

THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

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ADORN THE DOCTRINE

Jim Mickells

“Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” (Titus 2:9-10).

In recent weeks I have read several articles about leading the lost to Jesus. Last fall, the church here at Hickory Heights had a series of lessons devoted to that theme. Several songs we sing in our assemblies direct our thoughts toward the lost and the saving of their souls. One song which quickly comes to mind is “A Soul Winner For Jesus.” The first verse says, “I want to be a soul winner for Jesus every day.” I’m sure you’re very concerned about the lost, especially those whom you love and care deeply for. How can we be more effective in winning souls for the Lord? One thing I believe which will help is what Paul told Titus to exhort bondservants to do, “adorn the doctrine of God.”

The word adorn is defined as, “to ornament, adorn; metaphorically equivalent to ‘embellish with honor, gain honor’” (Thayer, p. 356). The NIV says, “...so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.” Vine tells us, in his word study, the Greek word kosmeo, is where our English word cosmetic is derived from. Those bondservants needed to live in a way which would make the gospel beautiful, appealing even to the masters of these slaves. Does God require any less of us? Our lives should be a clear reflection of the book we claim to believe in and live by.

This text not only instructs the bondservant to whom Titus was to exhort, but also is a great source of information for us as we try to live in a manner to attract others to God.

It would have been very easy for these slaves, once they were Christians, to feel no sense of obligation to their masters. After all, they enjoyed freedom in Christ. Even if they had not been as obedient to them

as they should have, now they were to be submissive to them because of who they were. As servants of the Lord, you and I experience liberty. Yet that does not mean we are free from obeying others. We are to obey the laws of the land (Rom. 13:1). - - all of them, as long as they don’t conflict with God’s law (Acts 5:29). Children are to be obedient to their parents (Eph. 6:1). Wives are to be submissive to their husbands (Eph. 5:22). Members are to submit to the elders (Heb. 13:17). Young people are to submit to those who are older. All must be obedient to God (James 4:7). Beautify the doctrine of God by being a humble submissive servant.

The bondservant was “to be well pleasing in all things.” It takes effort to please others, especially one’s master. One thing involved is putting others ahead of self. Paul said, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself” (Phil. 2:3). One of the great problems faced by many today is that of selfishness. Let those with whom we have contact see that we are genuinely interested in other people, themselves included.

One thing that can certainly turn people off about the gospel of Christ is the words they hear coming from one’s mouth. The instruction to be given to these slaves was “not answering back.” The NASV says, “not argumentative.” They had to use caution when speaking to their masters. We need to guard our speech as well. How do we answer the boss at work?

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Sunday: 10 am, 10:50am; 6:00pm

Wednesday: 7:30 pm

When outside, do our neighbors hear us screaming disparaging remarks at our children? When we have friends over, do we use our tongues to belittle our spouse? What do our children hear us say about the preacher, the elders, deacons, song leader, etc.? Being able to communicate with people is a great blessing from God. We should use our tongues to edify others, to impart grace to the hearers, and to honor and glorify God (Eph. 4:29-32).

These bondservants were also to be taught “not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity.” A footnote in my Bible says for pilfering, “thieving” - for fidelity, “honesty.” The Amplified Bible says, “Nor to steal by taking things of small value, but to prove themselves truly loyal and entirely reliable and faithful throughout.” What master would not like to have a slave like Paul has described in these two verses? How could he not beautify or adorn the teachings of God? Most people are attracted to others when they see such virtuous traits manifested in their lives.

May the Lord help us to be obedient servants, concerned about others, carefully watching what we say and how we say it, and being a people of honesty and integrity. Such lives will adorn the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, hopefully leading others to Him.

Note: The above article taken from, “Biblical Insights,” Volume 14: Number 5, May 2014, pg. 22

Keep The Unity

Jordon Smith

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is centered on the “Oneness in Christ.” This is the key note of the letter, the central theme. In Ephesians 4:3, Paul desired the saints would walk worthy of their calling and would endeavor “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Each individual saint was to work together to keep peace among the congregation. All saints, regardless of physical location, should be striving for the same goal...the “one goal” as each one functions as a part of the “one body,” being the body of Christ, of which He is the head (Eph. 1:22-23). The one consistent, powerful threat to the church universal, and to every individual congregation is itself. Circumstances surrounding the congregation’s location may not be pleasant but the congregation can still thrive in the edification and instruction of its members. Membership will fluctuate and outside circumstances will continuously change, and have changed. The one constant threat to every congregation...to your congregation is the attitude of its members, but more importantly the biggest threat to the unity of your congregation is your attitude. Are you looking to do what is in the best interest of the congregation, or just of yourself? Are you putting aside your pride, or letting all know how you feel about another individual or their opinion? Are you seeking a mindset focused on keeping the unity of the congregation with love? Christ calls each individual to do the right thing, to live a life pleasing to Him. Make sure you are doing all that is within your power to keep the unity.