
Words of Truth

Unruly And Vain Talkers And Deceivers

By: Brian A. Yeager

The apostle Paul, by the inspiration of God, wrote the following to Titus the evangelist: *“To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth”* (Titus 1:4-14).

All evangelists need to follow the applicable lessons above. Titus had a task that was challenging in front of him. Not only did he need to appoint faithful elders, but he had to prepare them to meet the challenge of dealing with the unruly, vain, and deceptive individuals in the area. I have studied this context thousands of times as it pertains to my work. I know there are hundreds of lessons in the verses I quoted above. What I want to address is what I titled this lesson. Let's consider what it means to be unruly and vain talkers and deceivers.

To Be Unruly

The term translated “unruly” [ἀνυπότακτος] means: “unsubdued, i.e. insubordinate (in fact or temper): — disobedient, that is not put under, unruly. Not made subject, unsubjected; that cannot be subjected to control, disobedient, unruly, refractory” (Strong's #506). It is translated in other Scriptures “disobedient” (I Timothy 1:9) and “under” (Hebrews 2:8).

An unruly person refuses to be submissive. Can a person be a faithful Christian if he or she has a problem with being submissive? When you read the following Scriptures, you'll have the answer: *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing*

and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God... But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you... Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (Ephesians 5:19-21, James 4:6-7, and I Peter 5:5-6). The Scriptures you just read teach us that we MUST be submissive to each other and our Lord. Thus, our question is answered. Now, let’s find out what it means to be vain talkers.

To Be Vain Talkers

The phrase translated “vain talkers” [ματαιολόγος] means: “an idle (i.e. senseless or mischievous) talker, i.e. a wrangler: — vain talker. An idle talker, one who utters empty senseless things” (Strong’s # 3151). This terminology does not appear anywhere else that I can find in the New Testament. However, statements about words of vanity (II Peter 2:18) and vain words do (Ephesians 5:6). In each of those contexts we learn that speech that is empty, that can distract someone from obedience to God, is sinful. To avoid such, let’s be sure to measure our words (Proverbs 17:27-28; 21:23) and speak profitable truth with everyone (Ephesians 4:14-15; 29). This all leads us to the discussion of deceptiveness.

To Be Deceivers

The term translated “deceivers” [φρεναπάτης] means: “a mind-misleader, i.e. seducer: — deceiver” (Strong’s # 5423). This term is not used anywhere else in the New Testament that I could find. However, teaching against those whom would seductively mislead others certainly does (Acts 20:20-32, Colossians 2:4-23, I Timothy 1:3-7, II Timothy 2:14-18, II Peter 2:1-22, Jude 1:1-25, and Revelation 2:18-29). Furthermore, we read that such individuals were prophesied to grow worse over time (II Timothy 3:13). A person whose aim is to seduce and mislead people cannot be a faithful follower of Christ (I John 2:18-26).

Conclusion

The context in which we read of unruly and vain talkers and deceivers is clearly talking about false brethren seeking to cause others to follow them. They had to be stopped. Lest any of us become individuals such as they, we have to continue to put serving our Lord and our brethren at the top of our list of priorities (Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:10-16, and Galatians 5:13). Like Paul, renounce the things of dishonesty (II Corinthians 4:1-2). It is not just the desire to teach a false doctrine you have to guard against. Like Jesus Himself, you have to be sure you are not seeking to promote anything that is of your own will (John 5:30; 6:38).