

Session 2: TITUS, CHAPTER 1

What do we know so far about the Epistle (Letter) to Titus?

The author of the letter was Paul. Recipient was Titus, a true son in the faith.

Date of the writing was around A.D. 66.

We know that the purpose of the writing was to:

- Encourage his brother in the faith, Titus, whom Paul left in Crete to lead the church, which Paul had established on one of his missionary journeys.
- Advise Titus regarding what qualifications to look for in leaders for the church.
- Warn Titus of the reputations of those living on the island of Crete.
- Help Titus to understand that continued disciplining is a must for him and all who are in training to carry out God's message of faith in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:1- 4, “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, ³ and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior, ⁴ To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.”

We don't know a lot about Titus...but, we do know the following:

- Was one of Paul's most trusted and most valuable helpers.
- Was a man whom had a tough assignment amidst lazy, undependable, and evil-minded people.

Paul had certain titles for Titus:

- Loyal child (Paul's convert and child in the faith (1:4)
- My brother (2 Corinthians 2:13)
- Sharer in work and toil (2 Corinthians 8:13)
- Brother who “walked in the same spirit” (2 Corinthians 12:18)
- A model for Christianity to the brothers in Crete (2:7).

A truth we don't want to miss from this Scripture...

God does not lie! Salvation is real; promised before the beginning of time!

Titus 1:5-9, “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. 6 An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. 7 Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. 8 Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. 9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

Just as parenting our own children requires much prayer, mentoring, guidance, encouragement and correction, the church must also have the same kind of order and special “parenting” as we go through life.

Encouragement builds self-esteem and propels the child forward to meet life's challenges. Correction instills and increases an understanding of right and wrong, as it teaches that human behavior has moral consequences.

Parents must provide the child's life with structure and organization. In this way the young person learns about expected roles and responsibilities within the home and society, as well as lines of authority and the importance of interdependence among fellow human beings. Meeting these needs prepares the child for life as an adult. If all of this is taken seriously, parenting is not easy.

So goes the church:

- ***As the church grows in numbers and maturity, its needs change much as those of the growing child do.***
- ***When Titus received Paul's letter, the churches of Crete were still quite young, but quickly growing out of infancy. They had reached the stage where more structure was required, where church members needed to ascend to roles of leadership and where they could begin to carry on ministry independent of their spiritual parents.***
- ***Preparing them for this was a task that fell to Titus.***
- ***An element within the churches was introducing false doctrine that threatened the development of these Christians.***

Thus Titus's instructions include correction.

The Elders of the Church

It was always Paul's custom to ordain elders as soon as the church had been founded (Acts 14:23).

Titus 1:5-9, List of Qualifications of Elders

(General consensus throughout Scripture)

- **One thing was especially stressed...He must be someone who has taught his own family in the faith.**
- **One who cannot be accused of wasteful living** (lacking legal or moral restraints, disregarding sexual restraints, and/or marked by disregard for strict rules of correctness)... **profligacy= one who is undisciplined.**

What the Elders Must Not Be, Titus 1:7b..

1. **Obstinately Self-willed (self pleasing)**
2. **Quick-tempered (anger in the raw)**
3. **Given to Drunken and Outrageous Conduct (someone in sober moments, acts with the outrageousness of a drunk).**
4. **Violent**
5. **Seeker of gain in a Disgraceful ways**

What the Elder Must Be, Titus 1:8-9

- **Elders must display to other people these qualities:**
Hospitable
Loves goodness (seeks and displays good thoughts and actions)
- **Elders must possess these virtues:**
Prudent, sensible,
Upright...Just
- **Devout (reverences the fundamental decencies of life)**
- **Self-controlled (complete control of self; not depending on others to control him (other than the Lord)**

Description of the qualities of the Christian elders within the church:

- **Able to encourage the members of the church (The function of true Christian preachers and teachers is not to drive people to despair but to lift them up with hope and trust);**
- **Able to convict (refute) the opponents of the faith.**
Rebuke people in such a way that they are compelled to admit the error of their ways...and accept the truth.

Note: One other element of qualification for the elder:

Listen to the various translations and versions...

- *Husband of one wife (American SB), KJV, English Version*
- *Faithful to his wife - New Living Translation*
- *The husband of but one wife (NIV, Amplified Bible)*
- *Husband to one wife (Complete Jewish Bible)*
- *Have only one wife (Good News Translation)*
- *Committed to his wife (The Message)*
- *Married only once (New Revised Standard Version)*
- *One-woman man (Orthodox Jewish Version)*
- *If he is married, he should be the husband of one wife (The Voice)*
- *Faithful in marriage (Contemporary English Bible)*
- *No comment on husband of one wife (Worldwide English Bible)*
- **Husband of first wife.... (????)*

Although there are some very different interpretations to this requirement for an elder, we must let the Holy Spirit lead us to what is meant as to this particular qualification.

Remember, if there is not a specific meaning/interpretation of a Scripture (in this case, a qualification of an elder), you always lean toward the most conservative meaning over the liberal, casual, or that which is accepted by the secular culture, meaning.

*For instance, the last bullet as an interpretation (husband of first wife), sounds like it is specifically dressing the issue of “no divorcee being an elder.” However, the interpretation could be so off-base that it would be interpreted as one Mormon puts it, “Well, I am the husband of my first wife...so I am eligible.” What he does not say is that he is also the husband of his 2nd wife, 3rd wife, and so on. Therefore, one can see how “off-base” and casually interpreted this verse can be.

Again, let the Holy Spirit be the teacher of the Word. He will reveal the truth to the person yielded to the Spirit where he will know the truth...and he will be set free.

Jokingly...the Liberal philosopher would say, “The truth sets me free; therefore, I’m freeing myself from my wife.” How ridiculous and ungodly can we get in today’s society! The Holy Spirit would never reveal that to any Christian as the interpretation of that particular Scripture.

We must be diligent in making sure we “hide His Word in our hearts where we choose not to sin against God.”