

**Titus 3:9-15**  
**“Dealing with problem people”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 9-11 Detractors and Dissenters**

**III. Vs. 12-15 Closing**

**I. Introduction**

Having given the church specific guidelines on how to be a Christian Citizen it appears that Paul anticipates the natural question, “*Paul you said that we need to speak evil of NO ONE, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to ALL MEN.*” “*Did you really mean to say NO ONE and ALL MEN? What about PROBLEM PEOPLE?”*

**II. Vs. 9-11 Detractors and Dissenters**

Vs. 9-11 Paul concludes this letter with “*How to deal with PROBLEM PEOPLE.*”

Within and without the walls of the Church “problem people” exist and they usually come in two varieties:

1. **Vs. 9 Detractors**: Are folks who like to debate, they have a lot of questions and hypothetical situations they want answers for. But the truth is they really don’t want answers they want reasons to remain unchanged by truth and are hoping that you will provide them with just such an excuse. The favorite game for “*detractors*” is truth “Dodgeball” as you can spend a tremendous amount of time answering their questions but in the end unfortunately “detractors” are not looking for reasons to obey the truth they are looking for excuses not too! Paul gives four ways they played “Truth Dodgeball” by engaging in:
  - ***Foolish disputes***: The word “*foolish*” comes from a Greek word that means stupid or absurd and “*dispute*” which comes from the Greek word questioning.

Putting it together it would mean *continual stupid questions*. In chapter 1 verse 11 Paul told Titus that there are some things people will try to get you into debating worthless things and *the best way to stop their mouths is not open yours*.

- ***Genealogies***: This was a very common tactic of the Judaizers who like to engage in debates over ancestry as an establishment of authority and correctness. I suppose to day folks would talk about their experience or education that would be the reason that they are right. Today we see Mormons spending millions of dollars and man hours researching genealogies so that they may baptize for the dead as they believe you can save a person through proxy. The problem is twofold: They fail to understand the purpose of baptism, as a person isn't baptized to be saved, they are saved and baptism is an outward sign that they have identified with the work of Christ and have surrendered to Him as Lord. Second they fail to understand that such an act does a dead person no good as the author of Hebrews wrote in chapter 9 verse 27 saying, "*It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgement.*" So it's best to just avoid arguments about genealogies.
- ***Contentions***: This word just refers to a quarrel but one that leads to contention and strife the point of which is to distract from getting at the heart of the matter.
- ***Strivings about the law***: This too was a favorite tactic of the legalists who would as Jesus said of them in Matthew 23:24 "*strain at a gnat but swallow a camel*".

There will always be people who want to strain at a Gnat while swallowing camels and Paul's word is avoid them. The tact that you utilize with this kind of person is

avoidance because engaging in this will be unprofitable and useless. The word “*avoid*” in the Greek means to “*step around or stand aside*”. So those who want you to play “Truth Dodgeball” you step around the game. These distraction are so that we will get off on tangents instead of keeping the main thing, the main thing.

2. **Dissenters:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> group of “problem people” are what Paul calls a “*divisive*” person which in the Greek is the word heretic the idea being that the person has chosen the opposite of the truth. They have made a choice to cause divisions as was the case with Korah who rose up against Moses and Aaron dividing the Israelites under the false premise that Moses and Aaron had too much power and that they were exalting themselves when in reality it was Korah that was exalting himself, drawing people away after himself. It is unfortunate that these “*church splits*” happen but Paul gives sound council on how to deal with “*dissenters*” as he says that the shepherd needs to lovingly confront a person who is causing dissention, warning them to stop to repeating the confrontation if they won’t heed the council. If they still refuse to stop then they are to be refused fellowship. Over the almost 30 years I’ve witnessed this many times where a person goes about trying to gain a following and a position and after they have enough folks following after them they get upset at the pastor or church leadership and leave the church with their followers in tow. Sometimes they start another church, other times they all start attending a new fellowship where in time this process will be repeated. I’m always a little concerned when someone new comes into the fellowship with a following of people and after a few short weeks begin to tell me how great I am and how bad the former pastor was. I may not know their former pastor but their new shepherd is most definitely not great! Paul says that

a person that continues on in this pattern is “*warped*” in character as they continue to sin and are condemned in their behavior. Not that long ago while out of town I noticed a church that had an unfortunate location as well as a name as it was called “*West Division Street Church*”. I don’t think I want to attend a church that is stuck on “*Division Street*”, albeit we are attending church in the Bitterroot Valley Calvary Chapel. There are many Christians that seem to think that this kind of “*church growth*” is attractive and will follow after this as number and popularity must mean God is in it and it is healthy.

### III. Vs. 12-15 Closing

Vs. 12-13 These final verses Paul conveys his personal wishes and greetings as well as reminding Titus of the purpose of the letter verse 14, “*let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that may not be unfruitful.*” If you were to go to all the closing words of Paul throughout his 13 letters they all have a common end as they both greet people who were at the destination Paul was writing to as well as sending greetings for those who were with him. Paul was not some stuffed shirt, he was a man who had many friends that cared for him, and he for them. Apparently Paul was at Nicopolis, there were three cities that bore this name in the ancient world: Cilicia, Thrace and Epirus. Most agree it was Epirus (*on the west coastland of Greece*) that Paul speaks of as they had work that would have suited him.

Of the names mentioned:

- **Artemas**: Is a name that we have only mentioned here and we know nothing of him other than that he must have been a useful believer as Paul was considering to send him or Tychicus to Titus.

- **Tychicus**: Is mentioned in Colossian's 4:7 where he is called a beloved brother, faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. The same comments are made about him in Ephesians 6:21 and in Paul final 2 Timothy 4:12 Paul sends him back to Ephesus with the letter as well as to replace Timothy so he could come before Paul was executed.
- **Zenas**: The word for lawyer is a word that is connected to the Mosaic Law, so he is most likely a converted Jewish lawyer and as much time as Paul spent in jail he was in needed a good lawyer. So for all the lawyer jokes here is an example that even lawyers can find the truth in Christ. He is mentioned as a believer and he and Apollos are to be sent on their journey at once.
- **Apollos**: Apollos was a powerful orator, skilled in rhetoric, his name first comes up in Acts chapter 18:24 where we are told that he was a Jew from Alexandria, eloquent in speech and mighty in the scriptures. We are further told that He was "*instructed in the way of the Lord, fervent in spirit and he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord*" and based upon the context seems to indicate that his enthusiasm matched his education. Yet with that said we are told that he "*only knew the baptism of John*". He knew of the necessity of a changed heart, he spoke of the fact that such a changed heart would be visible in a changed life. And he spoke of the need for Jesus to live this new life. But he lacked the teaching with regards to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So Priscilla and Aquila act as personal trainers and fill in the missing Piece of his teaching the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Apparently this worked as the carnal Corinthian believers were selecting him as a favorite teacher in 1 Corinthians 1:12.

Vs. 14-15 *“Let our people also learn to maintain good works”* in the Greek this phrase means *“possess honest trades”* and suggests that believers were to be able to support themselves by the work of their own hands so that they wouldn’t be a financial burden upon the church. Paul defines this self-sufficient as the ability to meet their own urgent needs and then says that not doing so would be unfruitful. James would write that Christians need to be *“Doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourself.”* He went on to say that a Christian saw a brother or sister naked and destitute of daily food and only said *“Depart in peace, be warmed and filled”* but do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? James went on to say, *“You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I’ll show you my faith by my works.”* Paul ends this letter with a benediction combining “love in the faith” and Grace to be with all!