

Titus 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

Analysis

After negative prohibitions (v. 7), Paul lists positive virtues. **A lover of hospitality** (φιλόξενον, philoxenon)—literally "stranger-loving," welcoming travelers and outsiders. Early Christians lacked church buildings; hospitality enabled gospel spread. **A lover of good men** (φιλάγαθον, philagathon)—or "lover of goodness," pursuing moral excellence. **Sober** (σώφρονα, sophron)—self-controlled, sound-minded, the opposite of excess.

Just (δίκαιον, dikaion)—righteous in dealings with others, giving each their due. **Holy** (ῥσιον, hosion)—devout toward God, distinct from δίκαιος (righteous toward others). **Temperate** (ἐγκρατῆ, enkratē)—self-controlled, especially regarding physical appetites (food, sex, sleep). These six positive virtues create a portrait of balanced, mature Christian character oriented both God-ward and neighbor-ward.

Historical Context

Cretan society was marked by the opposite of these virtues—inhospitality to strangers, vice over virtue, excess over moderation, injustice, impiety, and indulgence. Christian leaders needed to incarnate a counter-cultural way of life demonstrating the gospel's transforming power in pagan contexts.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Is your home a place of gospel hospitality where strangers and struggling believers find welcome and help?
2. Which of these six virtues—hospitality, love of good, sobriety, justice, holiness, temperance—is least evident in your daily life?
3. How do you cultivate self-control (temperance) in an age of unlimited access to food, entertainment, and sexual images?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| ἀλλὰ | φιλόξενον | φιλάγαθον | σώφρονα | δίκαιον |
| But | a lover of hospitality | a lover of good men | sober | just |
| G235 | G5382 | G5358 | G4998 | G1342 |
| ὅσιον | ἐγκρατῆ | | | |
| holy | temperate | | | |
| G3741 | G1468 | | | |

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 3:2 (Good): A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Titus 2:7 (Good): In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

1 Kings 5:7 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.