



How to Give Like a Cretan

Titus 3:12-15

Paul's Closing Words: Be an encourager!

12As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. 13Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. 14Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives. 15Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. (Titus 3:12-15 NIV)

Even an apostle needs encouragement!

At the close of his letter to Titus, Paul has some final instructions and encouragements.

v. 12—says that he hasn't decided but is planning on sending some relief for Titus. Either Artemas or Tychicus. This is the only time Artemas is mentioned in the NT; we know nothing else about him. Tychicus is mentioned elsewhere: (1) in Acts 20:4 he's from Asia—modern day Turkey), (2) In Eph. 6:21 & Col 4:7 we surmise that Tychicus was the courier for the Apostle Paul. And Colossians 4:7 says that Tychicus was a dear brother, a faithful minister, a fellow servant in the Lord. Wouldn't you like to be remembered like that? Tychicus was Paul's utility player. Whatever Paul needed him to do, he just went.

But the reason why Paul is sending relief is so that Titus can rendezvous with him in Greek city of Nicopolis ("Victory City") for the winter. "Meet me in Nicopolis because I want to spend the winter there; and do your best to get there because once the winter months come the seas will become too difficult to sail. Of course, Titus needs to wait until help comes because the churches are still too fragile left leader-less. But the moment he can break away, Paul wants him to come.

And why Nicopolis? (1) a strategic reason: it's on the western coast of Greece and could serve as a calculated launchpad for Paul's desire to go to Spain; something he wrote about in the book of Romans. (2) a personal reason. Even an apostle needs company.

"But the God who comforts [encourages] the downcast, comforted [encouraged] us by the coming of Titus." (2 Corinthians 7:6 NIV)

Wouldn't it be great if others said that our church family? That Windsor Road be recognized in our community as a people who give, not take; comfort, not complain; and build up, not tear down?

Wouldn't it be great if others said that about you? Do they? When you walk into a room and someone looks up from their desk, do their eyes light up? When someone answers the phone and they find out it's you, what's their tone? Do others feel comforted by your coming?

Even a church from Crete can offer encouragement!

v. 13—Paul infers who delivered the letter to Titus—(1) Zenas, a Roman jurist whose background and legal acumen would have made a great contribution to Paul's missionary team; & (2) Apollos. In Acts 18:24-25, we learn that Apollos was highly educated, had mastered the Hebrew Bible, was instructed in the way of the Lord, and had an outstanding gift of teaching/speaking. Apollos—with his academic/rhetorical background—and Zenas—with his legal background—made for quite a team. Paul wanted Titus to arrange an offering from the churches that would help pay for their travel expenses. "See that they have everything they need" means to get these missionaries the travel money they need to get to their destination.

Do you see what's going on here? God has so transformed these Titus 1:12 Cretans that they are now key supporters in global missions! Amazing! They are to be fruit bearing trees. Question: does an orange tree need the fruit it bears for itself? No! It's meant to support others.

What keeps us from be better encouragers? Could it be that we often underestimate the power we have to encourage others? The impact our encouragement can have on the lives of those we influence?

Titus 3:12-15 concludes with this Big Idea: When you get the opportunity to encourage others, take it! **If encouragement is a basketball . . . take the shot!** Don't pass it, dribble it, or hold onto it—take the shot! Hurry! Time is running out!