



Thinking

**About God's
Eternal Promise**

By

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“Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.” Titus 1:1-3

This is one of the most powerful and insightful introductions to the **GraceLife** in Paul’s writings. God opens to those who will hear and believe the Deep Secrets of True Spirituality. Here we learn the **Purpose of God in Life**. God chose Paul from all the peoples of the world to explain His Wisdom and the Mystery hidden in Him from before the beginning of time. God inspired Paul to preach, teach and write so that we might benefit for Eternity.

Paul was a “bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ.” Paul loved God with all of his heart. He was humbled to be one of God’s “servants.” The Greek word is *doulos*. It is the most abject and servile term that ancient Greeks used for a slave. It was a person who was born into slavery. Paul was born physically into the horrible slavery of “sin.” He was born anew into the wonderful slavery of an eternal relationship with Jesus Christ. The will of a Greek slave was swallowed up in the will of his master. Paul was God’s humble and loving “slave.” His will was God’s will. Paul lived his life completely for Christ. Paul dedicated his life to God and obeyed Him all of the years following his spiritual conversion to Christ. Paul braved angry mobs,

killer animals and demonic spirits to bring the Mystery of God's Grace to a needy planet.

Paul served God as "an apostle." God sent Paul, a Jew, to preach salvation to Gentiles from every nation. Paul called himself the "apostle of the Gentiles." Paul did not stop preaching, teaching and writing about his wonderful Savior until the enemies of God snuffed out Paul's life. He was obedient to the end.

Paul was a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ "according to the faith of God's elect." *kata pistin eklekton theou*. *Kata* – preposition meaning "down." It has the meaning of dominating. When used with a noun in the accusative case it carries the idea of "according to" or "with a view to." The word "faith" (*pistin*) is in the accusative case. That is the case that relates to action and indicates the direction, extent or end of an action. The "faith" that Paul writes about in his letter to Titus is the goal of a Christian's life. Paul was a servant of God and an Apostle of Jesus Christ dominated by the goal of "the faith."

"The faith" is what Christians believe and cling to for their spiritual, physical and emotional lives (*pistin* – objectively "that which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith"). "The faith" is the entire body of **teachings** about Christ and following Him. Many people make light of the importance of doctrine today. Some say feelings, emotions and relationships within the Body of Christ are what are important in the Christian experience. I submit to the Body

of Christ that all feelings, emotions and relationships must pass the test of “the faith” of Christian teaching. “The faith” is the entire Body of Truth which God established through His Apostle almost two thousand years ago. It is that Body of Truth that Christians are to believe, adhere to, imitate and obey. “The faith” is not any portion of Paul’s writings that we particularly enjoy and wish to practice. “The faith” is **every Word** of the Living God for the Dispensation of Grace.

Paul was a servant and an apostle “dominated by” the faith of **God’s elect**. “Elect” is *eklekton*. It is an adjective from *eklego* (to choose, select). It carries the idea of thoughtful and deliberate consideration in making a choice. It means “chosen ones.” The combination of the words *eklekton theou* (God’s elect) means that God was the One Who made the thoughtful and deliberate consideration that led Him to choose those who are called His “elect.” We are “God’s elect.” God carefully thought and deliberated about, considered and “chose” us. How wonderful! How exciting! How comforting! How special we are in the Sight of the All-Knowing, All-Loving God. We are His “chosen ones.”

The “faith” of God’s elect is the Body of Truth that guides Christians today and has guided Christians since Christ spoke through the teachings of the Apostle Paul centuries ago. Paul was a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to that “faith.” We have a very strong sense of protection when it comes to God’s Word. The Bible is the single most important document in existence today. Nothing in any library, nothing in any business or home, nothing on

the Internet compares even slightly with God's Holy Word. The Bible is not just a religious book upon which humanity can cast its eyes and wonder. The Bible contains the Holy Writings of the Spirit of the Living God as He moved upon select men across hundreds of years to explain God's Purpose and Will. The Writings of Paul are God's Purpose and Will for the present Dispensation of Grace in which we live today (Ephesians 3:2). The Bible is a Living Document that guides us to Eternal Life and to the GraceLife: God's 'gift' to His children.

Paul was also a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to "the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness" (*epignosin aletheias tes kateusebeian*). "Knowledge" is *epignosin*. It means "to recognize fully." The word carries an "intensity" of recognition and understanding into truth. It is a knowledge that comes from experience and "expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner" (Zodhiates). It often suggests "advanced knowledge or special appreciation" (Vine).

Christians are not stupid people. We do not have a low IQ, despite what atheists may claim. We do not blindly follow some off-the-wall, crazy religion that has no basis in fact. Christians do not believe something that is dead and dry. We have "full and complete knowledge" of truth. We have experienced "Truth" through Jesus Christ the Lord Who is **The Way, The Truth and The Life!** We have full access to the Wisdom of Almighty God. We know and understand the Words of the Living God. Now, that's **KNOWLEDGE!**

This full knowledge is “of the truth that leads to godliness.” “Truth” is *aletheias*. It comes from the combination of a (negative) and *letho* (to forget) and means “that which is unconcealed.” It is based on the concept of that which is manifest, revealed, actual. God “revealed” His Word, His Truth, to Paul and through him to the Church. God sent His Son, Who is Truth, to Earth to speak and prove what is True. It is that Truth that is the foundation of our full knowledge. We have a complete knowledge of “the truth” of God!

The knowledge of the truth “leads to godliness” (*tes kateusebeian*). The root word is *eusebeia*. It combines *eu* (well) with *sebomai* (to be devout). Kate, the prefix, means “according to” or “with a view toward.” It “denotes that piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him” (Vine). It is “well-directed reverence” (Zodhiates). Paul uses it in the sense of an externalized piety, not something that comes inherently from within a person. A Christian’s godliness comes from believing, obeying and practicing the Truth of God. Godliness in a Christian’s life, the proper respect and demonstration of reverence to God, comes from our relationship to God’s Truth. We become godly in manner because of the Truth we believe, obey and practice.

The “faith and knowledge” we have as Christians are “in hope of eternal life” (*ep elpidi zoes aionion*). *Epi*, “on”, has a root meaning of “upon.” It is used with the noun *elpidi*, which is in the dative case. It represents “place” and “relationship.” It implies a close proximity and contact upon. It carries the idea here of resting “full hope and

confidence” on something. It is what we “base” our hope upon.

Our “hope” is a “full hope and confidence.” We hope for something sure and lasting. Jesus Christ is proof of what we have. We don't walk around every day wondering if what we believe is true. We KNOW it's true. The writer to Hebrews wrote: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.” I also like the way the King James Version translates Hebrews 11:1-2.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

Our “full hope and confidence” rests on our eternal future, which is **eternal life**. Eternal is *aionion*. It addresses duration. It is a life that goes on forever. It never ends. It also speaks to the quality of the life we have in Christ. We have a Great Life. We have a Fantastic Life. We have Eternal Life in “The Life” - the Resurrected Son of the Living God. The Life God gives to His Children of Grace is a Life of Enduring Quality. Our Eternal Life will never become boring. It will never fade into mediocrity. It will always be Perfect. It will forever be Excellent. It will always be Fun! That's the “hope” we have in Christ.

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