

Exemplary Character

It is easy to learn by example. When in a class of mathematics or engineering, one works through example problems. Even when learning something as primary as reading or writing, one follows examples. In spiritual matters, one also learns much by example. God saw that we had examples of history to follow: *“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope”* (**Romans 15:4**; see also **1Corinthians 10:11**). The Lord set for us His own example: *“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps ...”* (**1Peter 2:21**). Multitudes of times, we are told to follow the example of those who are godly: *“Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us”* (**Philippians 3:17**). *“Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith”* (**Hebrews 13:7**).

When thinking of examples of those who were faithful, one’s mind might easily turn to Paul, Peter, or one of the other apostles of the Lord. Just as easily, we might think of a prominent evangelist such as Philip or Barnabas. We might even think of a younger evangelist to whom instruction was given to be an example—Timothy: *“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe”* (**1Timothy 4:12**).

There is one early Christian who is often overlooked as an example. He is well-known, but at the same time, little-known. He has a letter written to him, but almost nothing is said of him—he is not even mentioned in the book of Acts. In fact, except for a brief mention in the letter Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia, he is only mentioned in the letter of Second Corinthians.



Who is this man? He is Titus. He is one of the outstanding men of Scripture—a man of exemplary character. He ought to be an example for us all. He, like Timothy, was told to be that example: *“Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us”* (**Titus 2:6-8**).

Notice his example of conversion. We can’t his conversion directly since we don’t have a record of his conversion, but we can examine the fact of his conversion. Paul called him his son (**Titus 1:4**) like others whom he claimed were Christians (**1Corinthians 4:14**). We know how the Corinthians became sons (**Acts 18:8**). Likewise Paul called him a brother just as he called others who were converted (**2Corinthians 2:13**). We know what Paul had done to be converted (**Acts 22:16**), so, if Titus was a brother to Paul, he must have done the same thing. Truly he had been converted.

Notice his example as a busy Christian. Chronologically speaking, the first time we meet him, he is in the thick of things. He was with Paul on an eventful trip to Jerusalem (**Acts 15**; **Galatians 2:1-4**). Titus was involved—he did not have to have somebody to push him to the work. He went of his own accord. *“But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart*

of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord” (2Corinthians 8:16-17). Many people will work if pushed into it. So few will go of their own accord. What a commendation this is to Titus!

Notice his example in faithful love of the brethren. As we have seen, he was interested in others enough to go to work in their behalf of his own accord. Because of his love, he had been involved from the beginning and was bound to see the work to the end. “So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well” (2Corinthians 8:6). He had the same care which Paul had toward fellow Christians. He showed his love by his working in faith exactly in the way in which James writes: “If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, ‘You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works’” (James 2:15-18). Titus is a worthy example for us.

Notice his example in being cooperative. Titus was a Gentile (Galatians 2:3) and Paul was a Jew (Philippians 3:1-6). Yet, they could and did work together intimately: “As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you” (2Corinthians 8:23). He understood that in Christ Jesus there is no racial division (Galatians 3:28,29). There may be differences in social customs, but that does not mean that one is better than the other.

He was even cooperative in being left behind. Titus was left on Crete. He was not left as punishment, but because he was a man to do the work—a Christian man of love and work.

We need more Tituses in the land today.