

Fact Sheet for **“God’s Provisions”**
Titus 3:1-15

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Our lives can be filled with so many concerns... relational, medical, political, financial, spiritual. And at times, as we experience struggles in these areas, our lives may not show forth what God desires from us. Without downplaying any of these struggles it's helpful to put them in perspective.

The God we serve, the God of the Bible, is bigger and more powerful than all that we can imagine. Yet it was created by His word (Hebrews 11:3). Our solar system is vast, but it is just one of countless solar systems in our galaxy, the Milky Way. And our galaxy is but one of countless galaxy's in the universe. In that immense universe we are so very, very small, yet every cell of our body has been described as having more going on beneath its surface than do the streets of New York City.

We were created perfect by God. We did not evolve. Then we chose to sin. But in His great love God the Father sent God the Son to take on human form, and die on the cross for us. In His death and resurrection God the Son paid the eternal penalty for our sin. Imagine for a moment how much Jesus had to temporarily empty Himself of to provide for our forgiveness (Philippians 2:5-8). And it's so simple for us to tie into that forgiveness (John 3:16). And now, those who believe are indwelt by God the Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

But God has given us further help, the Bible. Here is how scripture came about. God so moved the human authors of scripture that, without destroying their personal interests or literary style, everything He wanted us to know was recorded without error in the words that they wrote. This is described in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. There is so much in these two verses, but look at the goal... righteousness! Our responsibility is to seek to understand scripture, and more than that apply it to our lives.

These are the provisions our great eternal God has given us for spiritual life and work.

Today we are looking at the last chapter of Titus. As we do you can see that this whole book is about the character our eternal God wants to develop in us. Look at Paul's opening verse (1:1). In 1:6-8 he describes the mature character that elders are to have. Paul goes on to describe others... older men (2:2), older women (2:3), young women (2:4-5), younger men (2:6-7a), and bondservants (2:9-10)

The Apostle Paul then adds the words found in 2:11-14 that also focus on godliness. By “good works” Paul does not *only* mean giving to the poor or things like helping a fellow Christian with a ride to a medical appointment. He has in mind anything that stems from godliness.

The first two chapters of Titus are clearly about godliness, and so is the last chapter.

ESV ¹ ¶ Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ² to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

These words are easy to understand, but too often we want to add our own thoughts to them.

to be submissive to rulers and authorities – if they aren't self-absorbed and evil
to be obedient – to authority when they are reasonable
to be ready for every good work – if it is appreciated by the other person
to speak evil of no one – as long as I agree with them
to avoid quarreling – *It's the other person who's picking a fight!*
to be gentle – with those who respond well

to show perfect courtesy toward all people. – This is at least how I will start.

But God saw fit not to have Paul so limit these words. We should do these things because God has saved us by His grace.

³ For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Take a moment to reflect on these words.

Now Paul briefly sums up.

⁸ ¶ The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

Paul then adds a short note about something they were experiencing.

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

Then even as Paul closes his letter with some personal greetings he echoes his theme of godliness.

¹² ¶ When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³ Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. ¹⁴ And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

^{15a} ¶ All who are with me send greetings to you. ^{15b} Greet those who love us in the faith. ^{15c} Grace be with you all.

I want to bring a thought to the table here. Be careful of your conscience. Our conscience accuses or defends us, but it is not inerrant and infallible like scripture. There can be areas of insensitivity in our consciences. For instance someone who has a very strong commitment to always doing what is honorable may find themselves ignoring everything Paul says in Titus 3:2 as they interact with someone who disagrees with them. There can be areas where our conscience has been twisted by our past experiences. J.B. Phillips authored a book in 1958 titled Your God Is Too Small. At the beginning of that book he gave an illustration of a child brought up by extremely strict vegetarian parents. He wrote, "If the child, now grown adolescent, attempts to eat meat he will in all probability suffer an extremely bad attack of 'conscience.'"¹ It is the Bible that is inerrant and infallible, not always our consciences. Meditate on the inerrant and infallible words our great God has given us (Psalm 1:1-3). Then look at Titus as God's letter to you. Consider what Paul wrote. Ask yourself how you measure up. And make any changes necessary.

We indeed serve an awesome God, who has saved us through His son, indwelt us with His Spirit, and given us the scripture that presents His best desire for our lives. Think about this often!

¹ P.10.