

# MBC MEN'S STUDY

## LEADERSHIP 9: THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

### CLASS 1: INTRODUCTION TO TITUS AND CHAPTER 1

- **January 19<sup>th</sup>: Introduction and Titus 1**
- February 16<sup>th</sup>: 2 Timothy Introduction and Chapter 1
- March 16<sup>th</sup>: Titus 2-3
- April 13<sup>th</sup>: 2 Timothy 2
- May 4<sup>th</sup>: 2 Timothy 3-4

### INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

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Paul's letter to Titus has long been held as an important document for the church. Just as with Paul's letters to Timothy in Ephesus, Titus is on the island of Crete attempting to set things in order for the churches there. **This letter is different than the two letters to Timothy as the church at Ephesus was already established but Titus was there to organize and put in place these things.**

#### **I want to start by sharing with you a little bit about Titus.**

Titus was a Gentile (**Gal. 2:20**) who was led to faith in Christ by Paul (**Tit. 1:4**). He was drawn to the ministry and became a co-worker with Paul, accompanying him and Barnabas from Antioch to Jerusalem (Titus was included in the "other believers" of **Acts 15:2**). At the Jerusalem Council, Titus would have been a prime example of a born-again Gentile Christian. Titus was living proof that the rite of circumcision was unnecessary for salvation (**Gal. 2:3**).

Later, Titus went to Corinth to serve the church there (**2 Corinthians 8:6, 16-17**). On Paul's third missionary journey, which took place from A.D. 53 to 57, Paul arrived in Troas and expected to meet Titus there (**2 Cor. 2:12-13**). Not finding his friend, Paul left for Macedonia. Titus rejoined Paul in Philippi and gave him a good report of the ministry in Corinth (**2 Cor. 7:6-7, 13-14**). When Titus returned to Corinth, he hand-delivered the Epistle of 2 Corinthians and organized a collection for needy saints in Jerusalem (**2 Cor. 8:10, 17, 24**).

Several years later, Titus and Paul traveled to the island of Crete, where Titus was left behind to continue and strengthen the work. Titus's task was administrative, mostly he was to maintain sound doctrine and "straighten

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from <https://www.gotquestions.org/life-Titus.html> accessed 01/16/2020

out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town” (**Tit. 1:5**). When Artemas and Tychicus arrived in Crete to direct the ministry, Paul summoned Titus to join him in Nicopolis, a city in the province of Achaia in western Greece (**Tit. 3:12**).

The last mention of Titus in the Bible indicates that he was with Paul during Paul’s final Roman imprisonment. From Rome, Titus was sent to evangelize Dalmatia (**2 Tim. 4:10**), an area which later became known as Yugoslavia and is now called Serbia and Montenegro.

As a Gentile Christian, Titus would have been particularly effective in combating the heresy of the Judaizers. The Judaizers insisted that all Christians were bound by the Mosaic Law. Usually, the Judaizers honed in on circumcision: Gentiles must be circumcised, they said, in order to truly be saved (see Paul’s refutation of this teaching in **Gal. 5:1-6**). Titus knew this teaching well, for the subject had come up in Syrian Antioch, leading to the Jerusalem Council, of which he had been a part.

Titus was a faithful servant of the Lord and a dedicated aide to Paul. He must have been trustworthy and dependable, since Paul appointed him to lead works in Corinth, Crete, and Dalmatia. Indeed, Paul calls him “my partner and fellow worker” (**2 Cor. 8:23**). Knowing the difficult situations in both Corinth and Crete, we can infer that Titus was an insightful man who could handle problems with grace. Scripture says that Titus had a God-given love for the Corinthian believers; in fact, in returning to Corinth, Titus went “with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative” (**2 Cor. 8:16-17**).

May we have the same zeal for the Lord that Titus showed. Every believer would do well to model Titus’s commitment to truth, fervor in spreading the gospel, and enthusiastic love for the church.

## **How was the church on the island of Crete? Did Titus adhere to what Paul commanded him to do?**

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- Early church historian, Eusebius, records that the church on Crete flourished and Christianity spread throughout the whole region.
  - One of the main reasons this was able to happen was because of Titus’s ability to put the right people in the right places. He would have been looking for men whom Paul would have approved of.

- By the 8th century there were 12 districts covering the island of Crete and more than 70 churches were flourishing.
- It continued to steadily grow until the Muslims came conquering in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.
  - It is fairly safe to conclude that Titus did exactly what Paul had commanded and placed faithful men in positions of eldership and deaconship over the church. The longevity of the church speaks to the faithfulness of Titus. Furthermore, there is traditional church history that Titus was named the Bishop over the Crete and died there at the age of 94.
    - Titus had a real administrative gift, but also a deep love for the people.
- **Date:** Paul wrote this letter to Titus around 66 AD
- **Purpose:** Paul exhorted and instructed Titus to stop false teachers in the Churches on the island.
  - Paul and Titus had gone to the island of Crete and preached the gospel. Apparently, many people were saved, and perhaps some from Pentecost as well. They needed to have their churches organized and established. This is the main purpose of this letter.
- **Outline:** This letter is not much different than Paul's other letter with regards to a fairly simple outline. This is how chapter 1 flows.
  - The Prologue (1:1-16)
    - The Salutation (1:1-4)
    - Paul's Charge to Titus: Appoint Elders Who Will Exhort in Sound Doctrine and Refute Those Who Contradict Sound Doctrine (1:5-16)

## LET'S START BY LOOKING AT THE FIRST 5 VERSES

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1. In **verse 1**, Paul simply identifies himself as a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ.
  - a. Do not just read over this important point. Paul knows his position before God (a servant) and he knows his calling from Christ (an apostle).
  - b. Furthermore, he knows why he has been commissioned to do the work that he is doing. He says *for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth.*
    - i. As one pastor writes, "A slave was owned by another person to whom obedience was required. If slavery meant obligation, apostleship meant authority, but both meant responsibility."

- ii. This must be our hearts as pastors. Know to whom you are obedient to and where you get your authority from. You will be tempted to give in to the pressures of the culture, of money, of power or a host of other ungodly temptations. When our source is God, you can sleep calmly at night knowing that you have done all that is required of you.
  - c. Do not think of *elect* here as the Doctrine of Predestination but rather as to the audience to whom Paul is writing, they are God's own people.
    - i. That is going to the foundation for what the letter is all about. As they are God's own people, they need to believe and live in a manner consistent with that fact.
    - ii. He not only is a servant and an apostle for the faith of the elect, but also for *their knowledge of the truth*. This is also fundamental to the church as Crete as they are fighting off false teachers.
    - iii. Paul knows that the best way to combat false teachers is simply by the truth.
    - iv. Furthermore, not only the truth, but with *godliness*.
      - 1. This word literally means *to have a devout practice and appropriate beliefs about God*. In other words, how we live is going to show what we believe.
      - 2. This is not only important for the pastor but for the congregation. You cannot teach one thing and then live another lifestyle.
2. Paul continues on in **verse 2** and once again talks about this hope that he has in eternal life. His faith and knowledge rest on this hope.
- a. This is not something that Paul has made up but comes from God...*who cannot lie*.
  - b. This is something for us to be reminded of on a daily basis...the world will fail us, our friends will fail us, our families will fail us...but God will never fail us. What He says He will do.
  - c. The eternal life which is found in the pages of your Scriptures which are inspired by God Himself are full of only truth because God cannot lie.
3. In **verse 3** Paul gives a sort of timeline. God manifested in His word the way to come to Him. This is God's special revelation and what we are entrusted to preach week in and week out.
- a. This is what Paul knew was the normal means of fulfilling his ministry. He was to preach the word. Preaching the word is not just for bringing the saving message, but it is also for the building up of the saints.
  - b. God's word is for equipping the church, exhorting and rebuking the body.
  - c. This is not a passive task that we as pastors have to do. We are called to preach, to proclaim the word boldly with our confidence placed firmly in God, who never lies.

4. **Verse 4** Paul gives Titus the direct charge and command and reminds him of who he is and seemingly sends him on his way to do what he needs to do.
  - a. He was sent on a mission from Paul but being supernaturally empowered to do so.
5. **Verse 5**, Paul gives Titus his mission statement. He left him on Crete to *put what remained into order and appoint elders*.
  - a. Paul and Titus had been on the island together and Paul know the state of the churches which were there. Remember that some of the islands inhabitants were there on the day of Pentecost and no doubt brought that back with them and shared the gospel.
  - b. It is safe to say they were not very well organized, and Paul knew what had to happen.
  - c. Timothy was to travel the 156 mile (251 km) and make sure the towns that had churches were also under proper leadership.

## VERSES 6-9

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In **verses 6-9**, Paul lays out pretty much the same list that he has in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. I am not going to go over the same ones again, but I do want to point out a few things from this list to Titus. We should note the importance that Paul places on character over ability in writing to both Timothy and Titus. God is not looking for worldly gifted men who are full of controversy but men who desire to live faithful and holy lives.

1. **Verse 6b** has caused a bit of controversy over the years in some churches.
  - a. Paul says about the elder *and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination*.
  - b. Some take this passage to mean that in order to be an elder, your children must be born again. You cannot pastor a church if you have kids that are unsaved.
  - c. The problem is found in the word *believers*. The Greek word (pisto;s) can be translated believer or faithful. Meaning that an elder's kids must either be born again, as the ESV seems to state, or they must be faithful.
  - d. What does faithful look like...Paul says in the rest of the verse...no one can charge them with debauchery or insubordination.
  - e. Debauchery means to live recklessly and wildly. It means having no control and just live like life is coming to an end. Spend what you want, eat and drink until your flesh is satisfied.
  - f. Insubordination means not to be controlled by or be subjected to. The two words are closely related, and they really mean that if a man does not have his house under control, how can he have God's house under control?

- i. These two words, debauchery and insubordination, connect back to the kids, not to the potential elder. That is why, I believe, we can confidently say that Paul does not have in mind saved kids, but orderly kids who are led and shepherded by their father.
  - g. Practically speaking, if one does hold to the belief that their kids must be saved, then someone cannot become an elder until all their kids have grown and been born again. Furthermore, we have to remember God's sovereign control in salvation.
  - h. This will be something you may need to wrestle with as you pastor/shepherd your church and as you look for men who are qualified.
2. **Verse 7**...we looked at this in our study through 1 Timothy 3:2-3.
- a. I think that it is helpful to know that this was Paul's normal expectation for elders.
  - b. This was not just something for those on Crete nor for those in Ephesus, these qualifications were for any man who desired to have the position of an elder.
    - i. It is also key to point out that men are going to slip in some of these areas. It is not about perfection but what characterizes their life and ministry.
    - ii. It is not a snapshot of a bad day, week, or year. But it is about what does it look like over the course of many years, through many trials, and the Lord working in the heart.
3. Moving onto **verse 8**, Paul says the man must be *holy and disciplined*.
- a. Holy can mean *pure or devout or pious* and speaks to the man's spiritual life. This is a man who is pleasing to God...a virtuous man.
  - b. The elder must be a man who has and holds to a virtuous life and is continually seeking to be pleasing to the Lord.
  - c. To be disciplined carries with it the same idea as what Paul said in 1 Timothy as *self-controlled*.
    - i. The word that Paul uses (ἐγκρατής) is unique to this letter and was used to promote something more than just self-control.
    - ii. It carries with it the idea of one having lordship and power over oneself.
      - 1. It means to master or to curb something that you are doing.
    - iii. Paul could have used the same word (σώφρων) that he did in **1 Timothy 3:2** but choose a stronger word to explain self-control.

1. This carries with it more about the sound mind, desires and impulses.
- iv. I believe this was a calculated decision, not Paul just using a wide range of words. The men on the island of Crete were known for debauchery and loose morals. They were known around the world as people who just lived for their pleasure without caring about anything else.
- v. Instead of Paul loosening up the requirements for eldership, he draws a thick line to make sure Titus knows and understands who to put in those positions.
  1. We should never use the excuse that there are no *real* qualified men to fill these roles, so we put men who are *good enough* there. Then we hope that they will grow into men of good character.
  2. That is not what Paul says, what Titus did or what God expects. God's standards are always to be met, regardless of what we think or feel.
4. **We are going to camp out in verse 9 for a few minutes.** Because of where Titus was and who Titus was going up against (we will see more of the *who* in verses 10-16), Paul gives a strong exhortation to Titus about what the elder is to do.
  - a. Firstly, he *must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught...*
    - i. Paul wants men who are devoted to and clinging to the word of God. The elder must be doctrinally sound and look to the Word only for how to live this life.
    - ii. They must be known as men who study the Word, believe it and then live it out.
    - iii. Paul is calling them to live a life which shows their belief in the absolute authority and sufficiency of the Word of God.
    - iv. Your graduation from seminary or being someone who people like is not a qualification for pastoral ministry. **You must have a firm and unwavering trust in the Scriptures.**
      1. There is no other way man can grow. You as the pastor will grow though diligent study of the Word and then in turn your congregation grows because you are feeding them the same diet of the Word that you are taking in.
      2. We need men who can look at the face of culture and be able to show them how the Word only offers them the way to a fruitful life.

**b. Why must the elder have this foundational belief and practice in God's Word?**

c. Here is your purpose statement...*so that* he may:

i. Be able to give instruction in sound doctrine...

1. It is from the Scriptures that the pastor must be able to instruct his people. Because he is a man rooted in the Bible, he is able to handle the word properly and carefully.
2. You should encourage your people by means of the Bible. This is not a superficial idea that comes and goes with the various thoughts of the culture.
3. There is no other way to strengthen the flock of God than with the means which God has not only provided but also inspired. God's people need God's food.
4. This is one of the reasons why we teach through the Bible as we do. We do not need to rely on witty sayings or come up with clever themes.
5. We do not need to rely on man's wisdom from psychology or anything else which detracts from the Word of God.
6. The Godly preacher knows where the true power is found.

ii. Rebuke those who contradict it...

1. Not only should the elder be able to comfort the flock, he needs to be able to rebuke people as well.
2. I believe that Paul has those in the church in mind as he is talking to Titus. As the pastor is to teach sound doctrine, he is also called to speak against falsehood.
3. In the context of Paul's words here, he has people in mind when he says *rebuke those who contradict*.
  - a. We must not only warn of their teachings, but in some cases, we must also warn the congregation of the people.
4. This is no easy task in our day and age. False teachers are everywhere, and they are gathering for themselves hordes and hordes of followers. They speak in such a way that is eloquent and really seems nice.



5. We need to be warning our people, not by our opinion or our feelings but by the word of God.
6. In many churches today the Bible has been set aside in favor of using man's so-called wisdom. Many believe that because the Bible is so old there is no way it can be relevant to our age.
7. They are looking to self-help and man's designed programs to feel better. These are the things that we must fight against by showing the absolute sufficiency and authority of the Word of God...but it starts with you and your belief.

iii. Do not let error into your church because you are afraid to confront it. You must, by the Word of God, be able to stand against falsehood to keep the church pure.

5. Ending the chapter in **verses 10-16**, Paul gives a description of the false teachers and their false doctrines which Titus must be able to stand against. Paul also points out what the life of these false teachers looks like. It is only right that since Paul said the elders must be able to defend that now he says what they are defending against.
  - a. He starts by simply saying *there are many...*
    - i. Much like in our day, there are many men who oppose the truth of God. I also think Paul is pointing this out so that Titus knows that he needs to be watchful of who he appoints as elders in the churches. If there are many who are false teachers, he needs to be that much more careful in selecting men who will rightly handle the word of God.
      1. It is safe to say that Titus did this knowing how long the church stood there at Crete.
  - b. Our churches are always most susceptible to dangers from within than that which come from outside her walls. The people who are accepted into the church body can do far more harm than those who are just outside talking.
  - c. What was Titus supposed to look out for in the church?
    - i. Paul says in **verse 10**, those who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers...especially those of the circumcision party.
      1. False teachers always will go against the sound teaching of Scripture. They will rebel against those who teach the Word with confidence. They will not submit themselves to the Word but kick against it, fighting for their own way.

2. They will also be men who seem to have a lot to say but there really is no substance to it. They may be eloquent and refined, but they lack any depth to what they are saying. They speak in vain.
3. The reason why they are rebellious and speak with no content is because their chief end is to deceive the people. This is the ultimate end of all false teachers, not to glorify God, not to edify the people, but to deceive them and take advantage of them.
4. Not only all of those people, but Paul says *especially those of the circumcision party*. This would be speaking to those Jews who were in the church and insisting that Christians still needed to adhere to some sort of external practice for their righteousness.
  - a. Namely, circumcision. But, this is not limited to that one practice. Judaizers would attempt to lay the law down and add to the gospel of grace.
  - b. Just as in our day and age, people will say that one must do something either with the gospel or added to the gospel, in order to be saved.
6. **Verse 11**, Paul is clear as to what Titus must do...he must stop them. These false teachers are upsetting families in the church by causing confusion and speaking against what the church is teaching.
  - a. Here is their motive...it is *for shameful gain*. They were not honest in what they were saying so they could gain something from the people.
    - i. Shameful gain speaks primarily with regards to money. They were out peddling their false teachings so they could make lots of money.
    - ii. This is nothing new. This happens all over the world. False teachers tell the people what they want to hear, give them an experience and then fleece them for money. What we see today is simply a continuation of what has been happening for centuries.
    - iii. We are still called to fight against it and stand for truth.
      1. Most importantly because they are attacking God's flock and as the shepherd of that flock, you are called to protect it. If you allow false teachings to run throughout your church or in your leadership, you are going against the Word of God and neglecting your duty from God.

7. **Verse 12**, Paul quotes one of their own prophets (poet Epimenides) who also knows these things to be true about the Cretan people.
  - a. This would not be an easy group to look for qualified elders in, but Titus had his command and knew what the Lord expected.
8. **Verse 13**, Paul agrees with the poet and gives Titus a sense of urgency.
  - a. Therefore, this connects back to what Paul just said about the false teachers in Crete. Because of what they are doing to the body of Christ and the threat to the church, *rebuke them sharply!*
    - i. Sharply means *harshly* or *severely*.
    - ii. Titus was to go to them and give them sound doctrine and allow the Word of God to cut to their heart.
  - b. Besides protecting the flock, why would Titus go and do this? Paul says *that they may be sound in the faith*.
    - i. Here is the real heart of the pastor...protect the flock and pray for fruit. Paul was not looking to keep these men out of the church, but hoping they would come to repentance and be brought into the church.
    - ii. Though Titus was to use extreme measures to rebuke the false teachers, it was under the hope they would become part of the body.
9. In **verse 14**, Paul specifies why they cannot have fellowship with these false teachers and what to look out for. They were teaching Jewish myths and holding up the commands of people.
  - a. These were men who were turning away from the truth.
  - b. Take note of this passage, these men knew the truth and choose to turn away from it. They most likely had some of that truth in their message, which is why it was so enticing. Be on the lookout for those who have some truth, and some falsehood mixed.
10. Finally, in **verses 15-16**, Paul gives two more declarations regarding those false teachers.
  - a. Paul places the responsibility on these false teachers. What he is saying is that they look back at their lineage, they try to keep the law perfectly and seek to hold onto traditions. Even though they do these things, they are still impure.
    - i. If they were pure, meaning if they had faith in Christ and followed the Scriptures, they would not need legalistic regulations and practices.
    - ii. They thought that it was what went in them that made them pure or impure, but that is never the case.

- b. He then calls out their lifestyle.
  - i. They were self-righteous teachers who thought they had it all together. They were full of pride and arrogance. They were trusting in their own works to get them in good standing with the Lord.
  - ii. They looked really good on the outside. Said the right things and did the right things.
  - iii. Meanwhile, their own works betrayed them. They were still living according the world and not for the Lord. They disqualified themselves and sought to do the same to others.