WARN A DIVISIVE PERSON

Titus 3:10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them.

What Is a Divisive Person

The word translated “divisive” is *“hairetikos,”* from which we get the English word “heretical.” This is the only place it occurs in the New Testament. The closely related word “*hairesis,”* from which we get the English word “heresy,” is used frequently in the New Testament.

Vine’s says *“hairesis”* means “a choosing, choice…; then that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects…a sect; this secondary meaning…is the dominating significance in the NT.”

Acts 5:17 “the party of the Sadducees,” Acts 15:5 “the party of the Pharisees,”

Acts 24:5 “the Nazarene sect,” Acts 24:15 “which they call a sect,” Acts 26:5 “the strictest sect of our religion” and Acts 28:22 “people everywhere are talking against this sect.”

*“Hairesis”* is translated “factions” in the Galatians 5:19-21a(NIV), “The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.” “Heresies,” “factions” and “divisions” are the most common translations.

A divisive person is one who insists on promoting a personal opinion to the point of causing separation in the body of Christ between those who agree with him and those who do not. He is seeking to get people to follow him and his ideas.

Acts 20:30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

Galatians 4:17 These people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them.

Who Was Paul Talking About

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.

Is Division in the Body a Serious Issue?

I Corinthians 1:10-12 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, "I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

John 17:22 “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

I Corinthians 3:16&17 Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

What to Do with Divisive People

Titus 3:10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them.

Paul’s Assessment of a Divisive Person’s Character

Titus 3:11 You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.

“You may be sure” is literally “knowing that.”

“Warped” is *“ekstrepo,”* “to turn inside out, to change entirely.” (Vine’s)

“Sinful” is literally “sinning,” using the most common New Testament word for sin, which literally means “missing the mark,” failing to do what is right.

“Self-condemned” is “*autokatakritos,” “auto,* self, *katakrino,* tp condemn)” (Vine’s) By doing what he does, a divisive person condemns himself.

Final Instructions

Titus 3:12-14 As 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. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.

Artemas is mentioned only here. Tychicus is mentioned as one who accompanied Paul when he went into Asia in Acts 20:4. He is called a “dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord” in Colossians 4:7 and he apparently carried Paul’s letters to the churches in Ephesus and Colossae.

Ephesians 6:21&22 Tychicus…will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

Titus seems to have been given the hard jobs, but there were others who were qualified to finish what needed to be done. There were a number of cities called Nicopolis, Paul was planning on spending the winter in one of them.

Zenas the lawyer is mentioned only here. Apollos is mentioned in several passages of Scripture. Acts 18:24, “Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.

Acts 18:27&28 When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

Artemas and Tychicus were part of the group of at least 20 missionaries led by Paul. Apollos and probably Zenas worked in friendly cooperation with Paul but were not a part of the group he led.

Titus is told to “do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.” Some go, some send, everyone needs to be involved in spreading the Gospel.

Closing Words

Titus 3:15 Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Titus 1:4b Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Things to Remember

Divisive people are to be warned twice and then ignored and avoided. Causing division in the church is a very serious offense.

People who cause division condemn themselves by doing it.

There were many people working in the group Paul led and also many others working independently of Paul. All were to be helped as part of the body of Christ.

The letter begins and ends with grace.