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The Real Profit Motive:

Titus 3:8-11

Profitable vs. Unprofitable Speech within the Church

Point 1: Know What's good and trustworthy - measure all else accordingly (v.8)

Point 2: Lots of things *not* to argue about (v.9)

Point 3: Divisiveness as self-destruction and other-destruction (vv.10-11)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is Paul referring to in Titus 3:8 when he says “This is a trustworthy saying”? Where should we place our trust?
2. What are “these things” that we should stress in our teaching, devote ourselves to, and treat as excellent and profitable? How might we ‘stress’ these things and ‘devote’ ourselves to them, in our daily lives?
3. What might be some examples of the “foolish controversies” that might plague a church? When does a discussion about theology cross over into a “quarrel about the law” which is “useless”?
4. Why does Paul give the divisive person three strikes before that person is out? And why give only three strikes, and not seventy times seven?
5. What is at the root of divisiveness, as well as useless quarreling and controversies? And, if the answer to the question is “selfishness” (is that a give-away?!), how has that become thematic throughout the whole letter to Titus?

Poem: Here is a fragment from T.S. Eliot’s wonderful poem “Little Gidding” from the volume Four Quartets, with its reflection on saying the best and most fitting word regarding the faith, and not pushing things further into confusion and controversy:

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem is an epitaph...