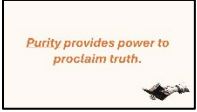




Pure Power (Titus 1:5-16)

The Letter to Titus #2 • October 5, 2025



Purity provides power to proclaim truth.

That's where we're going today. Write it down. Imprint it on your brain. That's what today's passage in Titus is going to show.

*** We'll be in Titus 1:5-16, if you want to turn there in your Bible*

We're in week two of a four-week look at the New Testament's **Letter to Titus**. It is a "pastoral" letter, written by the apostle Paul to his coworker, Titus. As a shepherd over the flock (the church), Paul knows he needs *others* to shepherd with him. So, as he writes to Titus, Paul is "shepherding a shepherd," helping him to know how to care for believers in Christ around him.



That matters to us, because like we discussed last week, I need YOU to be more than a sheep; I need you to be pastoral. I need you to be a **shepherd**. I need YOU to take ownership of the part of the flock closest to you, and to welcome in new sheep and care for them, actively shepherding those around you.

And if you are going to own that responsibility, today's passage will give you some important guidance and instruction.

Purity provides power to proclaim truth.

Prayer

Let's pray before we start... [PRAY]

Scripture Reading



"I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you. An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. A church leader is a manager of God's household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not

be a heavy drinker, violent, or dishonest with money. Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong. For there are many rebellious people who engage in useless talk and deceive others. This is especially true of those who insist on circumcision for salvation. They must be silenced, because they are turning whole families away from the truth by their false teaching. And they do it only for money. Even one of their own men, a prophet from Crete, has said about them, "The people of Crete are all liars, cruel animals, and lazy gluttons." This is true. So reprimand them sternly to make them strong in the faith. They must stop listening to Jewish myths and the commands of people who have turned away from the truth. Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are corrupted. Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are detestable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good." (Titus 1:5–16, NLT)



The Importance of Purity

One of the most impactful books I read while attending Bible college was a book called *Too Busy Not to Pray*. It was assigned by one of my professors, and I vividly remember trying to fit this required reading in between classes, waiting for the bell to ring.



My schedule was busy. I was taking about 20 hours of classes (a pretty heavy load), so time for homework was at a premium. I would slip the book out of my backpack and hope to skim through 10-15 pages before the next lecture started.

But then I would see the title: *Too Busy Not to Pray*. And I had to stop...and pray. It made me so mad! I just wanted to do my homework, but this title made me go to God and talk to Him...over and over and over again.

When I did finally finish the book, it was filled with practical tips and insights. It was a fantastic resource on prayer that was accessible – not overly theological

or academic, just straightforward and insightful. I would love to recommend this book to anyone who needs some help bolstering their prayer life!

But there's one problem: the author. *Too Busy Not to Pray* was written by megachurch pastor Bill Hybels, from Willow Creek Community Church in the Chicago area. Bill had done some great things for the church over the years, expanding its impact and outreach, and he delivered lots of great truth through his sermons, books, videos, and conferences.

But in 2018-2019, reports surfaced about Hybels' actions with women. Accusations of impropriety were made and later corroborated. Hybels resigned, as did board members who failed to correct the issue sooner. Hybels' actions were wrong. Reprehensible. A black eye for the Kingdom of God.

But *Too Busy Not to Pray*? It was and it is still valuable. I wouldn't endorse the author's *conduct*, but I can still praise his written *creation*...just like I would when I read Psalm 23, composed by a known adulterer and murder, King David!

God's truth doesn't become a lie just because the person who states it is flawed. To the extent that flawed and sinful humans proclaim truth, we can still listen to it and celebrate it! That has been the case since the church existed!



"It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News. Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice."
(Philippians 1:15-18, NLT)

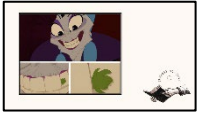
So, I can still read David's words in Psalms despite his major sins. I can still listen to music from Christian artists despite a singer's recent confessions of bad behavior. I can still sing songs written by disgraced songwriters. I can still learn from fallen figures.



"Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure", Paul tells **Titus in 1:15**. In other words, if we are seeking God's truth, we can find it regardless of the human source.

But... **purity provides power to proclaim truth.**

It is so much harder for people to hear truth when sin is in the way!



Have you ever been in a conversation where the other person has something stuck in their teeth? They can be saying amazing things. Important things. Profound things. Things that you desperately want or need to listen to. And the whole time you're just thinking, "What is that?! Broccoli? Should I say something? Should I make a subtle gesture? Should I just ignore it?" But you can't ignore it. It's staring right in your face!

And you can barely hear the words that are being spoken.

It's the same with sin. Impurities scream above the message. Our purity is essential, especially for a shepherd!



Church, if you are going to be shepherding others in the flock, I want you to do so unhindered. I don't want your example or leadership or truth to be penalized or ignored because sin got in the way!

Your purity matters! So, what should it look like?



Appoint This Type of Shepherd (Titus 1:6-9)

In this letter, Paul and Titus were working to raise up effective shepherds for the church. They had been together on the island of Crete (south of Greece in the Eastern Mediterranean) working on this task. Paul had to leave the island and his coworker behind (for unknown reasons), but he still viewed the appointing of elders as an essential task to complete.

"I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you." (Titus 1:5, NLT)

And the type of shepherds/elders/pastors/overseers (the terms overlap) that they were appointing *mattered*.

Listen to this passage again. Don't think, "*I'm not an elder, so this doesn't matter.*" It absolutely does! YOU are going to be shepherding others in your circle of influence. And the church (you included) must develop people who fit these qualities so that (later on) we can elevate and appoint well-qualified elders for the entire body of believers here.



This absolutely matters for both men and women!



“An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don’t have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. A church leader is a manager of God’s household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or dishonest with money. Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.” (Titus 1:6–9, NLT)

This passage is one of several in the New Testament that we read in order to know what kind of leaders we need in the church. Other passages are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-3. Together, they say: *appoint this type of shepherd.*



We need shepherds who are:

- **Known for righteousness.** They do the right things and make the right choices to honor Jesus
- **Devoted to their family’s faith.** Not only do are they devoted generally to their spouses and kids, but they lead their family to follow Jesus more closely.
- **Cautious of evil.** They avoid influences and attitudes that lead to sinful expressions.
- **Lovers of good.** They embrace truth as well as people.
- **Doers of good.** They live out their values, making them more than just a belief
- **Conformers of truth.** They stay true to the real gospel message of Jesus.

That’s what we should expect to find in the people we appoint as shepherds.

Back when I was in college, I helped at a small country church that had no one serving in the role of “elder.” They were convinced that no one in their church lived up to the qualifications listed in the New Testament, so they just never chose any.

How sad! I DO NOT want our church to be like that. Each of you can and should be able to fit this description – not of yourself, but as you allow the Spirit to lead you.

This is not legalism – Paul doesn’t say that one misstep is a disqualification. He’s just saying, “This is the kind of person we want!” None of us will fit the bill if we’re talking about perfection. But as a general description of character, that’s what we need.



Church, if you are going to be shepherding others in the flock, I want you to strive for that kind of purity. Be that kind of person! Remember your identity in Christ. Remember your salvation in Him. Remember that you have the indwelling Holy Spirit to enable and empower your life to demonstrate what Paul declares.

It is not a list for “someone else.” It is a list for YOU, made possible as God conforms you to His will.

As you do so, your **purity** will **provide** you with the **power to proclaim truth** as a shepherd.

If we have these qualities in place, Paul says, “*then we will be able*” to proclaim truth. The word he uses is the same word behind the word *dynamite* – it speaks of power and strength. Those qualities give us *power* to share the good and spiritually healthy message of Christ...and to rebuke those who try to steer others wrong.



Silence That Type of Shepherd (Titus 1:10-16)

As a shepherd, one of your biggest tasks will be to speak truth...and to correct the lies we hear all around us. Paul continues in verse 10.

“For there are many rebellious people who engage in useless talk and deceive others...” (Titus 1:10, NLT)

We face a culture that doesn’t understand or abide by the words of Jesus. The voices of His opponents are loud and prominent...and sometimes applauded.



Recently, at the funeral service for Charlie Kirk, the Christian conservative figure who was recently assassinated, we saw a glaring example:



Erika Kirk, Charlie's widow, spoke about the shooter who killed her husband.

"That man, that young man, I forgive him," she said, sobbing. "I forgive him because it was what Christ did and is what Charlie would do. The answer to hate is not hate," she added. "The answer we know from the gospel is love and always love — love for our enemies and love for those who persecute us."

Yet just a few minutes later, the President, Donald Trump, challenged that message.

*"He was a missionary with a noble spirit and a great, great purpose," Trump said of Charlie Kirk. "He did not hate his opponents. He wanted the best for them. That's where I disagreed with Charlie. I hate my opponent, and I don't want the best for them. I'm sorry. I am sorry, Erika. But now Erika can talk to me, and the whole group, and maybe they can convince me that that's not right. But I can't stand my opponent."*¹

People laughed it off, but that offhand comment illustrates what we face. We face a culture that is often opposed to Jesus' truth. We constantly hear from people who offer an alternative to Him and His ways.



"But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves."

(2 Peter 2:1, NLT)

And in the letter to Titus, Paul says if those voices try to influence our flock, we need to correct and silence such shepherds!

For Titus and his task on Crete, Paul reminded him that false teachers (especially of a kind called the Judaizers – people who wanted Christians to be

¹ [✚ Forgiving Kirk's Killer: Grieving Widow, Trump Offer Differing Theologies](#)

obligated to follow the Jewish law, earning their salvation) were peddling messages that were opposed to Jesus and truth.



Paul called them out...strongly! He was harsh in his challenges to those lies! He rebuked these false shepherds, saying they were:

- **Rebellious/Disobedient.** Going against God.
- **Empty talkers/Worthless.** Saying things that carry no weight or substance
- **Deceivers/Telling myths.** Trying to steer others away from truth.
- **Detestable/Cretans.** In v. 12 he uses the stereotypical view of this island's population – “always liars, evil beasts, gluttons.” The culture even had a verb, “to Cretan-ize,” aka “to double-deal, to lie.”

Was Paul just having an off day, being exceptionally harsh? No, this is how he regularly writes about false teachers. He insults their positions! He vehemently opposes their words! He wants their message silenced!



Church, if you are going to be shepherding others in the flock, take a cue from Paul. Don't be too soft when it comes to false shepherds. You need to hate falsehood more than you do right now! You need to have a holy disregard for the sinful messages on the lips of those around us.

This isn't a call to rudeness or violence. Don't be a jerk – use tact, wisdom, humor, and cunning, and do so with love for the person you are rebuking.



“Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.” (Colossians 4:5–6, NLT)

But don't be silent. Speak up when you hear messages that don't align with Jesus. Say the uncomfortable, unpopular thing in love. Silence them with obvious Jesus-truths, with a clear statement of His power and His mission!

Just like Paul:



“So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ.” (Colossians 1:28, NLT)

Your **purity** will **provide power to proclaim truth** to corrupted messengers and maybe...just maybe...earn you the right to be heard.

Conclusion

Paul's letter to Titus helps us see what shepherding looks like. The bar is high! But it is attainable.

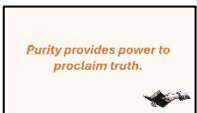


I expect shepherds in our church (YOU!) to meet Paul's standards. I want all of us to look at our lives and take note of anything that sticks out as a blemish...and then let the Holy Spirit sand it down, polish it, and make it shine. I want to see purity in our church! Not for my own sake but for the sake of those I lead!

Make sure you are pure, matching the qualities Titus was instilling in his shepherds. Make an honest assessment of your present character, especially if you are a leader, elder, deacon, or teacher.

*Then, take the steps to **proclaim truth**. Don't accept falsehood and error. Boldly reprimand anything that would corrupt your sheep. Not because YOU say so, but because it is the truth.*

People will better listen to Jesus without the noise of rebellion in their ears. They will have an easier time hearing about Jesus if your lifestyle aligns to what you preach. In no way should the gospel message be, "Do as I say and not as I do." Rather, it should be, "Follow me!"



Allow purity to provide the power to proclaim truth.

Prayer

Invitation

Let's stand and sing our invitation hymn together as we consider God's word and what it means for our lives...



Sermon Notes

Purity provides power to proclaim truth.

Scripture Reading: Titus 1:5-16

The Importance of Purity

(Philippians 1:15-18; Titus 1:15)

Appoint This Type of Shepherd (Titus 1:6-9)

(Titus 1:5, 6-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-3)

Silence That Type of Shepherd (Titus 1:10-16)

(Titus 1:10; 2 Peter 2:1; Colossians 4:5-6; Colossians 1:28)

Sermon Discussion Questions

- What does purity mean to you? What are some actions that create impurity? What are some actions that build purity in you?
- What is the Holy Spirit's role in creating and maintaining a leader's purity? Can we be pure on our own?
- What dangers arise in a church if leaders lack purity in their life? What dangers arise if *you* lack purity in your life?
- According to Titus 1:6–9, what qualities were required for elders/shepherds?
- Why do you think Paul emphasizes both character (purity) and doctrine (truth) for shepherds?
- Why do you think Paul was so harsh in his words toward false teachers (vv. 10–16)?
- If purity provides power to proclaim truth, what areas of your own life might be “blocking” people from hearing your testimony?
- How can you respond when you encounter teaching, media, or cultural voices that oppose Jesus' truth? What should correction of error look or sound like?