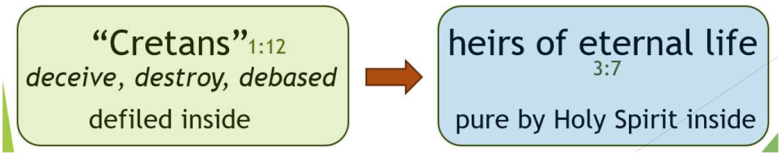
The Transformative Effect of the Gospel

Titus

The appearing of the grace of God changes everything! (2:11) God's grace "coming on the scene" is a "game changer" (or rather a "life changer")! The appearing of the kindness of God our Savior has saved us, giving us a whole new life by the Holy Spirit. (3:4-5) So we should act very differently than before God's love appeared to us (3:4-8). God's gospel gives eternal life to those who believe! (1:2-3) God's very life within us! Our way of living should show godliness that is consistent with this wonderful reality. (1:1) Those in Crete once acted like everyone around them: "Cretans" whose defiled nature showed in all they did. But they are no longer the same person, so it should show dramatically! They have the Holy Spirit inside now!



Godly elders should nurture godliness in the saints

Having preached the gospel in Crete, Paul left Titus to set things in order in the local churches, starting with appointing elders in each church (1:5). They must be blameless men who will oversee the people of God (1:7) and protect them from teachers who promote empty words that do not produce good works. (1:10-16) To develop godliness in all the saints, it is critical to have godly leaders. The elders are overseers who are to shepherd the flock of God among them (Acts 20:17, 28), nurturing godly lives firstly by their example (1:6-9).

May God still raise up such men to care for local assemblies, men who are exemplary in family life, controlled with regard to their plans, passions, pleasures, power and possessions, and having overall excellent character and ways. May the Lord raise up godly leaders with open homes from open hearts, loving to see health in the people of God, sensible, always doing what is right, having an active relationship with God that leads to pure ways, stable in living, and seeing the value and authority of the Scriptures. A local gathering of saints can imitate their example and benefit from their loving investment in them. How valuable are overseers with consistent lives, concern for God's flock, and capability to teach the Word and refute wolves!

Sound doctrine produces solid living, the "good life"

Empty religious talk does not produce actions that bless others, so it does not represent God well (1:16)! In contrast, saints should have ways of living that fit with sound doctrine (2:1). Godly behavior shows the doctrine's value and excellence (2:10). What glory to the gospel when truth comes from the mouth of a man from Crete who is expected to always lie (1:12)! The gospel of God's grace that saves us also instructs and purifies us such that our lives exemplify sensible, good deeds (2:11-14). What honor to God's Word when saints of all ages have sensible lives that bless others (2:1-8)!



Sound lives have substance below the surface

Inspectors sometimes drop a heavy rod on a concrete slab floor to listen for hollowness below the surface. The word of God is "sound", not hollow, so those with eternal life from that word should have lives that are solid not hollow-sounding. When someone refers to an older man's faith, love or perseverance, it should not ring hollow.

Sensible living is seen in the man delivered from demons in Mark 5 in that he is sitting and clothed and in his right mind (same Greek word as "sensible" throughout Titus). Before Christ, he would certainly not have been sitting and clothed. No one could subdue him. But now he was controlled by a completely different nature in him! Clear thinking led to consistent, controlled behavior. Likewise this should be seen in men and women of all ages (2:1-10).

Men and women of all ages should honor the gospel by their ways

Older men should be balanced, elevated and internally-controlled. They should carry themselves in such a way that people think they have something to offer. Others should be inclined to respect them when they see solid substance of their trust in God. They have proved the reliability of God throughout their life. Be the kind of man that when saints think of you, they think of a heart that desires their well-being as seen in acts of sacrificial love. Be steady and unswerving because of having learned from experience that the faithful God gives help. How desirable to have such older men around!

Similarly, older women should be honorable, with lives that show that they see themselves as significant in God's plans. They should have elevated ways and words that bless people rather than drag others down. Rather than living to indulge self, they should invest in others. Don't allow your own pleasures to fill your mind, schedule and expenses. Rather, put effort into nurturing the next generation in godly living, influencing younger women in the actual "good life." Rufus' mother was this type of loving, trusted mother in the assembly (Rom. 16:13). How valuable!

Younger woman should be influenced by the older women to have excellent lives that bless others. The enemy tries to degrade a pure, faithful, serving woman and reduce the perceived value of marriage, family and the home. But the gospel teaches a younger married woman to see the beauty of God's designs. She focuses her affection and interest on their husband and children, valuing those entrusted to her to nurture. Rather than caving to surficial attraction, she is a woman of substance who shares her secret beauty with her husband alone. What a high calling to be a "householder" responsible to manage such a foundational place of blessing as the home!

Do it with diligence and joy, setting the atmosphere as one that honors our beautiful Lord Jesus. Show that beauty of a pleasant disposition that wants to see others doing well, like God (3:4). Excel in that excellent attribute of functioning under authority like the Lord Jesus did so well. By your example, remind the bride of Christ to submit to our Husband. How excellent! What goodness can flow from such a solid woman!

Younger men should likewise be a blessing to others. It is possible for a young man in his teens, twenties and thirties to be solid and steady. Praise the Lord! Young men should develop awareness and consideration of others, being intelligently active and strong to bless (not just strong). Carry yourself in such a way that others admire your speech, conduct, love, faith and purity rather than despise foolish, youthful ways (1 Tim 4:12). Be known for doing good, like the Lord Jesus whose actions blessed others. (Acts 10:38). Teach God's thoughts faithfully. Have a dignified way of living that calls for respect. Carry yourself like a man; a man of substance; a man of God. Have speech that is genuine and honest, with no hollowness or manipulation in it, not saying what you think people want to hear so they like you. What a high calling!

This behavior honors sound doctrine

May people think highly of God's gospel when they see our way of life! How invigorating to see the grace, kindness, love, and life of God at work in real, sensible, good ways that represent the gospel well and bless others!

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