

The Book Of Titus

A Special Ambassador For Christ



Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Titus

OVERVIEW: THE VACUUM produced when a strong leader departs can devastate a movement, organization, or institution. Having been dependent on his or her skill, style, and personality, associates and subordinates flounder or vie for control. Soon efficiency and vitality are lost, and decline and demise follow. Often this pattern is repeated in churches.

Great speakers and teachers gather a following, and soon a church is flourishing. It is alive, vital, and effective. Lives are being changed and people led into the kingdom. But when this catalyst leaves or dies, with him or her goes the drive and the heart of the organization.

People flocked to hear Paul's teaching. Educated, articulate, motivated, and filled with the Holy Spirit, this man of faith faithfully proclaimed the Good News throughout the Roman Empire—lives were changed and churches begun. But Paul knew that the church must be built on Christ, not on a person. And he knew that eventually he would not be there to build, encourage, discipline, and teach.

So he trained young pastors to assume leadership in the church after he was gone. Paul urged them to center their lives and preaching on the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and to train others to carry on the ministry (2 Tim. 2:2).

Titus was a Greek believer. Taught and nurtured by Paul, he stood before the leaders of the church in Jerusalem as a living example of what Christ was doing among the Gentiles (Galatians 2:1-3). Like Timothy, he was one of Paul's trusted traveling companions and closest friends. Later he became Paul's special ambassador (2 Cor. 7:5-16) and eventually the overseer of the churches on Crete (Titus 1:5). Slowly and carefully, Paul developed Titus into a mature Christian and a responsible leader. The letter to Titus was a step in this discipleship process. As with Timothy, Paul told Titus how to organize and lead the churches.

Paul begins with a longer than usual greeting and introduction, outlining the leadership progression—Paul's ministry (Titus 1:1-3), Titus's responsibilities (Titus 1:4-5), and those leaders whom Titus would appoint and train (Titus 1:5). Paul then lists pastoral qualifications (Titus 1:6-9) and contrasts faithful overseers with the false leaders and teachers (Titus 1:10-16).

Next, Paul emphasizes the importance of good deeds in the life of the Christian, telling Titus how to relate to the various age groups in the church (Titus 2:2-6). He urges Titus to be a good example of a mature believer (Titus 2:7-8) and to teach with courage and conviction (Titus 2:9-15). He then discusses the general responsibilities of Christians in society—Titus should remind the people of these (Titus 3:1-8), and he should avoid divisive arguments (Titus 3:9-11). Paul concludes with a few matters of itinerary and personal greetings (Titus 3:12-15).

Paul's letter to Titus is brief, but it is an important link in the discipleship process—helping a young man grow into leadership in the church. As you read this pastoral letter, you will gain insight into the organization and life of the early church, and you will find principles for structuring contemporary churches. But you should also see how to be a responsible Christian leader. Read the letter to Titus and determine, like Paul, to train men and women to lead and teach others.

THE BLUEPRINT

Paul calls for church order and right living on an island known for laziness, gluttony, lying, and evil. The Christians are to be self-disciplined as individuals, and they must be orderly as people who form one body, the church. We need to obey this message in our day when discipline is not respected or rewarded by our society. Although others may not appreciate our efforts, we must live upright lives, obey the government, and control our speech. We should live together peacefully in the church and be living examples of our faith to contemporary society.

1. Leadership in the church (Titus 1:1-16)

This letter is from Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I have been sent to bring faith to those God has chosen and to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives. [2] This truth gives them the confidence of eternal life, which God promised them before the world began—and he cannot lie. [3] And now at the right time he has revealed this Good News, and we announce it to everyone. It is by the command of God our Savior that I have been trusted to do this work for him.

[4] This letter is written to Titus, my true child in the faith that we share.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior give you grace and peace.

[5] I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you. [6] An elder must be well thought of for his good life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or rebellious.

[7] An elder must live a blameless life because he is God's minister. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or greedy for money. [8] He must enjoy having guests in his home and must love all that is good. He must live wisely and be fair. He must live a devout and disciplined life. [9] He must have a strong and steadfast belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with right teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.

[10] For there are many who rebel against right teaching; they engage in useless talk and deceive people. This is especially true of those who insist on circumcision for salvation. [11] They must be silenced. By their wrong teaching, they have

already turned whole families away from the truth. Such teachers only want your money. [12] One of their own men, a prophet from Crete, has said about them, "The people of Crete are all liars; they are cruel animals and lazy gluttons." [13] This is true. So rebuke them as sternly as necessary to make them strong in the faith. [14] They must stop listening to Jewish myths and the commands of people who have turned their backs on the truth.

[15] Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are defiled.

2. Right living in the church (Titus 2:1-15)

But as for you, promote the kind of living that reflects right teaching. [2] Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have strong faith and be filled with love and patience.

[3] Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that is appropriate for someone serving the Lord. They must not go around speaking evil of others and must not be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good.

[4] These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, [5] to live wisely and be pure, to take care of their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God.

[6] In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely in all they do. [7] And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good deeds of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. [8] Let your teaching be so correct that it can't be criticized. Then those who want to argue will be ashamed because they won't have anything bad to say about us.

[9] Slaves must obey their masters and do their best to please them. They must not talk back [10] or steal, but they must show themselves to be entirely trustworthy and good. Then they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way.

[11] For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. [12] And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God, [13] while we look forward to that wonderful event when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. [14] He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing what is right. [15] You must teach these things and encourage your people to do them, correcting them when necessary. You have the authority to do this, so don't let anyone ignore you or disregard what you say.

3. Right living in society (Titus 3:1-15)

Remind your people to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. [2] They must not speak evil of anyone, and they must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone.

[3] Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled by others and became slaves to many wicked desires and evil pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy. We hated others, and they hated us.

[4] But then God our Savior showed us his kindness and love. [5] He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit. [6] He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did. [7] He declared us not guilty because of his great kindness. And now we know that we will inherit eternal life. [8] These things I have told you are all true. I want you to insist on them so that everyone who trusts in God will be careful to do good deeds all the time. These things are good and beneficial for everyone.

[9] Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These kinds of things are useless and a waste of time. [10] If anyone is causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with that person. [11] For people like that have turned away from the truth. They are sinning, and they condemn themselves.

[12] I am planning to send either Artemas or Tychicus to you. As soon as one of them arrives, do your best to meet me at Nicopolis as quickly as you can, for I have decided to stay there for the winter. [13] Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos with their trip. See that they are given everything they need. [14] For our people should not have unproductive lives. They must learn to do good by helping others who have urgent needs.

[15] Everybody here sends greetings. Please give my greetings to all of the believers who love us.

May God's grace be with you all.

MEGATHEMES

THEME: A Good Life

EXPLANATION:

The Good News of salvation is that we can't be saved by living a good life; we are saved only by faith in Jesus Christ. But the gospel transforms people's lives, so that they eventually perform good deeds. Our service won't save us, but we are saved to serve.

IMPORTANCE:

A good life is a witness to the gospel's power. As Christians, we must have commitment and discipline to serve. Are you putting your faith into action by serving others?

THEME: Character

EXPLANATION:

Titus's responsibility in Crete was to appoint elders to maintain proper organization and discipline, so Paul listed the qualities needed for the eldership. Their conduct in their homes revealed their fitness for service in the church.

IMPORTANCE:

It's not enough to be educated or to have a loyal following to be Christ's kind of leader. You must have self-control, spiritual and moral fitness, and Christian character. Who you are is just as important as what you can do.

THEME: Church Relationships

EXPLANATION:

Church teaching must relate to various groups. Older Christians were to teach and to be examples to younger men and women. People of every age and group have a lesson to learn and a role to play.

IMPORTANCE:

Right living and right relationship go along with right doctrine. Treat relationships with other believers as an outgrowth of your faith.

THEME: Citizenship

EXPLANATION:

Christians must be good citizens in society, not just in church. Believers must obey the government and work honestly.

IMPORTANCE:

How you fulfill your civic duties is a witness to the watching world. Your community life should reflect Christ's love as much as your church life does.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print