

# JESUS'S

BEAUTIFUL POSSESSION

*Learning to live*

*Godly, Zealous lives*

*for Him*

A STUDY ON TITUS

by Michelle Jesko

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# Introduction

Welcome, fellow learner, to this study on Titus!

I am thrilled to discover together what this book has to teach us. When Paul wrote this letter, he was exhorting his ministry partner, Titus, to establish faithful leaders in the churches on the island of Crete, and remind the believers of the importance of teaching sound doctrine and of encouraging godly living. You see, the culture on Crete at that time made it challenging for believers to remain faithful to the Lord and live productive and peaceful lives. False teachers had influenced the church, turning people away from the truth of the gospel and instead teaching for personal gain. They were deceiving the new believers, living gluttonous, self-absorbed lives, and upsetting whole families.

Sound familiar? In many ways, our culture is similar to the one on Crete. It is challenging to remain faithful to the Lord and live productive, peaceful lives when the world around us is self-absorbed, self-righteous, and devoted to myths and false teaching. Deceit and division from the world has also crept into the church, and it is upsetting not only the family of Christ, but individual families as well.

We have a lot to glean from this letter, not the least of which is the importance of knowing and teaching the Truth, found only in God's word. But my biggest take away from this letter is that, because of Jesus, we have hope. God's grace not only saves us, it also claims us, trains us, purifies us, and makes us zealous for good works. Because of God's saving grace and love, you and I can live generous, faith-filled lives that provide bright ribbons of hope in this sin-darkened world.

*Michelle*

# A Process of Discovery

Studying God's word takes patience, but you will find rich reward in doing so. *"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Psalm 119:103.*

To begin any study of scripture, it's important to have an understanding of what the original text meant to its original audience: What did it mean to **THEM THEN**? It sounds daunting, especially considering that we are living thousands of years past the time of the original writing. We haven't personally experienced the culture, location, people, and languages of the original audience. But people really haven't changed. *"What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun." Ecclesiastes 1:9.*

While we might not know what it was like to live in a city under Roman rule or how to shepherd sheep, we can understand what it is like to be human. The hopes, sorrows, joys, fears, sins, struggles, forgetfulness, and pride that plagued people in Bible times also plague us today. Not only that, we must also remember that our Lord, who is sovereign over all, never changes. *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8.*

So to understand the rich truths in God's word, we must first look at what it meant to **THEM THEN**. This practice will help prevent us from the common tendency to pull a verse out of context, thus losing its meaning and twisting it to fit our purposes and notions. To be good stewards of God's word, we must not go beyond what it says. *"You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you." Deuteronomy 4:2.* We must remain "on the line," interpreting what the text actually says, nothing more and nothing less.

Once we grasp the original context, the **THEM THEN**, we can begin to look for the **GOSPEL** in our text, and then finally we can apply the text to **US NOW**. *"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4.*

We have an advantage living in our 21st century because we possess a wealth of knowledge, research, historical documents, archeological finds, and commentaries available with just a click and a scroll. But before you go start googling, I want to encourage you to trust your ability to understand scripture all on your own. While it may be difficult at first, don't give up. You don't have to be a trained Bible scholar to understand the truths in God's Word. Start where you are with what you know. All you need is a willing heart, an engaged mind, and the Holy Spirit. The Lord is pleased every time you seek Him in His Word! If I can learn to do it, you can do it. So let's get started!



# Suggested Study Practices

**Pray** for God to give you understanding of the text. *“Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.” Psalm 119:18.* Don’t overlook this step!

**Print** out a copy of the text that you can mark up as you study. Use double spacing and generous margins to allow room to write your thoughts, questions, and notes.

**Read** and reread and reread the text again. The more familiar you are with it, the more you will begin to understand it. To better comprehend the context of the text, read the entire chapter it falls in, the surrounding chapters, and even better, the whole book if you have time. Ask, “Why did the author put this passage here at this place in the book?” Try to determine where this passage fits into the big story of the Bible (creation, fall, redemption, restoration).

**Ask** questions of the text throughout the entire study process. It’s like being a detective who digs for clues within the text he’s studying. As you begin, focus your questions on the big picture information: Who wrote this? What do I know about the author? Why did he write it? To whom was it written? What do I know about the audience? When was it written? What was going on at the time? Often you will find the answers to these questions directly in the passage. If not, try looking up other relevant passages that give clarity to these questions. Your Bible’s individual book introductions and other commentaries are also helpful to establish some big picture information, like the historical context and authorship. Then throughout your study of the passage, continue asking questions - who, what, where, when, why, and how. Look for the answers within your text first, then look at other passages that might provide clues.

Once you have read the passage several times and have gotten a preliminary handle on the big picture questions, you can start marking up the text. This takes some time. You’ll want to go slowly and have patience with the discovery process. You’ll also want to extend extra grace toward yourself as you are learning these study skills. The more you practice, the more you’ll get into a rhythm, developing your own methods of studying the text and gaining confidence in yourself. **The goal here initially is comprehension: understanding what the text says.**

I have included the English Standard Version of Titus in this workbook for you to mark up. **There is no right or wrong way to mark up a text.** Make it personal and applicable to your style of learning. If this task seems overwhelming, then may I suggest starting small. If all you do is mark places in the text that tell you something about God (His attributes, character, sovereignty, and authority) you will be off to a great start! **Because the only way we can truly know ourselves is to know our God. What He says about Himself and about us is the foundation for sound doctrine.**

# Comprehension (Them Then)

Here are some suggestions of practices I've found helpful in understanding the text.

- **Look up words in the dictionary** that you are unfamiliar with or any words that stand out to you even if they are familiar. Write down the definitions next to the word. To see how that word is used elsewhere in the Bible, do a **word search on your Bible app** or computer, or use the concordance at the back of your Bible. This will broaden your understanding of the word and can bring a deeper meaning to your passage.
- Use colored pencils to **underline repeated words**. Often, themes of passages begin to emerge when you search for repeated words.
- **Circle transitional words** (and, but, therefore, like, then, also, similarly, furthermore, etc). These words show shifts in thinking while connecting phrases and thoughts. Draw arrows to the words and phrases they link. Sometimes these transitions occur at the beginning of a chapter or paragraph, so you will need to look back at the previous section to see what they are referring to.
- **Note any thoughts and questions** you have as you are reading. Write them in the margin, but don't feel like you have to answer them right away. Your questions are an important part of the learning process.
- **Read the text in other translations** to bring clarity, especially with difficult passages. Bible apps and websites are great tools for this step.
- **Look up cross references** and note what you discover next to the text.
- **Highlight imperatives** in the text. These are commands and instructions, and they are important for the original audience and for us.
- **Look for attributes of God** that are communicated in the passage. Highlight or underline them and note the attribute in the margin.
- **Put a "cross" anywhere Jesus is mentioned**, directly or indirectly.
- **Mark "HS" when you see references to the Holy Spirit.**

As you mark up the passage, you will begin to see the author's aim emerge, giving you a better understanding of what he is communicating to his audience - **THEM THEN**.

**The final step in this initial comprehension is to summarize the passage in your own words.** (Ugh I know, I can hear the groans now!) This is an important step and helps you grasp the main messages the author is trying to communicate. Break the text down into sections and write short summary phrases or sentences.

## Comprehension: (Gospel)

Now you can start looking for the **GOSPEL** in your passage. Sometimes the gospel is obvious, sometimes it is not. Don't force it into your text. If you don't see it, that's OK. Sometimes it takes awhile to recognize it. Allow your text to reveal the gospel.

- Bracket or mark sections and phrases that connect to the gospel. Ask yourself, "How does my text relate to the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ?" Don't get bogged down in the details right now, especially if you are new to studying the Bible. Just start with what you understand and can identify.
- Jesus Himself tells us that the entirety of the Bible points to Him. "*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.*" *John 5:39* Since the gospel message is found throughout the entire Bible, also look for people, events, themes, and objects that point you to Christ. Ask, "How does my text point to Christ and contribute to the redemption story of the Bible? Do I see any major biblical themes in my text (like forgiveness, grace, mercy, sin, sacrifice, covenant, righteousness, holiness, etc) that find fulfillment in Christ?"

## Application: (Us Now)

Once you have comprehended the text and discovered the **GOSPEL** references, you are now ready to move on to the final application piece. How does this text apply to **US NOW**? For our purposes, we will save these application questions for Day 5 of our homework each week, so we can have several days of comprehending the text first. To think through personal application, ask these types of questions:

- "What have I learned about God (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) in this passage (His character, truths, authority, sovereignty, etc)?"
- "How does this knowledge about God shape my view about myself, mankind, the world, and my circumstances?"
- "Are there any action steps I need to take, truths I need to hold on to, or commands I need to follow?"

# Text of Titus, ESV

## Chapter One

### Greeting

**1** Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, **2** in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began **3** and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

**4** To Titus, my true child in a common faith:

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

### Qualifications for Elders

**5** This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— **6** if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. **7** For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, **8** but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. **9** He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.



**10** For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. **11** They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. **12** One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” **13** This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, **14** not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. **15** To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. **16** They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

## Chapter Two

### Teach Sound Doctrine

**1** But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. **2** Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. **3** Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, **4** and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, **5** to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. **6** Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. **7** Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, **8** and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having

nothing evil to say about us. **9** Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, **10** not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

**11** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **12** training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, **13** waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

**15** Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Be Ready for Every Good Work**

**1** Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, **2** to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. **3** For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. **4** But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of

regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, **6** whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. **8** The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. **9** But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. **10** As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, **11** knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

### **Final Instructions and Greetings**

**12** When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. **13** Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. **14** And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

**15** All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.

# *Session 1 Notes*

## Words So Sweet

Video link available at: [myabc.church/women](https://myabc.church/women)

# Day 1: Savoring the Letter

Today, your only assignment is to **read the whole letter to Titus** completely through at least once. So grab your favorite beverage, cozy up under a blanket, and enjoy!

# Day 2: Servant & Apostle

Now that you've read the entire book, we're going to focus in on just the first 4 verses. **Read Chapter 1:1-4, the "Greeting"**, a few times. Mark up the text using some of the previous suggestions, or any other ways that are helpful to you. Note any questions or thoughts you may have in the margin of the text.

Titus is an epistle, which is the Greek word for letter. Letters in Paul's era had 3 distinct characteristics: a sender, a recipient, and a blessing or thanksgiving. Looking at these verses, let's identify them and mark them on the text. Who is the:

Sender?

Recipient?

What is the Blessing or Thanksgiving?

In order to understand this letter better, it's important to get to know our two men, Paul and Titus. Some questions that come to my mind when I think about them are: Who were they? What was their relationship with each other? What was the motivation that prompted the writing of this letter and how was it received? Where were these men and what was going on in their lives? Lot's of questions. Let's see if we can find some answers. Today we are going to focus on Paul and we'll go to our text first.

In chapter 1:1-4, Mark everything you see that Paul wrote to describe himself. You can underline them or number them, whatever makes sense to you. Write out what you find here:

It's important to know how Paul viewed himself and what was important to him in order to gain insight into this letter.

Right off the bat, Paul calls himself a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. The order of these self-labels tells us something. Being a servant requires humility. In order to be God's servant, Paul had to surrender his life, plans, and dreams to God's plans, purposes, and assignments. Viewing himself as a servant first, and then an apostle, kept any pride from creeping into Paul's view of himself. Pride takes our eyes off of God and places attention on ourselves. It changes our motivation from serving the Lord and bringing glory to Him, to serving ourselves and bringing glory to us.

To get a deeper understanding of the word "servant", let's look up some other scriptures that include that word. I've listed a couple for you, but feel free to look up others you know, or do a word search on your bible app/concordance and write down what you find:

Matt 20:28

Gal 1:10

Look closely at verses 1-3. Here, Paul shares why he is called to be a servant and an apostle. On the text, mark those reasons and then write them here:

Paul says he is a servant and apostle for the sake of the faith of God's elect (believers). He is called to make sure they know 1) the truth of God's word 2) how that truth accords with godliness and 3) how that truth gives the hope of eternal life. By speaking on those 3 things, Paul strengthens the faith of believers and shares the gospel.

Look at the end of verse 3. Who is the one who has commanded and entrusted Paul with preaching this message?

Now read Acts 9:10-16. In verse 15-16, we read in God's own words what His calling and command was on Paul's life. What did God say?



Look up the words “command” and “entrusted” in the dictionary.

Command:

Entrusted:

God commanded Paul to preach to His people and entrusted him with His message. Out of surrender and humility, Paul said, “yes.” You and I are also called to surrender our lives to the Lord. We may not be called to preach or be an apostle like Paul, but we are all called to be a servant to Him.

How is God calling you to surrender your life to Him and serve Him? How have you served Him in the past? What struggles do you have with surrender? Share with group.

We are also entrusted with His message of truth, to know it and share it with others. Encouraging each other in Bible study and engaging with His word every day is one great way to know and share His truth. How else can you share Truth? With whom?

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Ask God to help you live a life of surrender and to show you how you can be His servant. Thank Him for entrusting you with His beautiful message of hope, and ask how you can share the Truths found in the Bible with the precious people He brings into your life. Write down any thoughts that come to mind as you pray.

## For Deeper Study: Paul's Conversion

The best way to really get to know Paul is to read about him in Acts and also to read the other books he has written in the New Testament. But since that would take a tremendous amount of time, may I suggest that today you just spend some time reading all about Paul's conversion experience in Acts 7:54-8:3, 9:1-31. Before Paul became "Paul", he was a man called Saul. Write down what you learn about Saul before his conversion and afterward. How did he change? Why did he change? How might his experience have impacted his passion for the gospel? His letter to Titus?

# Day 3: Paul's True Child

**Read Chapter 1:1-4 again** and mark any additional insights or questions you have.

Today we are going to see what the Bible has to tell us about the recipient of Paul's letter, Titus. Let's go to our text first. What does verse 4 tell us about Titus? Mark the description and write it here.

Paul uses a familial term to describe Titus. What do you think that term implies about their relationship?

Paul states Titus is his true child and they share a common faith. What is their common faith? Let's look at the rest of verse 4. Mark all of the words in that blessing that state traits of their common faith and write those words here.

We don't know a lot about Titus, but he is mentioned by name elsewhere in the Bible. Look up those references and write what you find out about him. (I know it's a lot but hang in there - this journey is worth it!) Note any descriptive words about Titus, his relationship with Paul, & his role in the church.

2 Corinthians 2:12-13

2 Corinthians 7:5-16

2 Corinthians 8:1-24

2 Corinthians 12:14-21

Galatians 2:1-5

2 Timothy 4:9-12

After reading these verses, what additional words would you use to describe Titus?

What nationality is Titus?

Because of what we found out in Galatians, we know that even though Titus isn't mentioned by name in Acts, he was present at the Jerusalem Council. Read Acts 15 to find out what happened at the Jerusalem Council.

What were the apostles debating about? (Verse 1)

What verse alludes to Titus' presence?

What was decided?

Titus was a Greek Christian, one of Paul's intimate friends, his companion in some of his apostolic journeys, and one of Paul's trusted partners who carried out difficult assignments. They served together for over 2 decades. Because Titus was Greek, he wasn't circumcised. Paul felt strongly that Titus (and others like him) should not be required to be circumcised to be followers of Jesus. Titus was one of the central figures in this debate at the Jerusalem Council. Remember this, and look for a glimpse of this debate later in the letter.

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Praise God for placing you into a family of faith to "do life" with. Ask Him how you can partner with someone in ministry, like Paul and Titus did. Write down any thoughts that come to mind as you pray.

# Day 4: God Never Lies

**Read Chapter 1:1-4 again** and mark any additional insights or questions you have.

Today we are going to see if we can find a theme or emphasis starting to emerge from our first 4 verses. If you haven't already done so, underline repeated words you see with different colored pencils, and then write those words here along with the number of times they appear in the text.

One of the repeated words I found is "God". In fact, God appears 5 times (if I counted right) in this text, followed by "Jesus", "Savior", and "faith". This tells me that a main emphasis from this section is God. Let's look closer to see what this letter has to tell us about God. Do you see any attributes that reveal His character, truths, authority, sovereignty, etc? Mark them on your text and write them here.

In verse 2, one attribute I spot is that God never lies. Let's look up some other scriptures about this. I've listed a few for you, but feel free to look up others and write down what you find:

Numbers 23:19

1 Samuel 15:29

Isaiah 65:16

Why do you think it was important to Paul to stress in the opening lines of his letter that God never lies?

Why do you think it is important for us today to remember that God never lies?

He is a God of truth and we can trust what He says. His word is reliable. If God never lies, then we can also trust His promises. He will do what He says He will do. Look at verse 2.

What is something that God promised?

When did he promise it?

When was it manifested in his word? (Manifested might be a good word to look up in the dictionary & write out the definition.)

God does things at the proper time. Let's explore this truth further. Look up these verses and write what you discover.

Romans 5:6

1 Timothy 2:5-6

1 Peter 5:6

God is sovereign over everything, and this includes time. He works out His plans at the proper (correct) time - His timing, not ours. How does this make you feel in your current season of life? Is there anything that you are worrying about that you need to release to the Lord? Write it below. Find comfort, sweet sister, in knowing that God will work out His plans in your situation at the proper time.

The blessing in verse 4 provides some more words describing God and Jesus. Mark those words on the text and write them here.

I'm seeing some gospel themes in these words. How about you? Thinking back to the repeated words we listed earlier, words that included God, Jesus, Savior, and faith, I'm seeing an emphasis begin to form. Clearly the gospel was forefront on Paul's mind as he wrote this letter to Titus. So as we continue studying the rest of the letter, let's keep that in mind.



# Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Praise God for being a God who never lies and who does things at the proper time. Ask Him to give you peace and patience during your seasons of waiting on Him. Thank Him for being your Savior, and for filling you with His grace and peace. Write down any thoughts that come to mind as you pray.

# Day 5: Personal Application

**Read Chapter 1:1-4 one last time** and look at all your notes and comprehension summary answers before answering these application questions.

## Application questions:

What have I learned about God (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) in this passage (His character, truths, authority, sovereignty, etc)?

How does this knowledge about God shape my view about myself, mankind, the world, and/or my circumstances?

Are there any action steps I need to take, truths I need to hold on to, or commands I need to follow?

## Pray:

Based on your answers to the above questions, pick one verse from the “Greeting” we studied this week, personalize it, and pray it back to God. For example, one truth that I want to hold on to comes from verse 2, so my prayer might sound something like this: “God, I thank you that I can have the hope of eternal life. You are a God who never lies, and you promised this hope before the ages began. I know that you keep your promises. Lord help me remember this truth when I’m faced with seasons that are heartbreaking and hard to understand. I know that you are working out your perfect plans in your perfect timing. Help me keep my eyes focused on You and the hope of eternal life, rather than my difficult circumstances. Thank you Jesus. Amen.”

# *Session 2 Notes*

## What is Truth?

Video link available at: [myabc.church/women](https://myabc.church/women)

# Day 1: Compassion for Crete

This week we are going to study the section called, “Qualifications for Elders”. **Read Chapter 1:5-16**, a few times. Mark up the text using the previous suggestions, or any other ways that work for you. Note any questions or thoughts you may have in the margin of the text.

Let’s start unpacking this section and see what we learn. Right away we learn Titus’ location when he received the letter and the reason why he was left there (and, we can infer, the purpose for Paul writing the letter). Mark that on the text and write the answers here:

Location:

2 reasons why Titus was there/the purpose behind the letter:

We can gather from verse 5, that at one point in their missionary journeys, Paul and Titus worked together on Crete, but then Paul left Titus there to finish the work while Paul continued on. (Scholars debate the exact timing.)

Let’s look into the location first. Crete is an island south of Greece and southwest of modern-day Turkey. (See map) It was home to the ancient Minoan civilization and was steeped in Greek mythology. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew name for Crete was “Caphtor”.

Look up Jeremiah 47:4 and Amos 9:7. What people group came from Caphtor?



This nation may sound familiar to you. They were sometimes allies, but most often they were deadly enemies of God's people. You may remember them from the stories of David and Goliath, Samson, and the battles of King Saul. But even the Patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac, had dealings with them. They go back as far as Genesis, and are listed in the nations descended from Noah in Genesis 10:13-14. (If you're curious do a word search on "Philistines" and read more about them.)

In the New Testament, there are only two other mentions of the island Crete or its people, the Cretans, besides the letter of Titus. In Acts 2:11, a group of Cretans are mentioned. Read Acts 2:1-13 and write what you find out.

This is a pretty pivotal moment in the early church and these people were a part of it! We don't know if that group brought the gospel back to the Island or not, but it's a possibility.

Crete is also mentioned in Acts 27 when Paul was sailing to Rome and they encountered the storm at sea. Perhaps this event is why he decided to go back to the Island with Titus to share the gospel and establish churches. Scholars aren't sure. We also don't know how long Paul and Titus were on the island together, or how long Titus was left there to finish what Paul started. But really, those details don't matter. What we do know is that God saw the people of Crete and had compassion for them. Even though they were once brutal enemies of the Israelites and served pagan gods, the Lord looked at them and saw a people needing redemption. And He sent Paul and Titus, filled with the Holy Spirit, to preach that message.

*But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. Romans 5:8-10*

Read Psalm 103:8-13 and write down all the attributes of God you see.

Praise God for his grace, mercy, and love for the Cretans, and for us!

Before we wrap up today let's look again at the reasons behind Paul leaving Titus on Crete. In verse 5, Titus was told to put what remained into order and appoint elders in every town as Paul had directed him. This means that before Paul left the island, he gave instructions for Titus and gave him the authority to carry those instructions out. This letter was a reminder to Titus of those instructions and of his authority. It was meant to encourage Titus, remind him of the power and truth of the gospel, and exhort him to finish the work. Titus had a big job ahead of him, as we will find out the more we dive into this letter. The Cretans had a reputation, and it wasn't a good one. But Titus also had authority from God and the Holy Spirit to guide him. The same is true for us. When God gives us an assignment, He gives us the authority to carry it out and the Holy Spirit to guide, equip, and strengthen us.

How does that make you feel?

As we continue dissecting this letter, start looking for the imperatives Paul writes to Titus and highlight them when you see them. Remember, these are commands and instructions, and they are important for the original audience and for us. You may be surprised to know that in this short letter there are over 15 imperatives! (Hint: the first two are in verse 5. Highlight them now.)

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Praise the Lord for being a God of compassion, who seeks us out while we are still lost in our sins and rebellion. Pray through Psalm 103: 8-13 and praise God for who He is and what He has done for us. Ask Him to give you the wisdom and courage to do the assignments He gives you.



# Day 2: Entrusting Elders

**Read Chapter 1:5-16 again** and mark up any additional insights or questions you have.

We know from verse 5 that one of Paul's directives to Titus was to appoint elders in every town. What exactly did Paul mean by elder, why did they need elders, and how was Titus to know who to appoint? Let's see what the text has to show us.

What is an elder? If you do a word search, you will find it scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments. Elders were community leaders (Genesis 50:7) and were highly respected (Proverbs 31:23). They were often older men, who had gained wisdom from many years of following the Lord. Look up Numbers 11:16-17 and write down what you learn about the role of the elders under Moses's leadership.

A practical role of elders is to spread out the burden of caring for a church body.

In the New Testament, as the church began to spread and grow, it became crucial for the disciples to appoint elders for every body of believers scattered throughout the region. (Acts 14:21-23.) These men would be charged with leading, discipling, caring for, and teaching their local church bodies. They were also decision makers in the church, as evidenced by their participation at the Jerusalem Council, along with the apostles (Acts 15:6).

Let's look back at our text and see what additional insights we can gain about elders. Verse 7 has two other descriptive titles for an elder. What are they? Look up their definitions and write them next to the words.

1)

2)

Elders have a big responsibility. Thoughtful consideration needed to be given for who to place in these roles. So how was Titus to know who to appoint? Paul tells him. Since they are God's representatives, elders must be above reproach (and for emphasis, Paul states it twice! vs 6 and vs 7.) Then to make sure Titus knows what it means to be above reproach, Paul lists out characteristics that fit this bill in verses 6-8.

First off, Paul addresses the elder's family relationships. If he's married, he's to be faithful to his wife as God commands (Exodus 20:14, Proverbs 5:15-20). If they have children, they should raise them in such a way that points them to the Lord and

teaches them to have self-control. Why does this matter? Look up 1 Timothy 3:5 to answer this question and write it below.

Now does this mean that an elder and his family must be perfect? No, because no human is perfect. If we were, we wouldn't need a Savior. Does this mean that if a man's children rebel against the faith he is disqualified? No. Jesus himself said that His message would divide households, including parents and children (Luke 12:51-53). But as God's overseer and steward, an elder does need to be a believer who leads his family faithfully.

Let's list the rest of the qualifications in verses 6-8 below, starting with the disqualifying "red flags" and then listing the positive characteristics.

Disqualifiers

Positive Character Traits

The disqualifiers are no-brainers. You wouldn't want an arrogant, quick-tempered, drunk, violent, greedy man as a leader of any organization, much less God's church. But let's spend some time on the positives. Why do you think it is important for an elder to exhibit these traits? Write your thoughts next to each word.

Hospitable:

Lover of good:

Self-controlled:

Upright:

Holy:

Disciplined:

Now Titus wasn't the only co-worker of Paul who was tasked with appointing overseers. Timothy was too. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and record any additional insights you gain. Notice the similarities? Any differences?

All of these characteristics boil down to one overarching task for elders in Titus 1:9.

What must elder's do?

Why? 1)

2)

Don't you love how "the word" is described? God's word is TRUSTWORTHY! Let's just sit in that truth for a minute before we move on. Look up these additional verses:

Psalm 93:5

Psalm 111:7

May the trustworthiness of God's word bring you comfort and confidence! An elder must be someone who is faithful to God's word, understands that it is trustworthy and true, and remains convicted and obedient to it. He must study it faithfully. Only then will he be able to teach sound doctrine to the church and rebuke those who contradict it.

Paul has a lot more to say about sound doctrine in this letter, as we will uncover over the next few weeks. Tomorrow we'll look further into why it was particularly important for the elders on Crete to know and teach sound doctrine.

## Comprehension questions:

How would I summarize what I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Pray for the elders and pastors of your church, including their families. Praise God that His Word is trustworthy and ask Him to help you hold firmly to it. Write down any thoughts that come to mind as you pray.

# Day 3: Troublemakers

**Read Chapter 1:5-16 again** and mark up any additional insights or questions you have.

Today we're going to focus on verses 10-14 and see why it was important for the elders in Crete to hold firmly to the trustworthy word. As we do, we will get a glimpse into the problems going on in Crete that Titus was dealing with.

The word "For" at the beginning of verse 10 is a transitional word. Circle the word and mark on your text the 2 clauses that are linked. (Hint since it's at the beginning of a sentence, look at the previous sentence.) This little grammar exercise gives us a clue as to why elders in Crete needed to be able to teach sound doctrine and rebuke those who contradict it. Write your answer here:

Look closely at verse 10 and describe what some of the people in the church on Crete are doing. What kind of a message were they spreading?

Our text says that some of those insubordinate people were part of the circumcision party. We know from our study last week, that the apostles and elders had already made a decision at the Jerusalem Council regarding this issue. But the fact that this group is mentioned again here tells us that the problem hasn't gone away. Titus, an uncircumcised Christian himself, will have to address it.

Why must these insubordinate individuals be silenced (verse 11)?

These men were teaching what they ought not to teach. Their message was hollow, deceptive, and contrary to sound doctrine and the gospel. We get a clue as to their motivation in verse 11 - shameful gain, i.e. greed. They were somehow profiting by the false message they were teaching. But their personal profit came at great cost to these churches. These false teachers were leading the Christians astray from the truth and supremacy of the gospel, and they were upsetting whole families. That's why they must be stopped.

The culture on the island was also a challenging one for Titus and the churches there. Look at verse 12 and write down the words used to describe Cretans.

It doesn't sound like a pleasant bunch of people does it? Yet these people were the very ones that the church on Crete was called to minister to and share the gospel with. Titus had his hands full, but remember he had the authority to deal with the problems on Crete, he had the trustworthiness of God's word, and he had the Holy Spirit to guide him.

I see another imperative in verse 13, telling Titus what he needed to do. Highlight the imperative and write down the directive here:

Why was Titus called to do this?

I think there are two reasons. One, he was called to rebuke them sharply because the testimony about the Cretans and the false teachers is true (verse 13). But also, by rebuking them sharply, Titus is giving them an opportunity to change their course. I love the redemptive quality at the end of verse 13 - even the troublemakers are given a second chance to be sound in the faith and be a productive part of the church.

If they become sound in the faith, then verse 14 tells us a couple of things they won't do. They won't devote themselves to Jewish myths and they won't devote themselves to the commands of people who turn away from the truth.

I searched for the word "myths" and found it appears 4 times in the New Testament. Let's see if those verses provide any more color to what Paul was talking about. Look up at least one of the verses below and write what you discover.

1 Timothy 1:3-4

1 Timothy 4:7

2 Timothy 4:3-4

2 Peter 1:16

Paul could have been talking about additional practices and beliefs that some Jews were trying to force upon Jewish and Gentile believers, things like circumcision, eating clean versus unclean foods, genealogies, etc. Basically these myths were ideas or requirements they were adding to the gospel. Apparently this was a problem that plagued other areas too, not just Crete.

Regarding "not following the commands of people who turn away from the truth," Timothy was given similar advice from Paul. What does 1 Timothy 6:20-21 say?

You and I don't devote ourselves to Jewish myths, but this verse makes me pause and ask myself, "What things do I devote myself to that are unprofitable?" Is there anything or anyone in this culture that subtly tempts me to turn away from the truth of God's word? Take some time to prayerfully respond and be prepared to discuss this in your small group.

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Ask God to help you know sound doctrine so you won't be swayed by false teachers. Pray for our community, asking God for opportunities to share His gospel with those who are lost. Ask Him to help you devote yourself to things that promote His truth, rather than myths or lies.

# Day 4: Pure & Defiled

**Read Chapter 1:5-16 again** and mark up any insights or questions you have.

We're going to wrap up this section by looking at the final 2 verses. There are fewer than 50 words, but boy they pack a punch! Read verse 15. Paul is comparing two types of people and their relationship to things "pure." Identify them and write how this verse describes them.

1)

2)

Let's see if we can gain more insight into what Paul was getting at. He wrote a lengthier but similar description in 1 Timothy 4:1-5. Write down what you learn, keeping in mind what we learned yesterday about Jewish myths and commands of people (verse 14).

Might Paul's statement in Titus about the "pure," be referring to those who "believe and know the truth" in 1 Timothy 4:3-4? I think Paul is saying that for those who believe and know the truth (i.e. the pure), everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. That's good news for believers!

But what about the defiled and unbelieving? Their minds and consciences are defiled. To get more insight into what Paul means by consciences, let's check out some additional verses. Look up at least one and write what you discover.

Acts 24:16

Romans 9:1

1 Timothy 3:9

Hebrews 13:18

This helps me understand Paul's comparison of pure and defiled people a little better. Because of Jesus' work on the cross, those who put their faith in Him are considered pure. They operate under the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, who purifies their thoughts and consciences. They aren't perfect, but they are in process. They desire to act honorably in all things. But for those who have not accepted Jesus as their Savior

(the defiled and unbelieving), nothing is pure. Instead of being led by the Holy Spirit, these people are led by their defiled thoughts and corrupted consciences.

Let's continue on with verse 16. This verse is still talking about the defiled and unbelieving people. The first sentence describes their actions and the second sentence describes their character. Let's look at the first sentence. It has a transitional word (circle it) that links two opposing thoughts describing the actions of these people. Write those two actions.

1)

2)

These people say one thing, BUT do the opposite. They claim to know God, BUT they deny Him by their works. Whoa! Their works, the things they do, deny the very God they claim to know. Why should that matter? Let's see. Write what you learn.

1 John 2:4-6

This tells me that not every confession of knowing God is authentic. Those who truly know Him and love Him will do what He says. Knowing God = Obedience. Let's let that sink in a bit and look at what Jesus had to say. Write down His words.

John 14:23-24

Now again, we are human so we will never have perfect obedience. But if we truly know and love Jesus, we will have the desire to obey Him. Jesus knows our human weaknesses, and that left on our own we will fail. So He sends us a helper. Go back to John 14 and read verses 15-17.

Who does Jesus send? (He is called by two descriptive names, write them both.)

How long will the Holy Spirit be with you and where does He dwell?

What are some things the Holy Spirit does? Look up these verses (or any others you think of) and record your answers.

John 14:26

John 16:13

Galatians 5:16-17



Living in this fallen, sinful world is hard. But when we listen to the Holy Spirit's promptings and do our best to follow Jesus in obedience, we are demonstrating our love and allegiance to the Lord and showing the world a better way to live.

Finally, let's look at the character of the defiled and unbelieving. Write their 3 characteristics listed at the end of verse 16.

Praise the Lord because without Him, we would be just like that. Remember the last phrase. We will learn more about good works in the coming weeks.

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Praise God for the gifts of salvation and the Holy Spirit. Thank Him that you don't have to be perfect, but that through the Holy Spirit you are a work in process. Ask Him to help you be a woman who faithfully loves and obeys Jesus.

# Day 5: Personal Application

**Read Chapter 1:5-16 one last time** and look at all your notes and comprehension summary answers before answering these application questions.

## Application questions:

What have I learned about God (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) in this passage (His character, truths, authority, sovereignty, etc)?

How does this knowledge about God shape my view about myself, mankind, the world, and/or my circumstances?

Are there any action steps I need to take, truths I need to hold on to, or commands I need to follow?

## Pray:

Based on your answers to the above questions, pick one verse from the “Qualifications for Elders” passage we studied this week, personalize it, and pray it back to God.

# *Session 3 Notes*

## Sound Teaching

Video link available at: [myabc.church/women](https://myabc.church/women)

# Day 1: Sound Doctrine for Men

This week we are going to study the section called “Teach Sound Doctrine”. **Read Chapter 2:1-15**, a few times. Mark up the text as you read. Note any questions or thoughts you may have in the margin of the text.

In this section of the letter, Paul exhorts Titus to teach sound doctrine to the Christians on Crete, and then proceeds to specify directions for each of the 5 demographics within the churches: older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and bondservants. He also includes directions to Titus personally regarding his conduct. Today we are going to look at his directions for older men. (By the way, this chapter has a lot of imperatives for Titus. Highlight them as you find them.)

Chapter 2 starts with the phrase, “But as for you.” That first word is a transitional word, linking the sentence to come with the previous sentence or paragraph. Since Paul just finished describing the false teachers on Crete and the character of those who are defiled and unbelieving, he’s comparing Titus with these people and reminding him, “You are not like them!” So what is Paul telling Titus to do? (Remember Titus was given instructions and the authority to carry out those instructions.) Write what verse 1 says.

We can assume that everything Paul lays out in the rest of the letter accords (agrees, is consistent with) sound doctrine, since that is what Titus is to teach. So what is sound doctrine? How do we know it? How is it lived out? Why should he teach it? We will attempt to answer these questions throughout the week.

First of all, what is sound doctrine? Let’s see if we can find other scriptures that talk about it. Look up these verses from 1 Timothy and write what you find out about sound doctrine - what it is and what it is not.

1 Timothy 1:9-11

1 Timothy 4:6

1 Timothy 6:3-4

Considering what we’ve read so far, we can conclude that sound doctrine is based on the gospel and teachings of Jesus, the words of God contained in the entirety of scripture, and teaching that accords with godliness. Before we continue, take a minute and write why YOU think it’s important to teach sound doctrine. How does it impact a body of believers? Be prepared to discuss with your small group.

*“The standard for all (the letter of) Titus says, ‘sound doctrine,’ could also be translated ‘healthy teaching.’ All trifles vanish away before solid teaching. The previous section described a pathological situation in which misguided leaders wreak havoc in families, congregations, or both. False teaching is foundational to the maladies Paul diagnoses. The antidote is its opposite: ‘healthy’ or ‘sound’ instruction in the Christian faith. That is not all Titus must do. But if he fails at promoting that kind of teaching, any hope for healing of the ills in Cretan churches is slim.” (Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary on The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, p 508)*

Let’s see what specific sound doctrine Titus is to teach the older men within the churches on Crete. Read verse 2. It has 3 directions regarding behavior for older men, followed by 3 areas they are to be “sound” in. (There’s that word again!) Write the first 3 directions for behavior here.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

This time, in order to get a richer understanding of these words, let’s try looking up verse 2 in some different translations. Bible apps are great for this. You can highlight a verse and quickly compare it to as many different translations as you want. Or, if you have other translations of the Bible in your home, grab them. Next to the ESV words above, write down any other words you find. Other translations I like to use are NIV, NASB, NKJV, NLT, and AMP. The Message Bible can be helpful, but treat it like a commentary. It’s really more of a loose paraphrase, instead of a word for word translation.

Now let’s look at the final 3 directions for older men. Older men are to be sound in:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

I decided to look up the word “sound” in the dictionary since it’s repeated so many times here. Once I got past all of the auditory definitions, I found some good nuggets. Sound, used in this type of context, means: in good condition; secure; reliable; free from moral defect or weakness; upright; honest; good; honorable. You get the picture? This is a pretty high standard for these older men. Let’s think about these one by one.

Sound in faith - what does that mean to you?

Sound in love. How is that expressed? Write Mark 12:30-31 here.

Sound in steadfastness. For clarification, look up the word steadfastness in the dictionary and write what you discover.

If you search for steadfast in the Bible, you will find that most often it is referring to God's steadfast love for us. Do a word search and write a verse you find that expresses God's steadfast love for us. Share your verse with your small group.

So putting all this together, it tells me that an older man who is sound in faith, love, and steadfastness, is one who is unwavering in purpose and resolve, like God's steadfast love toward us. He endures the demands and troubles of this world with perseverance and patience, while keeping his eyes on the Lord and the hope he has in Christ. He loves God and loves his neighbor with a sacrificial heart. He is a man who reads the Bible. Wow! These older men have a lot to strive for. Tomorrow we will look at women.

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Praise the Lord for the incredible gift of His word that provides sound doctrine for us. Pray for the older men in your life, that through the work of the Holy Spirit, they will be able to live Christ-honoring lives.

# Day 2: Sound Doctrine For Women

**Read Chapter 2:1-15 again** and mark up any additional insights or questions you have.

Today we are moving into the teaching for women, verses 3-5. Bear with me, this will be the longest day of homework we have to complete. Might I ask that you spend some time in prayer before we dig in? Ask God to give you humility and an open heart to receive what He has for us in His word.

In verse 3, I see a transitional word. Write it here:

This word means “in the same way,” which tells me that Paul is giving women the same attention he gave the men. This teaching is equally important to the church family so that together we can function in a way that accords with sound doctrine.

The beginning of verse 3 addresses the behavior of older women, much like verse 2 addressed the behavior of older men. I see three behaviors listed here: one behavior we should exhibit and two we should not. Then Paul starts describing what the older women are to teach. First, let’s write the three behaviors here:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Let’s start with “reverent in behavior”. Look up “reverent” in the dictionary.

Reverent:

Now look up Hebrews 11:7 and see another instance where the word “reverent” is used. (Some translations use the words godly fear or holy fear.) Write what you discover.

Noah had deep, awe-filled respect for God, so he responded with faith and obedient behavior. My takeaway here for women is that like Noah, our behavior should reflect our faith in God and awe-filled respect of Him. When we follow God in obedience, we bring Him honor. Not only that, when we follow Him in obedience, we are expressing our love and gratitude back toward Him. What are your thoughts?

Moving on to slanderers. Why do you think Paul brought up this particular behavior for older women? How would this behavior harm the church family?

Read Ephesians 4:29-32 and write down what kind of speech should come out of our mouths.

Regarding the next behavior, it's interesting that Paul, when describing drinking wine, uses the phrase, "slaves to much wine." Look carefully at each word. What do you think he means?

Ephesians 5:18 gives us a little more insight. It says, *"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit."*

This is contrary to what culture tells us, isn't it? I found some funny quotes expressing our culture's attitude toward drinking wine. You might have even seen some of these on t-shirts: "Life happens, wine helps," "You look like I need wine," "Corks are for quitters," "I make wine disappear, what's your superpower?" and my personal favorite, "All you need is love ... and a bottle of wine." While these make me chuckle, they also make me pause and reflect on my attitude regarding wine and my use of it. Drinking wine, in and of itself, isn't the issue here. But becoming slaves to much wine or getting drunk on wine, now that is a problem. That behavior leads to debauchery. *"Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery."* I don't think we'll be seeing that quote on a t-shirt anytime soon!

Let's move on to what older women are to teach. Verses 3-5 tell us that older women are to teach what is good (i.e. sound doctrine), and so train younger women to do certain things. What's the difference between teaching and training? Well, training carries with it the idea of teaching but adding a time element. When you train someone, you are teaching them skills and behaviors over a period of time and giving them chances to practice those behaviors. I love that Paul is encouraging women to teach and train other women. In the church, this is usually expressed through Bible studies, classes, and mentoring. But it can also happen through friendships and modeling. When you think about it, who is the person best suited to mentor you? Someone who is like you, but who is a little further along in their faith and life journey. Ladies, we relate to each other. We understand our struggles, hopes, and fears. Whether it is juggling a household and career, worrying over appearance, or experiencing the influx of monthly hormones and emotions, we know what it is like to be a woman. So let's be women who help and encourage one another in our life journeys and in our faith.



If you think about it, all of us are both the “older woman” and “younger woman” at the same time. No matter what stage of life we are in, we will most likely have someone a little further along than us that we can learn from, and someone who is a little behind us that we can mentor and encourage. Who in your life has been a mentor to you? Maybe this person doesn’t even know that they have been a model to you, but you have learned a lot just by observing them. Have you ever been a mentor to someone else? How can you model sound doctrine? Spend time in prayer and ask the Lord to help you be more intentional in this. Write down any names of potential mentors/mentees that come to mind. Be prepared to discuss this in small group.

So what should older women teach younger women? I see 6 things listed. Write them here:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)

Right off the bat, I think a lot of us bristle at the fact that these traits mostly deal with family and the home. Aren’t women more than just being wives, mothers, and housekeepers? The answer is that of course women don’t have to be a wife and mom to have value. We have many talents and gifts that are esteemed and necessary both inside and outside the home. But let’s think about why Paul might have focused so much on family responsibilities. Remember what we learned back in chapter 1:11? What was one of the problems on Crete?

False teachers were upsetting whole families. Might Paul have had this issue in mind when he addressed the women? As women, we often set the tone in the home. (When momma ain’t happy, then no one’s happy, right?) We tend to be responsible for most of the child-rearing duties and keeping of the home. It’s not because we aren’t qualified to do anything else. Rather, in general, I believe God has gifted women with innate abilities and strengths that allow us to run a household and raise children well, among all of our other amazing capabilities. Let’s celebrate those gifts and praise God for that privilege.

What about single women? Is Paul excluding them? No. Remember Paul called Titus his “true child in a common faith.” When you are a Christian, you become part of a church family, with brothers and sisters in Christ, and spiritual children and parents. All of us have a critical role in teaching and modeling sound doctrine and behavior within the family of Christ. We will address this topic more in the teaching at the end of the week. But for now, let’s continue to ask God to give us humility and an open heart for the sound teaching and design He has for women.

Let’s get back to our previous list of traits older women are to train. Next to each trait, write down what you think it means to exemplify this trait. If any scripture comes to mind to help explain your thoughts, write that down. Be prepared to share your thoughts with your small group.

Goodness, this seems like A LOT to take in, doesn’t it?

Now taking all of the instructions Paul lists for older women and looking at them as a whole, it seems to me that having reverence for God functions as the basis for all the rest of our behaviors. Reverence for God compels us to obedience. Reverence for God helps us avoid slandering someone or getting drunk on wine. Reverence for God gives us the desire to teach what is good and train younger women to exhibit loving, self-controlled traits and cherish their role within a family.

And what is the result of all of our reverent behavior? Look at the end of verse 5 and write the last phrase here.

When women model reverent behavior and teach sound doctrine to each other, it keeps the Word of God from being reviled. Look up that word in the dictionary.

Reviled:

Wow! That’s a heavy responsibility. Now before you start feeling self-condemning, I want you to remember that we are all a work in progress. No one will ever be perfect. We all need a Savior every day. We will talk about this more on Day 4. But for now fellow sister in Christ, let’s celebrate the unique role and influence we have in each other’s lives, in our families, in our church, and as a witness to the world.

# Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Praise the Lord for the incredible gift of His word that provides sound doctrine for us. Pray for yourself and the women you know, that through the work of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to live Christ-honoring lives. Pray for God to grow intentional mentoring relationships in your life and in the lives of women in our church. Thank Him for placing you in your circle of influence where you can set the tone in your home, model reverent behavior in the church, and be a witness for Christ in your workplace and neighborhood.

# Day 3: Young Men & Bondservants

**Read Chapter 2:1-15 again** and mark up any additional insights or questions.

We are going to look at the final two demographic groups Paul lists in verses 6-10, younger men and bondservants, and then see Paul's instructions to Titus himself.

This section starts with the same transitional word, "likewise," which tells me again that the instructions to these final demographic groups are equally as important as the instructions to the older men and the women. Can you see a pattern here? For a healthily functioning body of believers, we all have equal responsibility to do our part. No one is exempt. No one has a greater burden. We all need to foster behavior that accords with sound doctrine in our daily living. This brings peace and unity to the body, and glory to God and His Word.

Paul continues with instructions to the younger men in verse 6. Write them here.

What! You mean, *that's it*? At first glance, it does seem like these younger men have it easier than anyone else. They only have one instruction to follow! But when you think about it, self-control really encompasses all other behaviors. (More on that tomorrow). It's interesting that the next verse continues with an imperative to Titus. Write the beginning phrase of verse 7 here.

I wonder if Paul was exhorting Titus, who was a younger man himself, to be an example to these younger men. If that is the case, then Titus is to model good works in all respects, so the younger men will follow. Titus is to not merely teach it, but live it out in everyday life. We will learn what constitutes "good works" when we get to chapter 3.

Now Paul moves on to Titus's teaching. Remember that this chapter started out with Paul telling Titus to teach what accords with sound doctrine. Now we circle back to that thought again. In the prior verses, Paul has been telling Titus *what* to teach. Now Paul tells Titus *how* to teach. In his teaching, Titus is to show 3 very noble characteristics. What are they?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Feel free to look up the words above in a dictionary to get clearer understanding of them, and write down what you find. I want to focus on sound speech for a minute. Verse 8 tells us that sound speech cannot be condemned. We already know that sound speech will agree with sound doctrine. It is true, right, solid, and good. It aligns with scripture. But now we know that sound speech also cannot be condemned. Looking up “condemned” in the dictionary, I learned that it means “to express an unfavorable judgment or strong disapproval.” So basically, if Titus has sound speech, then people will find no grounds to criticize or disapprove of it.

Why is it important for Titus’s teaching to show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned? Well, Paul gives us the answer in the rest of verse 8. Write it here.

Remember that Titus is about to go up against the false teachers and troublemakers within the church on Crete. Paul has given Titus: 1) his *mission* on Crete, 2) his *authority*, and now 3) his *message*. If Titus does his job well, then the integrity, dignity, and “soundness” of his message will put all of his opponents to shame. Those false teachers and troublemakers will have nothing evil to say about Titus (or Paul, or frankly the gospel either) because the message he teaches is sound. Does this seem like a big job for Titus? Absolutely! But remember, Titus isn’t alone in this endeavor. He is filled with the Holy Spirit, and armed with scripture. He doesn’t need anything else. We know from Isaiah that God’s Word does not return void. Look up Isaiah 55:11. Write it here.

Isaiah 55:11

All Titus has to do is teach God’s word, and then God takes care of the rest. Oh sweet sister, when the battles of this world seem overwhelming, when everything in culture seems upside down, when troublemakers and false teachers want to condemn Christians and our precious Lord with evil words, run to God’s Word. His Word brings truth to the darkness! His Word brings hope and healing to the lost! His Word does not return to Him empty, but accomplishes that which He purposes and succeeds in the thing for which He sent it! Praise Him!!

Is there a situation now that is heavy on your heart where you need to run to God’s Word? Spend a few minutes and give it to God in prayer. Ask Him to show you His truth in scripture, and then pray that truth right back to Him. Write down what’s on your heart and add any scripture that comes to mind. If you’re comfortable, ask your small group sisters to lift up your situation in prayer. Remember, we need each other, and this includes helping and supporting each other through the hard things in life. Let’s live vulnerable, authentic lives with one another. Let’s be a church family that “*Rejoices with those who rejoice, weeps with those who weep.*” *Romans 12:15*

We'll wrap up today by looking at the last group of people Paul addresses in the church on Crete - bondservants. I don't know about you, but I find it compelling that Paul mentions this group of people, and I have to ask, "Why?" You would think he had already covered everyone. By addressing bondservants, I don't think Paul is condoning slavery. I think he is just acknowledging a reality on Crete at the time - people had bondservants. Typically, bondservants would be individuals who went unnoticed and were unvalued, except for the labor and services they provided. They had few to no rights, and were often treated miserably and without dignity or respect. So by Paul bringing them up alongside the other groups previously mentioned, he is assigning them equal value, dignity, and worth. Bondservants have an important role to play in the church. They are not overlooked and forgotten, not by Paul or by God! Let's look at verses 9 and 10, and list out all of the instructions for them. Look up any words you'd like to clarify.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Why should they behave this way? The end of verse 10 gives us the answer. Write it here:

I love the word "adorn" here. Adorn means "to make more pleasing and attractive." When bondservants adopt these 5 traits, their actions will stand out, *especially* because of their position and role in society. Instead of being overlooked, they will be noticed, making an impact in a culture that is lazy, gluttonous, and evil. Their respectful attitudes will make the doctrine of God their Savior more pleasing and attractive to others (especially their masters), and they will become an incredible witness to the beauty of the gospel message.

*"Doctrine by itself can be lifeless and dull, but lived out nobly, it may work magnetically and give rise to admiration. Then it may communicate the saving grace of the Christian message across even the kinds of social barriers that separated slaves and masters. God the Savior cares for both and uses every means possible to make his presence known. One of these means is how believers live out their convictions wherever God places them." (Yarbrough, p. 524)*

Think about where God has placed you, whether it is your job, your home, or your neighborhood. How can you live out your convictions there? What attitudes and behaviors would stand out, bringing attention and glory to God? Write your answer and be prepared to discuss this in small group.

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Praise the Lord for the incredible gift of His Word that provides sound doctrine for us and accomplishes His purposes. Pray for the younger men in your life by name, that through the work of the Holy Spirit, they will be able to live Christ-honoring lives. Ask God to show you how you can live out your faith in the workplace, home, and community where He has placed you.

# Day 4: Purifying Grace

**Read Chapter 2:1-15 again** and mark up any final insights or questions you have.

I have been looking forward to this day all week! Today we get to the crux of the letter, Titus 2:11-15, the basis and heart of everything Paul wants to impart to Titus. We've been learning about sound doctrine, what it is and what it means for the body of Christ. We've discussed that ALL of us, men and women of all ages, and even bondservants, have a significant role to play within the body of Christ. Living out the teachings of sound doctrine is a hefty responsibility, but it leads to peace and unity in the body, brings glory to God, and provides a gospel witness that is in stark contrast to the values and behaviors of this world.

Let's take a step back now and look at all of the people addressed in our first 10 verses as a whole. When I do that, I notice that even though there are varying lists of instructions for each demographic, there is an overarching theme for all that emerges. This theme is represented by a word that appears three different times in these verses. Look back over them and see if you can spot it. Write it here when you find it.

I think the overarching theme for everyone in the body of Christ is self-control. But before we start becoming prideful and judgmental regarding self-control, or self-loathing at our lack of it, I want to make it clear today that it is only through the work of the Holy Spirit within us that we can have any type of self-control. We are works in progress and will continue to be as long as we walk this earth. My husband, Brent, had a catchy term for this truth as we were talking about this passage. Instead of self-control, we should call it:

**“Self-you don't have control”**

In our selfish nature, control may be something we can muster up for a time, but without God's Spirit we will eventually falter on our own. But the Holy Spirit in us does have control, if we allow Him. This is where the gospel comes in, the continuing good news for everyone who puts their faith in Jesus Christ. And this good news is how Paul finishes out our chapter. So let's begin.

Verse 11 starts with, “For the grace of God has appeared.” Remember that the word, “for” is a transitional word, linking the thought to come with the thought before it. Paul has just listed an incredible amount of behaviors for Titus to teach and believers to live out. Putting myself in Titus's sandals, I would feel really overwhelmed, and would be tempted to give up before I even started. With this transitional sentence however, Paul is both reassuring Titus and motivating him to carry out the ministry. In effect, I think



Paul is saying, “Hey Titus, it’s not up to you! God has a plan and He does the work through us. Remember, THIS is why we do what we do!” And then Paul proceeds to remind Titus of the gospel. He couldn’t have given a more beautiful motivator than that.

Go back to verse 11. What has appeared and what did it do?

It’s interesting that Paul says “God’s grace appeared,” not God’s Son appeared or Jesus came to the earth, like you would expect. Why? I wonder if it’s because Paul wants to emphasize here the ongoing work of God’s grace beyond salvation. Why do I think that? Look at the tense of the words “bringing” and “training” in verses 11 and 12. These are ongoing activities. God’s grace has appeared in the past, yes, but His grace hasn’t left this world. It is continuing to bring salvation for people, actively seeking to save the lost. Hallelujah! But not only that, once we put our faith in Christ for salvation, God’s grace is now continuing to work in our lives each and every day, training us. Aren’t you glad that God loves us enough to not only save us, but to patiently and deliberately train us and change us throughout our lives?

So what is His grace training us to do? Look at verse 12: God’s grace is training us to

Renounce:

Live:

How do we learn to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled (there’s that theme), upright, and godly lives in the present age (yes, even in OUR present age)? *God’s grace*. Praise Him for this amazing gift!!

Speaking of our present age, I know that living in this world today is incredibly difficult. As I said in the introduction, it is challenging to remain faithful to the Lord and live productive, peaceful lives when the world around us is self-absorbed, self-righteous, and devoted to myths and false teaching. It’s enough to make a girl want to give up sometimes, isn’t it? But right now you and I are called to live here. The fact that you woke up this morning means that God has a plan and a purpose for you today. But we don’t have to just survive here. We can have HOPE in our present age. How?

Look at verse 13. I love the words describing Jesus here. Mark them on the text.

Jesus is our HOPE while we are waiting in this present age, and He is the GLORY of our great God and Savior. We can have hope NOW, even when our days are dark, because we know that we have a future hope with Jesus. This present age is not all there is. Jesus is our Savior, who gave Himself up for us when He left Heaven and came to earth as a baby. He gave Himself up for us when He lived among us, serving us, teaching us, and loving us. He gave Himself up for us when He allowed men to nail

Him to the cross to die the death that we deserved. But that wasn't the end because three days later Jesus, the Glory of our great God and Savior, rose again, ensuring our salvation and our future. THAT is HOPE!

We're still not done with our text though. Why did Jesus give Himself up for us? There are two reasons listed in verse 14. Write them here.

1)

2)

Look up the words "redeem" and "purify" in the dictionary and write their meanings above.

What does Jesus redeem us from?

Who does Jesus purify us for?

We are a people for whose possession?

This is a beautiful thing. This is the gospel. This is what makes us *Jesus's beautiful possession*. But that's not all. Look at the end of verse 14.

A people for Jesus's own possession will now have such gratitude that they will be zealous for good works. I think it's important to point out here that we aren't being called to do good works out of drudgery or duty. No, our motivation comes from a grateful heart, and that enables us to be zealous (enthusiastically diligent, devoted, eager) for good works. We'll spend next week talking more specifically about good works. So when we get to chapter 3, let's remember this zealous attitude toward good works that we should embody and the motivation behind them.

The last verse in this chapter is a doozy! After the beautifully motivating description of the gospel, Paul is now, in effect, ending this section with a row of exclamation points!!!!!! It's a "Go, Fight, Win Titus!!!!!" kind of a statement. What makes it feel this way are all of the imperatives in the sentence. Circle them and write them here.

Titus is to:

1)

2)

3)

4)

I wonder how Titus felt after reading this last statement. Was he encouraged? Ready to do battle? Pumped up? How do you feel? Well, Paul isn't finished with his letter to Titus yet. He has final instructions for his friend and partner in the faith to carry out on Crete that we will read next week.

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Praise God for His daily grace working in your life that trains you to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions. Pray instead *Galatians 5:16*: "*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*" Thank Jesus for redeeming you, purifying you, and making you His beautiful possession.

# Day 5: Personal Application

**Read Chapter 2:1-15 one last time** and look at all your notes and comprehension summary answers before answering these application questions.

## Application questions:

What have I learned about God (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) in this passage (His character, truths, authority, sovereignty, etc)?

How does this knowledge about God shape my view about myself, mankind, the world, and/or my circumstances?

Are there any action steps I need to take, truths I need to hold on to, or commands I need to follow?

## Pray:

Based on your answers to the above questions, pick one verse from the “Teach Sound Doctrine” passage we studied this week, personalize it, and pray it back to God.

# *Session 4 Notes*

## All Are Equal

Video link available at: [myabc.church/women](https://myabc.church/women)

# Day 1: Remind Them

This week we are going to study the final section called, “Be Ready for Every Good Work.” **Read Chapter 3:1-15**, a few times. Mark up the text like you have been practicing. Note any questions or thoughts you may have in the margin of the text.

We just finished an amazing crescendo in the letter last week, ending on the beautiful work of the gospel. But don't think this week is going to be a let down. Paul still has to impart a lot of wisdom to our friend, Titus. (I'm beginning to think of him as a friend now, aren't you? He's a brother-in-Christ that I look forward to meeting one day in Heaven!) In thinking about how to divide this week's homework, I decided to break it up using Paul's imperatives in this section. Don't feel bad if you haven't noticed them yet. It took me some time to discover them and recognize their importance. These imperatives provide natural transitions in thought for Paul and separate calls to action for Titus. There are four main imperatives, calling Titus to: 1) Remind 2) Insist 3) Avoid and 4) Come/Greet. Today we will discuss “remind,” verses 1-3.

Paul starts this section with the words, “Remind them ...”. Remind who? Let's look back at how chapter 2 ended. Chapter 2:15 was the exclamation point verse, full of imperatives for Titus. He was to “declare, exhort, rebuke, and let no one disregard him.” So again, my question is, who was he supposed to be doing those things to? Well, since Paul just finished a whole section that was addressing various people groups within the church family, we can gather that this new section is also addressing those same people, the Christians on Crete. No one new has been introduced.

We can assume, since Paul used the word “remind,” that everything he's about to say refers to subjects Paul already taught the Cretans when he was on the island. So these reminders are nothing new. What is Titus to remind these people? Let's look at verses 1 and 2. I see seven things. Mark them on your text and list them here.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)

Let's work our way through them. Consider for a moment why Paul might list, "be submissive to rulers and authorities" first. We already know a little bit about the culture from chapter 1. Cretans were insubordinate, liars, evil, and gluttonous. These characteristics would imply a lack of restraint and a self-centered attitude, which most likely led to a culture that bucked against rulers and authorities. This way of thinking directly opposed the sound teaching introduced in chapter 2, which called Christians to be submissive and self-controlled. Further, this attitude would undermine Titus' authority, risking the establishment of healthy, gospel-rich churches. In order for a healthy society or church to function, there must be established order with clear chains of command in leadership. When Paul told Titus at the end of chapter 2, "Let no one disregard you," he had the insubordinate Cretan culture on his mind. So a priority for Titus is to help the Cretan Christians learn to regard their leaders, and submit to rulers and authorities in the church and also in the community.

This reminder to the Cretans seems pretty applicable for our divisive political culture today too, doesn't it? Why should we be submissive to rulers and authorities? Let's see if additional verses can help answer that question. Look up Romans 13:1-7. You can read the whole section for more details, but we are just going to focus on the first verse. Write it here.

Romans 13:1

There is the answer to our "why" question. Now Paul takes it a step further in his letter to Timothy. Look up 1 Timothy 2:1-4. Write down who we are to pray for and why.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

So not only are we to be submissive to rulers and authorities, because God put them into their positions of authority, but we are also to pray for them. This is good and pleasing to God, and can lead to better living conditions for us (*"that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way"* 1 Timothy 2:2). Will there be rulers and authorities in power that you didn't vote for and don't agree with? Yes. Will there be leaders who are not Christian and who disdain our God? Yes. Do we still need to pray for them? Absolutely, because they are placed in their positions by God for God's purposes. So pray for all our rulers, but pray especially for those who don't know Jesus, because *"God our Savior desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."* 1 Timothy 2:4.

Being “obedient” seems like a natural extension to being “submissive to rulers.” As believers we are called to be obedient to Christ and God’s word above all else, but we are also called to extend our obedience to others out of love and respect, and to keep the peace. Examples include people like parents, elders, bosses, civil authorities, etc. Is there anyone in authority whom you are called to be obedient to that you struggle with? Why? Can you think of examples of times when you should not be obedient to a person in authority?

Next comes being “ready for every good work.” I will discuss this in more detail in my teaching, but for now I want you to write down what this means to you. Be prepared to discuss this with your small group.

The final four reminders deal with how the Christians were to treat others in the community, not just the church community, but ALL people. The first two are negative and both involve the tongue, “speak evil of no one” and “avoid quarreling.” The last two are positive and involve actions, “be gentle” and “show perfect courtesy toward all people.” If there is ever a time when this teaching is needed, I would say it is now. Oh sister, does your heart break like mine for how divisive our world is becoming? We live in an angry, arguing, self promoting, value shaming, virtue signaling, judging, in your face, cancel culture, that’s all about ME ME ME. And sadly, this division is creeping into our church families as well. Let’s listen to Paul’s reminder to the Christians on Crete and be a people who react differently than the world. Instead of quarreling and speaking evil of people, let’s be gentle and show perfect courtesy toward all people. Let’s be kind to everyone, but let’s be especially kind to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let’s put aside petty differences of opinion, and instead remember that we are united in Christ and bound by love. Look up Psalm 133:1 and write it here.

Psalm 133:1

Of the four reminders above, what do you struggle the most with? Discuss how we can foster unity, gentleness, courtesy, and productive speech in our church and community.



We are going to wrap up today by looking at verse 3. Did you notice the transitional word, “For”? Remember this links two sentences/thoughts together. In this case it’s linking all of Paul’s reminders in verses 1-2, with verse 3. He says, “For we ourselves were ...”. Who do you think Paul is talking about here?

Yep, he’s talking about himself and Titus. And what does he say about the two of them? Let’s list them out. They were once:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)

Not a pretty picture, huh? Does it surprise you? This is the world we live in, and it describes every person apart from God. Why do you think Paul included this personal reminder? Write out your thoughts.

The beautiful thing about this verse is the verb tense, “For we ourselves were once ...”. It’s past tense, meaning they are no longer that way. Something or rather *Someone* saved and changed them. It’s good for us to remember who we once were before Jesus saved us. This keeps us humble and dependent on the Lord, and compassionate toward those who are still lost and in the dark.

*“Paul is reminding Titus that however bad the Cretans might be (Titus 1:12), Paul knows that he, Titus, and all believers are by nature and past deeds no better. Their only advantage is due to a person and work manifestly not their own.” (Yarbrough, p. 543)*

Paul will elaborate on this good news in the next section, and we will cover it tomorrow.

# Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Think through the list of reminders we studied today. Whether it's submission, obedience, good works, or showing kindness to everyone, ask God to help you with those areas in which you struggle the most. Thank Him for saving you from the person you used to be. Ask Him to help you have humility and compassion toward those who are still lost.

# Day 2: Insist On

**Read Chapter 3:1-15 again** and mark up any additional insights or questions.

The section of text we will be studying today involves the things that Titus is to “insist” upon (the second imperative in this chapter). If he is to insist upon them, they must be important! So as you study this section, ask yourself, “What makes it important?” We will be looking at verses 4-8. Remember yesterday ended with a series of words describing how Paul and Titus (and by extension all Christians) once were. That unflattering list would be so depressing if that were who we still are. Praise God for the next word in our text. It may be small, but it is packed with hope - “BUT!”

Look at verse 4 and the first part of verse 5. Who appeared and what did He do?

Don't you love those descriptions of Jesus? Jesus is the “goodness” and “loving kindness of God our Savior” manifested in human flesh. That's pretty incredible when you really stop to think about it. We need not wonder if God is good, loving, or kind. All we need to do is look at His Son, God in the flesh, who lived and walked among us.

Why and how did Jesus save us? Verse 5 gives us the answer.

**Why?** According to this -

Not because of this -

**How?** 1)

2)

This leaves no room for doubt. Our salvation is based solely on God's mercy through Christ, not because of anything we have done. The phrase, “washing of regeneration” can be a little hard to understand. Basically, it is referencing our spiritual rebirth in Christ. Christ died for our sins, and we are made clean (spiritually reborn) when we put our faith in Him. To add some clarity, read 1 Corinthians 6:11. When we are spiritually reborn, we receive the Holy Spirit inside of us who renews us.

Paul could have ended this description here. But he wanted to drive this point home. Verse 6 elaborates on the gift of the Holy Spirit and it is such a beautiful description of the abundant generosity of our Lord. God didn't just give us the Holy Spirit. No, He *“poured Him out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”* Praise Him!

Verse 7 contains the final piece of the gospel message and has a word and a phrase that are throwbacks to earlier sections of the letter. Can you spot them? Mark their references on your text next to the word and phrase. (Hint: look at 2:11 and 1:2.)

According to this verse, how are we justified (declared innocent or guiltless, absolved)?

Here once again Paul is hammering home the work of grace in a believer's life. Not only are we saved from our sins by grace, we also become heirs of God. Read Romans 8:12-17 and write what you learn about being heirs of God.

Romans 8:12-17

As an heir of Christ, what do we gain according to Titus 3:7? "The hope of eternal life." Paul began his letter by stating that as a servant and apostle, he is tasked with sharing the truth that brings the hope of eternal life to people. We are guaranteed eternal life because God never lies (1:2). Now Paul is once again emphasizing the hope of eternal life. This time he says we receive eternal life because we have become heirs through Christ. What does the guarantee of eternal life mean to you? How does it give you hope? How does it help you with the struggles of daily life and with seasons of suffering? Write Romans 15:13 and be prepared to discuss this topic of the "hope of eternal life" with your small group.

Romans 15:13

In verse 8 we find our imperative for this section, "insist," and we find Paul stating emphatically that all he just said (i.e. the gospel and hope of eternal life) is trustworthy. Titus is to insist on those things when he is teaching the Christians. Why do you think Paul is stressing that this message is trustworthy? Now that I think about it, why do you think Paul told Titus in 1:2 that God never lies? Remember what we learned about the culture on Crete? Reread 1:10-16 to help formulate your answer.

Finally in the rest of verse 8, we find out "why" Titus is to insist on these things (the gospel message). Why?

When Christians truly understand the trustworthiness of the gospel, the gift of grace in our lives, and the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ, we should feel such gratitude in our hearts that the natural outpouring is to devote ourselves to serving the Lord through good works.

Read Hebrews 10:23-25 and write what this idea looks like when it is lived out in a body of believers.

What a beautiful picture of our hope lived out. Because of God's saving grace and love, we can live generous, faith-filled lives that provide hope in this sinful world. This is "excellent and profitable for people" (verse 8). Tomorrow we will study what is "unprofitable and worthless."

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Praise God for the trustworthiness of the gospel, the gift of grace in your life, and the hope of eternal life you have through Jesus. Ask Him to help you focus on that hope the next time you are in a season of suffering. Ask Him to show you how to live a generous, faith-filled life, full of works that are excellent and profitable - all for God's glory.

# For Deeper Study: The Holy Spirit

Throughout this study we've been discussing the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. In Titus 3:5-6, Paul described the Holy Spirit as being "poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ." Why was this such an incredible gift?

In the Old Testament, very few people were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's indwelling was selective and temporary, and came upon certain people to carry out God's purposes. They were mainly individuals who served God in the role of a leader, prophet, priest, or king of Israel. But all of that changed after Jesus's death and resurrection. The idea that the rare gift of the Holy Spirit is now being poured out on ALL Christians RICHLY is an amazing truth! Instead of being given selectively and temporarily, the Spirit is now given abundantly and permanently! This Spirit is not only with us, but in us as we become new creations and united with Christ. Spend some time reading about this amazing gift of the Holy Spirit and write down any new insights or reminders of truths you find. May we never lose our awe and gratitude at this precious gift we possess.

John 16:1-15 Jesus tells the disciples about the "Helper" who will come after He leaves

Acts 1-2 Pentecost

Do a search in the Old Testament for the Holy Spirit. Read about the Spirit's role in creation and His role in some of the individual leaders of Israel.

Romans 8:9-11 & 1 Corinthians 6:17 We are one spirit with Christ & are in Christ

Galatians 2:20 Christ lives in me

Colossians 1:26-27 The glorious mystery

# Day 3: Avoid

**Read Chapter 3:1-15 again** and mark any additional insights or questions you have.

Paul's third imperative to Titus explains what he and the Christians on Crete are to "avoid," verses 9-11. Let's list them out.

1)

2)

3)

4)

I think looking at similar verses in the letters to Timothy might help us understand this list better. Taken together, the letters of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus form what's called the Pastoral Epistles. These letters provided helpful counsel to Timothy and Titus (and by extension all church pastors, leaders, and elders) on how to administrate and teach in the church. There is a lot of overlap within these three letters, so it seems that Timothy and Titus had similar issues to address in the churches they were overseeing. Look up the following verses and write any clarifying insights you find.

2 Timothy 2:14-18

1 Timothy 6:3-5

1 Timothy 1:3-4

I thought it was interesting that Paul told Titus to avoid "foolish" controversies. He wasn't saying to avoid all controversies, just the foolish ones. As a Christ-follower and leader in the church, it is inevitable that Titus would face opposition and conflict. The same is true for us. Discernment and prayer are needed to determine when it is wise or foolish to engage. One good rule of thumb is to ask how the conflict impacts the gospel message. If it maligns our Lord, we must speak up. If it opposes, dilutes, adds to, or distorts the gospel or the truth of God's word as a whole, then we must engage. This is especially important in today's culture, where false teaching and cultural lies run rampant. We need to stand firm on Truth and be brave enough to speak out. One of my favorite scriptures gives us guidance on how to speak truth in a way that is less likely to provoke conflict. Look up 1 Peter 3:15 and write it here.

1 Peter 3:15

The next thing Paul says to avoid is “genealogies.” Including genealogies in this list seems a little odd. What’s the big deal about tracing your family tree? We like to know our roots because it creates a sense of belonging and satisfies curiosity. But for the Jewish person, genealogies were extremely important. They might not have had access to ancestry.com, but all of them could identify the family line and tribe they belonged to. Being part of one of the 12 tribes of Israel meant that they were one of Abraham’s descendants and part of God’s covenant with Abraham.

But even more than that, we can see in scripture that genealogies are important to God. God established the family and knows every descendent of every person He created. Throughout the Old Testament, lists of family lines are frequently mentioned, starting as far back as Genesis 4 where we are told the names of Cain’s descendants. Even in the New Testament, we are given Jesus’s genealogy in Matthew and Luke. I don’t believe Paul is saying that genealogies aren’t important. Rather, I think he is telling Titus to focus on what’s most important. All Christians, whether Jew or Greek, or any other nationality, are now part of God’s family through the new covenant in Christ. We are all “Jesus’s possession” and heirs together, sharing the same promise and hope of eternal life. The Jewish Christians who were still emphasizing genealogies were missing the big picture and potentially creating a barrier for people who weren’t of Jewish descent. Tracing genealogies, like requiring circumcision, distracted Christians from the freedom of the gospel and distorted Christ’s message of grace.

The last two items on our list, dissensions and quarrels about the law, are also to be avoided. Let’s think about the church family you belong to for a minute. Are there any dissensions and quarrels going on right now? How does that impact the family of Christ? What does that do to the witness of the church to the watching world? How can we avoid this? Be prepared to discuss this in small group.

Paul tells us at the end of verse 9 *why* we need to avoid these things. What does he say?

When compared to the good works we discussed yesterday, these items are the opposite.

Finally, in verses 10 and 11 Paul gives Titus instructions on how to handle individuals who stir up division within the church family. What does Paul say to do?



I love the redemptive nature of this instruction. We are to extend grace and give people the opportunity to change by warning them not just once, but twice. If they heed the warning let them continue to be a contributing and productive part of the body. If not, then Paul says, “have nothing more to do with him.” Why? Verse 11 tells us that “such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.” His actions and stubborn refusal to change his ways reveal a sinful heart and unrepentant attitude, which condemn him and cause division in the church. Sometimes church discipline is necessary not only as discipline for the individual, but also for the good and unity of the church body. But the hope is always for restoration, now or in the future, once the individual displays a repentant heart.

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Spend a few minutes praying. Ask God to bring to mind any attitude or behavior you have that is unprofitable and worthless, then ask Him to help you avoid it. Pray that He will give you boldness in speaking Truth with love and respect when opportunities arise. Ask God to help you be a peacemaker in your church, avoiding dissensions and foolish quarrels. Praise God for being a God of grace who extends his mercy toward everyone, including the troublemakers.

# Day 4: Come & Greet

**Read Chapter 3:1-15 again** and mark any final insights or questions you have.

Wow! We've made it to our last day of comprehension homework. Tomorrow will be our final day of application. I hope you have enjoyed digging into Titus and have picked up a few new study skills along the way. Has this study been a challenge for you like it has been for me? I've been stretched but also encouraged, and I have thoroughly enjoyed studying this letter and putting this teaching together. Thank you for your persistence in seeing Titus through to the end. I hope that our time together has given you more confidence and some tools to study scripture on your own, including asking curious questions of the text. God is pleased when we have diligent hearts bent on seeking Him in His word! I believe the Holy Spirit longs to speak to us and change us for His glory.

Today we are going to wrap up by looking at the closing to the letter in verses 12-15, which includes the final imperatives, "Come/Greet." Paul ends his letter like most people end letters, with final thoughts and greetings. At first glance, this may seem like an unimportant list of names of people we don't know and remarks that don't really matter. But if we look closely, there are some interesting nuggets of truth and application we can learn from this part of the letter. Even though we don't know these people, we can imagine them living out their lives, working together for a common goal as brothers in Christ, and supporting and encouraging each other.

Let's start with verses 12 -13. Here we learn that Paul is going to spend the winter in Nicopolis. Nicopolis was a city about 310 miles from Crete in Northwestern Greece. The city is no longer in existence, but you can visit the ruins. Although nothing more is written about it in the Bible, we can assume there was some sort of Christian community there. At any rate, Paul would like Titus to come to him in Nicopolis. Whether he made it or not, we're not sure.

Four people are named in this section. Perhaps one of them was the courier of this letter? They are all co-workers of Paul's, Christians who were entrusted with teaching believers and spreading the gospel. We can assume that Titus also knew these men, since Paul doesn't elaborate on introductions. In verse 12, Paul tells us that either Artemas or Tychicus are being sent to Crete to relieve Titus, so he can "do his best" to go to Paul in Nicopolis. Who are Artemas and Tychicus? This is the only mention of Artemas in the Bible, so we know nothing more about him. But Tychicus is mentioned several times in the New Testament. He was a close friend of Paul's, and was sent by Paul to the Ephesians and Colossians. Let's get to know Tychicus better. Look up these verses on the next page where he is mentioned by name and write down anything you find interesting.

Ephesians 6:21-22

Colossians 4:7-8

2 Timothy 4:12

Acts 20:1-6

Two more men are mentioned in verse 13 - Zenas the lawyer and Apollos. We know nothing more about Zenas, other than his occupation. He was probably well-versed in Greek or Roman law, and possibly Jewish law as well. Apollos is mentioned several times in scripture. He too is a co-worker of Paul's and an interesting person. To know Apollos better, look up these verses where he is mentioned by name and write down anything you want to remember.

Acts 18:24 - 19:1

1 Corinthians 3:1-10, 21-22

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 6

Paul tells Titus to do his best to speed Zenas and Apollos on their way. We don't know where they are going, but we can assume they have work to do spreading the gospel and building up the church. The image in this verse is one of brothers in Christ supporting each other. Titus is not only to help these men start their journey, he is also called to make sure they "lack nothing." Titus and the Christians on Crete were to provide food, clothing, money, prayers, transportation, and anything else these fellow Christians needed for their assignment. By providing for these men, the believers were given the opportunity to do good works and partner with God in His mission to reach the lost outside of their little island of Crete.

We too are given opportunities to support our brothers and sisters in Christ who are working to spread the gospel outside our "little islands." We can donate our time volunteering in our community or church. We can financially support a missionary or organization. We can support our brothers and sisters in Christ through prayer. Spend some time asking God to show you where He wants you to partner with Him and write your thoughts here. Share these ideas with your small group.

Moving on to verse 14, one of the central themes of this letter emerges again. Can you spot it? Write it here.

Paul wants to stress again the importance of this instruction. It's like he's saying, "Hey Titus I know I've said a lot in this letter, but don't forget this!" A community of Christians devoting themselves to good works, helping each other with urgent needs, and being fruitful is a beautiful thing, but it doesn't come naturally. They had to "learn" how to do it. And sister, we do too. We'll talk more about this in our final teaching, but for now think about how we as a Christian community can learn to do these things. What kind of attitude should we have? How do we teach and encourage others, including our families, to adopt this attitude and behavior? Be prepared to share.

The final verse just brings a smile to my face. Can't you picture Paul writing this letter, thinking about all of his devoted friends in the faith scattered around the Roman Empire, feeling a bond of genuine love and affection for them? Paul sends Titus heartfelt greetings from everyone who is with him, and then tells Titus to pass along greetings to "those who love them in the faith." What a sweet example of the incredible bond within the family of Christ.

When I think about you, my sisters in Christ, I feel that same bond of love and affection. We have a shared hope and faith that unites us, providing deep, rich friendships. This is a bond much like the bond with our natural families, but it runs even deeper. Think about those times when you've met someone new and found out they love Jesus. Don't you feel an instant connection? You "get" each other even if you really don't "know" each other well yet. This mysterious bond of love is a gift for the church. Paul references "the unity of the Spirit," "the bond of peace," and "being of one mind," when describing the body of believers in other letters. I can't imagine the tremendous joy we will feel when the family of Christ is finally reunited in Heaven with our Savior!

Then Paul ends his letter in the same way he started back in chapter 1:4 - with grace.

*"Paul and Titus had a long history; he did not need to school Titus here on the centrality and magnificence of gospel grace. Still, he has mentioned in this epistle that grace appeared in Christ and 'offers salvation to all people' (2:11). By this same grace believers are 'justified,' that they 'might become heirs having the hope of eternal life' (3:7). Grace will sustain Titus, Paul knows, in the difficult tasks he faces, as it linked believers across the stretches of the Roman Empire and beyond. It continues to transform those who receive the gospel message in all corners of the globe today as*

*God's promise of redemption unfolds and 'the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ' (2:13) approaches." (Yarbrough, p. 560)*

Amen! That's where you and I will end - with grace. May God's grace be with you all. May you know the boundless depths of His love and grace toward you each and every day. May you rest in the truth that, as Jesus's beautiful possession, His grace for you will never end. His grace saves you, claims you, trains you, and purifies you. And this grace, dear sisters, is what brings us HOPE. Praise you Jesus! We love you! Let God speak His love directly to your heart as you hear His voice in these words:

*Isaiah 49:15-16 Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.*

*1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

*Deuteronomy 7:6 For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.*

## Comprehension questions:

What is one thing I learned from this section so far?

Do I see the gospel anywhere in this section?

What have I learned about God in this passage so far?

## Pray:

Praise God for the gift of the church family. Ask Him how you can love them in practical ways. Thank Him for His love and grace toward you, and the hope they bring. Rest as Jesus's beloved and beautiful possession.

# Day 5: Personal Application

**Read Chapter 3:1-15 one last time** and look at all your notes and comprehension summary answers before answering these application questions.

## Application questions:

What have I learned about God (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) in this passage (His character, truths, authority, sovereignty, etc)?

How does this knowledge about God shape my view about myself, mankind, the world, and/or my circumstances?

Are there any action steps I need to take, truths I need to hold on to, or commands I need to follow?

## Pray:

Based on your answers to the above questions, pick one verse from the “Be Ready for Every Good Work” passage we studied this week, personalize it, and pray it back to God.

# *Session 5 Notes*

## Works of Gratitude

Video link available at: [myabc.church/women](https://myabc.church/women)

# Facilitator Guide

Dear facilitator, THANK YOU for leading the discussion on Titus in your small group. Your faithfulness to the ladies in your group and to God's word honors the Lord.

At the end of each day's homework, you will find the same comprehension questions. You can go over those questions in your group, or you can choose to go through the homework day by day asking your small group members what stood out to them. Encourage your ladies to share their thoughts with the study method they're practicing, including any struggles or successes they've experienced. What is working for them? What does not work? Encourage them to not give up, but to continue trying new things until they find a system that works for them.

Additionally, I've scattered throughout the homework questions for small group discussion. Hopefully these questions will inspire deeper discussions within the group.

Finally, after you've spent some time going over the 4 days of comprehension questions, move on to the application questions on day 5. It is my hope that your small group will begin to share the truths about God and themselves they are learning, and will encourage one another to live out those truths in a way that brings glory to God.

Be sure to leave time for prayer in your group. In addition to praying for needs within the group, feel free to use one of the prayer prompts at the end of each day for inspiration. Or try picking a verse or two from the passage studied and pray it through together. (An example of praying scripture like this is found on Day 5 of Week 1.)

Since there will be no homework to discuss on our first day of the study, I've compiled some questions and an icebreaker below to generate discussion and sharing in your group. You can also discuss the teaching session or go over the *Introduction*, *Process of Discovery*, and *Suggested Study Practices* sections of the homework.

## Session One Questions:

Icebreaker idea: Since *Titus* is a letter, when was the last time you hand-wrote a letter? Who was it to and what was it about? Do you enjoy writing letters?

- 1) What has been your experience with studying Scripture on your own? Are there any study tools that help you? What frustrates you when studying scripture?
- 2) What drew you to this study? What do you hope to learn?
- 3) Have you ever studied Titus before? What is your impression of the book? What do you remember from it?



# Resources

Map of Crete: Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crete>. By TUBS - Own work This W3C-unspecified vector image was created with Adobe Illustrator. This file was uploaded with Commonist. This vector image includes elements that have been taken or adapted from this file: Greece location map.svg (by Lencer)., CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=14520890>.

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the *ESV Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version)*.



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