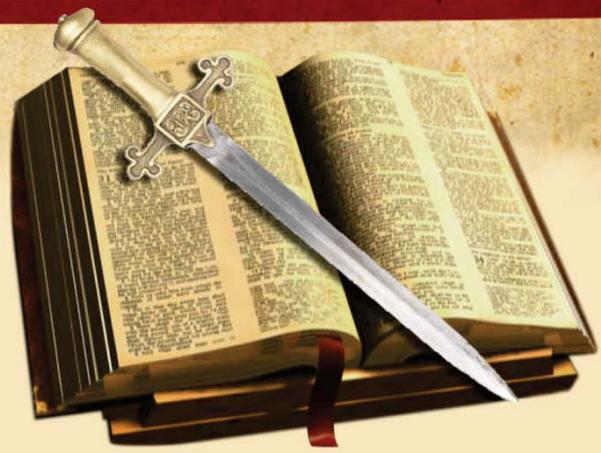


# Setting Your Heart on the Kingdom



TITUS

## *Righteous Living...A Hopeless Fantasy?*

*(The Principle of: Chastening Grace)*

Titus 2:11-14

Don't be deceived. Righteous living isn't behavior modification...it's a complete change of natures! The fallen character is so thoroughly ingrained in the human soul that any attempt at self-reformation is futile! Thus sin isn't just an act...it's our fallen nature! Listen to Jeremiah's stinging prophecy, "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil*" (Jer. 13:23). No one knew this like Paul. Tenaciously he had fought to earn righteousness by trying to be good. Until he met Jesus! It was then that he was given what he could never acquire...imputed righteousness. Oh, the indescribable grace of God! *Without it, God is unapproachable and righteous living is a hopeless fantasy that constantly eludes us.*

As Paul penned this great pastoral letter, he wanted Titus to know that righteous living would be impossible were it not for grace. The apostle's previous admonition to the older and younger generations would be unachievable were it not for what he wrote next: "*The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.*" Grace is more than mercy. It's divine power that not only brings salvation, it enables men to live moral lives to the glory of God. *It's His grace that teaches us to live righteously (literally: "Trains us as a parent chastens a child.")*.

Dear heart, have you ever been taught (chastened) by grace? If so, you've experienced the incredible love of Christ...so subtle, yet so compelling. It's the work of His Spirit bringing conviction to your redeemed soul. (The fallen nature can never receive God's corrections.) When you think, speak or act in a way that violates God's character within you, He gently speaks to your heart. "*No, My child, that's not who you really are.*" With godly sorrow you quickly run into the arms of Jesus. Sensing love and forgiveness, you repent with tears of joy. *Thus you are loved into obedience! Oh, what a wondrous God we serve! In God's Kingdom, it's grace, not the Law, that produces righteous living.*

*Next: The Kingdom of God in Philemon - Offenses, Failures and Rejection*

