

Busybody

The Problem

Plutarch, *On Being a Busybody*: "Just as a cook prays for a good crop of young animals, and fishermen for a good haul of fish, in the same way a busybody prays for a good crop of calamities or a good haul of difficulties that he, like a cook or fisherman, may always have something to fish out and butcher."

A busybody is a person who inserts himself uninvited into some else's life, who meddles or pries into the affairs of others. The Bible is very clear that this is wrong, totally inappropriate behavior, especially in a local church congregation.

Synonyms for "busybody": meddler; interloper; quidnunc; kibitzer; buttinsky. (You probably have more synonyms of your own.)

1 Peter 4:15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody (**allotroepiskopos**) in other men's matters.

2 Thess. 3:11. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies (**periergadzomai**: to take more pains than enough about).

1 Tim. 5:13. ...Not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies (**periergoi**), saying things which they ought not.

Romans 14:4, Who are you that judges another man's servant? to his own master he stands or falls. Yea, he shall be held up: for God is able to make him stand.

Busybody: a meddler; a person given to intruding in other people's affairs; interloper, quidnunc; kibitzer. Slang: buttinsky.

This is a sin caused by a variety of sin patterns

The following areas of weakness contribute to mental attitude sins and verbal sins that are part of a busybody's carnal character.

Arrogance: consummate human pride that says "I am able to fix the people's problems, and I commission myself to do just that."

Self-righteousness – the Bible has strong words for the religious busybody.

Romans 2:1-6. Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every person according to his deeds:

Judgmentalism: can't stand to see someone get away with something; can't wait for God to deal with the matter (therefore, lack of Patience)

Acting in God's place.

Matt. 7:1-5. Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?

You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Lack of forgiveness

Eph. 4:31,32. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Denying privacy; no "live and let live."

Hatred

Desire for revenge

No Relaxed Mental Attitude

No Mastery of the Details of Life

Trying to build one's happiness on someone else's misery.

Victory over the sin of being a busybody

1. Desire to be occupied with Christ, to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.
2. Acknowledgement that God is sovereign and agreement that His word is paramount.
3. Knowledge, from the Bible, that being a busybody is a sin.
4. Desire to maintain fellowship and the control of the Holy Spirit.
5. Confession of the sin to God.

There are three parts to cleansing in the Bible.

For the unbeliever, that is the cleansing that comes with salvation.

Titus 3:5. He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

For the Christian who is carnal, out of fellowship

1 John 1:8-10. If we say that we have no

sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

For the spiritual believer who is walking in fellowship, there is continual cleansing through the Word of God.

Eph. 5:25-27. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Other specific doctrines give insight into how a believer is to relate to the Lord and to other people.

Grace; Occupation with Christ; Mastery of the Details of Life; Mental Attitude; Faith-Rest

All of this is quite appropriate to the context of Titus 1. The Christian Jews were causing great distress in the local churches because they were insisting that Christians follow Jewish laws customs. Instead of minding their own business, and letting other believers live their lives as unto the Lord, they were actively working to change people's behavior.

Titus 1:10-14. For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.

One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be

sound in the faith,
not paying attention to Jewish myths and
commandments of men who turn away from
the truth.

Titus 1:10

**For there are many unruly and vain talkers
and deceivers, specially they of the
circumcision:**

“For there are many unruly”:
(anupotaktos), “insubordinate;
undisciplined; rebellious; independent; not
subject to authority”

There were many believers on Crete living in a
state of spiritual anarchy. These types are
insubordinate to every type of authority and
are not used to the authority of God’s Word and
the pastor’s teaching.

Three characteristics of revolt against doctrine
are covered in this verse;

1. the unruly, or “the undisciplined”
2. the vain talkers, or “those with empty
arguments, and
3. the deceivers, or “those who mislead
others”.

The noun **(anupotaktos)** is translated
“lawless” in 1 Tim. 1:9 “Knowing this, that the
law is not made for a righteous man, but for the
lawless and disobedient.”

Heb. 2:8. Thou hast put all things in
subjection under his feet. For in that he put
all in subjection under him, he left nothing
that is not put under him . But now we see
not yet all things put under him.

There will be no insubordination to Jesus
Christ!

“vain talkers”: **(mataiologos)**, “empty
argument; words without content”. A combined
word in the Greek, from **(mataios)** “empty”
and **(logos)** “word”. The old King James here,
“vain”, referred to “emptiness” (a few
generations ago).

Solomon spoke of “vanity of vanities” in
describing the empty life that has all this world
has to offer but does not have God.

Here, these people are expressing viewpoint
from empty souls. These are babes in Christ
commenting on spiritual issues with which they
are not familiar either in principle or in
practice.

People who would never think of criticizing an
engineer or doctor or an accountant, because
they don't know those professions, seem to
think nothing of making judgment as experts in
the plan of God. So you have hundreds of
opinions on child training, education, marriage,
politics, how to run a church. Imagine a person
who can't add fractions telling a mathematics
professor that his explanation of a calculus
problem is wrong.

Prov. 29:11. A fool utters all his mind; but a
wise man keeps it in until afterwards.

1 Tim. 6:20. O Timothy, keep that which is
committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and
vain babblings, and oppositions of sciences
falsely so called.

READ **1 Tim. 1:6,7** for reference to “vain
jangleings”, the old King James word.

“and deceivers”: **(frenapateis)**, “deceiver;
misleader” The verb form appears in **Gal. 6:3**
“For if a man think himself to be something,
when he is nothing, he *deceives* himself.”

READ **Eph. 4:11-15** for the defense against
being deceived.

The deceiver is a person that thinks that every
man is king and that what he thinks is correct.
This category includes the legalist, the moralist,
the humanist, the one who is disoriented to the
grace of God, who, therefore, communicates
false doctrine in opposition to the truth.

“specially they of the circumcision”: a
reference to the Christian Jews who were
adamant about including the keeping of the
Law as part of the salvation package. Some of
them were associated with the congregations,
but they insisted on mixing Law and Grace.

(Lest we criticize, however, remember that neither Titus nor any other believers in the 1st Century, Jewish or Gentile, had a copy of the completed New Testament canon. Titus may have had some parchment copies of some of Paul's writings, and there may have been one or more Torah scrolls on the island. But imagine trying to understand the Christian way of life with so little New Testament doctrine!)

The Jew is very proud to be a Jew, and rightly so in many respects. But he may also feel superior to Gentile believers, possibly because Jews were among the earliest believers on Crete, some of them having been in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Jews generally considered themselves better than Gentiles, and the name "The Circumcision" was borne proudly.

READ Eph. 2:11-22. Christ has joined together the Jew and Gentile; but the Judaizer wants no part of this. The Judaizer is not a Grace believer, and he clings to his traditions with a grip of steel.

READ Rom. 2:17-29

There is an obvious need on Crete for crash programs of straight, thorough teaching on Salvation, Grace, Positional Truth, and a hundred other doctrines.

Titus 1:11

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

"whose mouths must be stopped": (**epistomizo**), "to stop the mouth; to silence someone; to bridle; to muzzle".

Hence, "whom it is necessary to silence". It is imperative to teach those who are negative. Believers who are in revolt against God's authority, who will not obey, will only cause trouble among the congregation. These types must be silenced. They must either keep quiet and grow under the authority of the one teaching, or they must be required to leave.

Matt. 22:34, Jesus Christ put the Sadducees to silence.

READ Titus 2:7,8

READ 1 Pet. 2:11-15

"who subvert": (**anatrepo**), "to cause to fall; to overturn; to destroy"

The colloquial meaning of the word is seen in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, P Oxy I 69:2, "they broke down a door leading into the public street." Or in P Oxy VI 902:11, "I have been reduced to complete ruin."

In this verse, the word is used in the sense of overturning something.

READ 2 Tim. 2:15-18 for the sense of turning something upside down spiritually.

"whole houses": (**holos oikos**), "entire households; whole houses"

This may be a reference to the fact that churches met in people's homes. Hence, "they corrupt entire local churches". Or, the phrase could refer to "families", households in the familial sense. Then this would say "the corrupt entire families". I have read discussions of both ideas, and I have no objection to either.

Phil v.2 *; 1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:3-5; Col. 4:15

False teaching destroys a local church when it remains unchecked. The false doctrine doesn't have to be something obviously heretical, such as denying the deity of Christ, His resurrection, or the virgin birth. It can simply be any human viewpoint about any doctrinal topic.

All believers have human viewpoint ideas; but when someone starts promoting some such idea publicly in the congregation, it becomes subversive.

Legalism, false teaching, human viewpoint, are the leaven which leavens the whole lump. There must be strong emphasis from the pulpit to protect the congregation from those who are vocal with false ideas.

"teaching": (**didasko**), "public instruction"

“things which they ought not”: “things that are not proper”

...such as, giving advice from the human point of view from a platform of pseudo-authority.

There will be believers who have been around a while and have built up a following, a mutual admiration society. A mutual admiration society is a group, small or large, who agree in some area of mental attitude sin, usually associated with some form of sinful judging. These people will pump each other up, using sins of the tongue, evil speaking, to try to tear down the character or work of someone else not in the group.

Or, a vocal older believer will teach false ideas from a platform of authority which the others in the group have allowed him to exercise. This teaching may involve outright lies. Or it may involve partial truth using scriptures outside of context. These will be mini-sermons which sound good but which are false or lack content. So you get all types of teaching on how to run the church, marriage, child training, law keeping, legalism, along with every form of behavioral control from the platform of a “busybody” (**allotroepiskopos**).

“for filthy lucre's sake”: “for the sake of dishonorable profit” There were those on Crete who taught for money, dishonestly.
