

## ***A REMINDER OF HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD LIVE***

**By Andy Manning**

**Titus 3:1-2 (Week 9)**

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The title of this sermon is “A Reminder of How Christians Should Live.”

Christians need reminders from time to time.

**I heard it said** that “A large part of any pastor’s public ministry is reminding people of what they already know (PreceptAustin.org).” That’s a big part of my job; not necessarily teaching you something new every week, but reminding you of what you already know; reminding you of what’s important.

You know, **remembering is the key to overcoming temptation.** When you are tempted to sin, the way to overcome is to remember.

First, remember the pain that sin caused you in the past – the physical pain, emotional pain, relational pain, financial pain, the pain that it caused others.

Second, remember the truth of God’s word – that sin leads to suffering. Sin makes big promises, but it’s a liar; it never delivers; it never comes through; it is pleasurable for a moment, but then it always hurts you, and it never leads to more happiness.

Third, remember God’s discipline; remember that when God’s children choose to disobey Him, He will respond by disciplining us.

And fourth, remember God’s promises. God promises to bless righteousness and obedience. When you remember these things, and meditate on these things, God gives you the strength to overcome temptation. Remembering is powerful.

Today I want to give you a reminder of how Christians should live.

Christians are supposed to live in a certain way.

Christianity is not simply a set of doctrines to believe in. It is a way of life.

Jesus said in **John 14:6**, “I am the way (to heaven), the truth (a set of doctrines), and the life (a way to live).”

As Christians we are to live a certain way, not just believe a certain way.

Today we’re going to be reminded of 7 Christian behaviors.

5 of them are virtues, or morally excellent behaviors. And 2 of them are vices, or sinful behaviors.

5 of them are behaviors to adopt, and two are behaviors to avoid.

And that’s true about Christianity.

The Christian life involves things to do, and things not to do.

God’s will involves behaviors that He wants you to do, and behaviors that He wants you to avoid.

Turn with me to **Titus 3:1-2 (CBD)**, and let’s read.

1 Remind them to submit to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to be kind, always showing gentleness to all people.

## **7 Christian Behaviors**

### **1. Submit to the government.**

Notice the first phrase in **verse 1**. “Remind (there’s our word “remind”) them to submit to rulers and authorities.” In other words, submit to the government.

The Greek word for “submit” is *hupotasso*;

it is a military term that means to rank yourself under someone else.

It is lived out by obedience.

Sometimes the word is translated “obey.”

This is the same word that was used in chapter 2, verse 5, when it Paul says that older women are to teach the younger women to be submissive to their husbands.

The Christian life is all about submission and obedience.

All Christians are to submit to God, and to the government.

Wives are to submit to husbands.

Employees are to submit to their employers.

Church members are to submit to pastors.

Children are to obey or submit to their parents.

To be a faithful Christian who is pleasing to God it is essential that you learn to be submissive.

The idea of submitting to the government is found in several places in Scripture.

**Romans 13:1** (HCSB) says, “Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God.”

**1 Peter 2:13** (HCSB) says, “Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the Emperor as the supreme authority.”

Why are we called to submit to the government?

Go back to **Romans 13:1**. “Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God.”

There is no authority except from God; those that exist are instituted by God.

In other words, God created government; government is God’s idea.

God created marriage; God created the church, and God created the government; and He created all of these institutions for our benefit – for what political scientists might call human flourishing.

**Romans 13:4** says of the government, “For it is God’s servant for your good....”

Why did God create the government? Why do we need the government?

Because of human evil.

Human beings are evil. If there was government, then the strong would destroy the weak. It would be total chaos.

If all human beings were perfectly moral and virtuous, there would be no need for government; but because the existence of human evil, we need a government to restrain evil so that we can enjoy our lives.

Now on the flip side, because of human evil it is also important the government remain limited; that it doesn't have unlimited power, and unlimited responsibility.

Why? Because the government is run by sinful human beings, and if you give sinful human beings too much power over the lives of others, really bad things happen.

So we should submit to the government because the government is created by God for our good.

This means as Christians we are not anarchists.

We don't want to get rid of the government.

We value the role of the government.

At the same time, it means that Christians must be good citizens.

We must obey the law.

We must pay our taxes.

Christians don't riot.

We might protest peacefully, but we don't riot.

We obey and are respectful to police officers.

And if we think a police officer is out of line, we don't try to physically fight the police, we go through the proper channels and file a complaint and if necessary press charges.

We show respect to our political leaders; even when we don't respect the person, we respect the office.

We pray for our country and our leaders.

We vote.

We serve in the military if we feel God is leading us to do that.

And when called, Christians need to run for office.

Now there are exceptions to submitting to the government, but it's probably not what you think.

Many people seem to think that if the law doesn't make sense, if the law is foolish, then they don't have to obey it. Not true.

We must obey even the laws that we don't agree with.

The only time we have the freedom from God to disobey the government is when the government commands us to do something that is against God's will.

In that case, we must respond as Peter and the Apostles did in **Acts 5:29** when they were commanded by the Jewish government to stop preaching about Jesus. They say, "**We must obey God rather than men.**" Other than that, Christians should be the best of citizens.

## **2. Obey God.**

Christians are called to submit to the government, but we are also called to obey God.

And as we just say in Acts 5:29, we must obey God before the government. In fact, we must obey God before anything else. Obedience to God is the Christians primary duty in life.

**James 4:7** says, “Therefore, submit to God.” There’s the same Greek word again, *hupotasso*. We are to rank ourselves under God in authority. He is in charge. We are not.

What is obedience? To obey is to carry out God’s commands. To follow God’s orders.

Where do we find God’s commands and orders? In the Bible. The Bible is God’s word, and therefore we are obey the Bible.

This means that you need to read the Bible. Many Christians are disobedient because they don’t know what the Bible says. You can’t obey God’s commands if you don’t know them.

What is God’s command to husbands? **Ephesians 5:25** says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.”

What is God’s command to wives? **Ephesians 5:22** says, “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.”

What is God’s command to married couples? **Exodus 20:14** says, “Do not commit adultery.” And then in Matthew 28 Jesus says that adultery includes not only the physical act, but even looking lustfully at another woman. **Matthew 19:6** says, “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

What is God’s command to singles? **1 Thessalonians 5:3** says, “For this is God’s will, your sanctification: that you keep away from sexual immorality.” The word “immorality,” or “fornication,” refers to any sexual activity outside of marriage.

What is God’s command to children? **Ephesians 6:1** says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right.”

What is God's command for expecting mothers? **Exodus 20:13** says, "Do not murder."

What is God's command for those who struggle with same-sex attraction? **Leviticus 18:22** says, "You are not to sleep with a man as with a woman; it is detestable."

What is God's command for the weekends? **Ephesians 5:18** says, "And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living."

What is God's command regarding your money? **Ephesians 4:28** says, "Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need." **Malachi 3:10** says, "Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house."

What is God's command about church? **Hebrews 10:24-25** says, "24 And let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works, 25 not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other."

A Christian is one who is obedient to God's commands.

Jesus said in **John 14:15**, "If you love me, you will keep my commands."

### **3. Be ready for every good work.**

This is a really cool phrase.

To be "ready" means to be prepared, to be in a state of readiness, to be on the tiptoes of expectancy, and to be willing.

The word "be" is in the present tense. So it means to be constantly, always, in a continual state of readiness, preparedness, and willingness.



In Matthew 24:44 Jesus told His disciples to always be ready for His return.

In 1 Peter 3:15 Peter says to always be ready to make a defense (an apologetic) to everyone who asks you for the reason for your hope.

And here in Titus 3:1, Paul is saying to be always, continuously ready, prepared, equipped, and willing to do good works, or good deeds.

What is a good work? It is **an act of service to God and others.**

As Christians, we should always be ready, prepared, equipped, and willing to serve God and others. To help people in need.

It could be witnessing to someone, or inviting them to church. It could be serving in the church in some way. It could be lending a helping hand. It could be sharing your money and resources.

**Matthew 5:16** says, “In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

In **1 Timothy 2:9-10** Paul said that Christian “women are to dress themselves in modest clothing, with decency and good sense, not with elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive apparel, 10 but with good works, as is proper for women who affirm that they worship God.”

In **1 Timothy 6:18** Paul told Titus to tell the rich Christians to “do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share.”

In **Titus 2:7** Paul told Titus to be an example of good works.

In **Titus 2:14** Paul said that Christ died “to cleanse for Himself a people for His own possession, eager to do good works.”

In **Titus 3:8** Paul said that Christians should “devote themselves to good works.”

**Hebrews 10:24** says that we need to “watch out for one another to provoke love and good works.” We are to be like Tabitha.

**Acts 9:36** says, “In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. She was always doing good works and acts of charity.”

A Christian is one who is continually, always ready, prepared, equipped, willing to good works; to serve God and others.

We should be known as “do-gooders.”

When we scatter during the week, each of us going our separate ways, we should all be going throughout the community doing good works and good deeds and acts of charity.

Now let me add two words of instruction about good works.

We need to give priority to fellow believers, and fellow church members.

And second, we need to give priority to urgent needs, or pressing needs.

**Galatians 6:10** says, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.”

And **Titus 3:14** says, “And our people must also learn to devote themselves to good works for cases of urgent need, so that they will not be unfruitful.”

#### **4. Do not slander.**

Now we’re on to verse 2, and we’ve made it to the first vice. Slander. Do not slander anyone.

This Greek word for “slander” is *blasphēmeō*, and it can mean several things.

First of all, it can mean slander, which means to intentionally tell lies about someone.

But it can also mean to revile, which means to “criticize in an abusive or angrily insulting manner,” or simply to speak disrespectfully to or about someone.

In other words, the word *blasphemo* can simply mean hurtful speech.

Christians do not use hurtful speech. It’s not enough to avoid curse words, and nasty jokes, and lying. We are also to avoid hurtful speech.

This can be insulting people, raising your voice at people, or talking bad about them behind their back.

And this is where many Christians fall short.

We are good at not insulting people or raising our voice at people, but tend to talk bad about people behind their back.

We talk about people’s faults and shortcomings behind their back. We do it when we are frustrated or offended by someone.

That’s a form of slander. That’s a form of *blasphemeo*.

“But it’s the truth. I’m not telling lies.”

Remember that we are called to the Golden Rule in **Luke 6:31**. “Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.”

People don’t like it when you talk about their shortcomings and faults behind their back. It’s disrespectful. It feels like betrayal. So don’t do it. It’s wrong.

So here's a good principle to live by. **Be a raving fan in public and an honest critic in private.** When you are talking to and about someone in the company of others, be very kind; be raving fan of that person. And if you have a genuine problem with that person, then go directly to person alone, and in private, and only to that person. There is a time and a place to confront someone about their offensive behavior. But be a raving fan in public, and an honest critic in private.

**Ephesians 4:29** is a good verse to remember. "No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear."

## **5. Avoid fighting.**

Now we've come to the second vice in this passage – fighting, or quarreling.

This can mean a physical fight or a verbal fight.

It means to avoid brawling. What is a brawl? A brawl is "a rough or noisy fight or quarrel; to brawl is to fight or quarrel in a rough or noisy way (Google)."

There are some people who just seem to get in fights all the time, or on the edge of fights all the time. If not fist fights, then verbal fights.

And it can be over anything. Theology; apologetics; politics; someone cutting in front of you in line; bad customer service at the store; sports; it doesn't matter.

A brawler, or a quarrelsome person, or a contentious person seems to always be prone to loud and rough fights and arguments.

This reminds me of one of the qualities of a church leader. Titus 1:7 says that a church leader must not be a "bully." That word literally means a striker. Someone who will physically harm or threaten to physically harm people. We should not be physically violent.

The only time is when we are defending ourselves or others from physical violence.

But we never respond to an insult with physical violence; it doesn't matter what the person says to you.

But this command in Titus 3:2 goes beyond physical fighting to also verbal fights. We must avoid all fighting – physical and verbal.

And by the way, this applies to marriage and children as well. You should not have verbal fights with your spouse or your children.

This means that Christians need to learn how to communicate without getting into a fight or an argument.

### **How to Communicate Without Getting Into a Fight**

**First, don't cut each other off.** Let the other person talk. A person who cuts people off is called a steamroller. Don't do that.

**Second, don't insult one another.** Especially when you are discussing a disagreement, be careful not to insult the other person.

**Third, don't raise your voice.** Carefully monitor your volume. If you notice that you or the other person is getting louder, stop talking and listen for a while.

**Fourth, don't assume motives.** Don't act like you know why a person did or did not do something. You don't know their heart; you can't read their mind.

**Fifth, avoid absolutes.** Avoid saying, "You always leave your clothes on the floor," or "You never get to work on time," or "I always do more work than you."

Those five things are what cause a disagreement to escalate into a fight.

### **6. Be considerate.**

The next virtue in Titus 3:2 says “Be kind,” but I prefer the word “considerate.”

The Greek word here (*epieikēs*) is translated “considerate” in Philippians 4:5 by the New Living Translation.

The Christian Standard Bible translates it “gracious.”

**Philippians 4:5 (NLT)** says, “Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do.”

I like the word “considerate” because I think it best communicates the meaning of this word.

When you look up the word “considerate” in the dictionary (Google) it means to be “careful not to cause inconvenience or hurt to others.”

First of all, I like the word “careful” in that definition.

Christians are considerate in that they are careful about how their actions and words affect others.

They consider others before they act or speak.

We are not to be careless about others.

We are not to have an “I don’t care” attitude.

That’s how some people are. “I don’t care. I’m going to speak my mind. I’m going to do what I want to do. I’m going to say what I want to say. It’s a free country.”

These are people who abuse freedom by trampling others.

Christians are not like that. We carefully consider how our behavior might impact others.

And then like the words “inconvenience” and “hurt” in that definition.

We are careful not to cause inconvenience or hurt to others.

We are careful not to bother others; we are careful not to offend; we are careful not to inconvenience others.

We don't try to make a left turn at stop sign on Ambassador Caffery during rush hour.

We don't take a basket full over groceries to the 20 items or less cashier.

Now there are times when you will not be able to avoid hurting, offending, or inconveniencing people, because sometimes your faith will offend people. The Gospel is offensive. God's word is offensive to some. But Christians are careful not to hurt, or inconvenience, or offend people; we only do so when absolutely necessary. We are considerate.

By the way, just imagine what it would do to a marriage if the husband and wife made a commitment to this one virtue – considerate. Imagine if they were both careful not to hurt or inconvenience one another. That one virtue could transform a marriage, right!

## **7. Always show gentleness to all people.**

The last Christian behavior mentioned in this passage is the virtue gentleness.

Gentleness is one of my favorites because I'm always thinking about gentleness when I'm talking to people, and I'm always teaching it to my kids.

It's one of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.

It means to **stay calm and kind, even when you are angry.**

In life, you are going to get angry.

Anger is not evil. Anger is like fear or happiness; they are natural, healthy human emotions.

But gentleness is the ability to stay calm and kind, even when you are angry.

A person with gentleness gets angry, but they don't get violent, or physical, or mean, or loud; they don't lose control; they stay calm and kind.

Gentleness is absolutely essential for healthy relationships because you are going to make each other angry, but if you lose control, things go from bad to worse.

Only with gentleness can you overcome conflict and disagreements.

## **CONCLUSION**

This is how Christians behave.

Submissive to the government.

Obedient to God.

Ready for every good work.

Not slandering.

Not fighting.

Kind or considerate.

And Gentle.

Where do we get the power to behave like this? From Jesus.

When you make the decision believe in Jesus and commit your life to Him, He changes your heart and gives you the desire and power to behave like a Christian.



Have you made the decision to trust and follow Christ? Do so today!