. Be ready for every good deed. Surely all Christians are aware of the importance of doing good

things instead of evil things. Surely we are looking for opportunities to do good to all men. Good deeds might include, for example, caring for the sick and needy, evangelism, and hospitality among other things. I hope you are on the lookout for opportunities to do these kinds of things. But *looking* is only part of the equation.

Finding opportunities to do good is of little value if you are not ready to do those things when the opportunities present themselves. You might find a number of homeless people on the side of the road, but are you ready to do good? You might be aware of a traveller in need of a place to stay for the night, but are you ready to do good? You might be aware of someone who needs the gospel, but are you ready to do good? Remember to make preparations—whatever those preparations may be—to do good deeds.

3. Do not speak evil of others. This is the kind of thing we teach children, but adults need this reminder too. From time to time we may be tempted to say evil things about others. The NASB uses the word “**malign**,” but it could also be translated slander or blaspheme. Have you ever said something about someone which—whether it was true or not, whether they deserved it or not—harmed the way another person looked at them. Remember not to speak evil of others.

4. Be peaceable and gentle. One could properly look at this reminder (and the one to follow) as the alternative to the previous reminder. That is to say, do not speak evil of others, but rather have a demeanor of peace and gentleness. These two qualities should characterize us as Christians. These are the kinds of qualities that one finds in the fruits of the Spirit.

Divisiveness and harshness go hand in hand. If you want to drive a wedge between you and a brother or sister be harsh in the way that you speak and interact with them. On the other hand and in the same way, peacefulness and gentleness go hand in hand. Remember to pursue peace by being gentle in your interactions.

5. Show every consideration for all men. Perhaps this is a sort of summary statement encapsulating all that has gone before. Perhaps this is the climax of this brief list—the culmination of the way Christians should behave. Either way, this last reminder is needed advice.

Selfishness appears to be an innate quality of humanity which the current culture embraces and encourages. We are consumed with our rights, our comfort, and our thoughts. Yet, selfishness is the antithesis of the proper Christian attitude. This last reminder speaks to this fact. In everything you do be concerned about others, not yourself. How will my disregard for rulers and authorities affect others? How will my unpreparedness affect those in need? How will my evil words affect others? How will my harshness and divisiveness affect others? Remember to always consider how your actions will affect those around you.

“BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HAS BLESSED US WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST.”

~ EPHESIANS 1:3

RIGHTEOUS VS. WICKED: RESULTS OF WORDS

By Andrew Dow

In Prov 10:7–11 Solomon offers wisdom regarding the use of words—the wise are remembered for their good words while the wicked are ruined by their foolish words. In verses 12–14 he continues with these nuggets:

**“Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all transgressions.**

**On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found,
But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.**

**Wise men store up knowledge,
But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.”**

The quickest way to cause trouble in the church is to say hateful things. The quickest way to squelch the power of hateful words is to speak in love. Do you ever feel like you try to say loving things, but some react poorly anyway? This is where discernment and wisdom comes into play. Find wise words (words that promote peace and unity) and keep saying those things. The alternative is to continue to say unwise and unloving things. This foolishness results in constant trouble and imminent destruction. Be wise!

NOTES: _____

AM LESSON:

Church vs.
Individual

PM LESSON:

Jesus’s Power Over Your
Problems (Mark 4:35–5:43)

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”
(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**