

Titus 2:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Analysis

Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity—μὴ νοσφιζομένους (mē nosphizomenous, not embezzling/pilfering/misappropriating) addresses petty theft. Slaves had access to household goods; temptation to pilfer was constant. Instead, ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν πίστιν ἐνδεικνυμένους ἀγαθήν (alla pasan pistin endeiknymenous agathēn, demonstrating all good fidelity/faithfulness)—comprehensive trustworthiness even when unsupervised.

That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (ἵνα τὴν διδασκαλίαν τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ κοσμῶσιν ἐν πᾶσιν, hina tēn didaskalian tēn tou sōtēros hēmōn theou kosmōsin en pasin)—κοσμέω (kosmeō, to adorn/decorate/beautify, root of "cosmetic") makes doctrine attractive. Slaves' faithful service provides visible apologetic. The most socially powerless demonstrate gospel power most clearly—God's upside-down kingdom (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

Historical Context

Masters judged Christianity by their slaves' conduct. Dishonest or lazy Christian slaves discredited the gospel; faithful ones commended it. This placed enormous pressure on the most vulnerable, but also empowered them as crucial gospel witnesses. Their godliness adorned doctrine more powerfully than eloquent preachers.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Does your daily work adorn the gospel, making Christianity attractive, or do you discredit it through laziness, dishonesty, or complaining?
2. How do you resist petty theft—time, supplies, intellectual property—in your workplace?
3. In what ways can even the powerless and lowly demonstrate gospel truth through faithful service?

Interlinear Text

μὴ νοσφιζομένους ἀλλὰ πίστιν πᾶσιν ἐνδεικνυμένους

Not purloining but fidelity all shewing
G3361 G3557 G235 G4102 G3956 G1731

ἀγαθήν τίνα τὴν διδασκαλίαν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμᾶς θεοῦ

good that G3588 the doctrine G3588 Saviour our of God
G18 G2443 G1319 G4990 G2257 G2316

κοσμῶσιν ἐν πᾶσιν

they may adorn in all
G2885 G1722 G3956

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:16 (Good): Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

1 Peter 2:12 (Good): Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Ephesians 4:1 (Parallel theme): I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 John 1:9 (References God): Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

1 Corinthians 4:2 (Parallel theme): Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Matthew 24:45 (Parallel theme): Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

1 Timothy 6:3 (References God): If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

1 Timothy 6:1 (References God): Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

Luke 16:10 (Parallel theme): He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

1 Peter 3:16 (Good): Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.