

How To Have A Healthy Church

Titus 2:1-15

Titus was written by Paul, sometime between AD 63 and 65.

Titus was a gospel minister who had previously been of great help to Paul in the missionary enterprise.

Though explicitly written to Titus, the letter was intended to be read before several house churches throughout the major cities of Crete.

The Cretan church was young, and the members were inexperienced. Most were Gentiles, though there were Jewish communities on the island.

Paul is now in the closing years of his ministry. He tells Titus the kind of people he should appoint as church leaders for the future.

They must have mature faith and good character.

He also advises Titus on how to teach the various groups of people in the church—the old and the young, both men and women, and those who are enslaved.

Finally, Paul reminds Titus that Christians should be good members of society—self-controlled, forgiving, and reluctant to quarrel.

What Does The Bible Say?

Mentoring

As for you, Titus, promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching. 2 Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound faith and be filled with love and patience. (Titus 2:1–2 NLT)

The older men are to be: self-controlled, worthy of respect, and live wisely.

Spiritual health is more important than physical health.

Their love and patience should be an example to all.

3 Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good. 4 These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, 5 to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God. (Titus 2:3–5 NLT)

The older Women are to be: Reverent, Not to be slanderers, Teach what is good, Love their husbands and children, and be self-controlled and pure.

Two essential purposes compel Christians to exhibit self-control is to guard purity in their life.

First, a person's claim to be "Christian" comes from an intimate relationship with God.

Second, the church's mission is to extend God's rule and grace throughout the earth.

6 In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely.

7 And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. 8 Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us. (Titus 2:6–8 NLT).

Paul turns his attention to Titus, be an example in what you teach.

How Can We Obey

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

(Titus 2:9–10 NLT)

Their first responsibility was obedience.

In our culture, because we do not have enslaved people, we look at any Scriptures towards enslaved people as commands for the workplace.

11 For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. (Titus 2:11 NLT)

God's grace has been revealed.

12 And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, 13 while we look forward

with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. (Titus 2:12-13 NLT)

God's grace reforms us.

14 He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds. 15 You must teach these things and encourage the believers to do them. You have the authority to correct them when necessary, so don't let anyone disregard what you say. (Titus 2:14-15 NLT)

God's grace rewards us.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves

has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

- 1. How We Live Should Be Consistent With What We Believe (Titus 2:1-10)**
- 2. Our Efforts Should Be Consistent With God's Purposes (Titus 2:11-15)**

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: Paul wrote Titus around AD 65 during the time between his first and second imprisonments.

Explore:

Paul's letter to Titus, a Gentile convert (Galatians 2:3), is a great example of this week's theme of passing on the faith. The apostle had visited Crete with Titus and left him there to oversee the fledgling church (Titus 1:5). Crete was a difficult place to minister due to the nature and reputation of its inhabitants. Paul had spent time training Titus for such a task. This letter is evidence of Paul's ongoing support for his younger brother in Christ. It also reveals that the task given to Titus would mirror Paul's own ministry: reproofing behavior among believers, rebuking false teaching, and encouraging godliness as a way of life. Paul was passing on what he had received and learned to Titus, and was instructing Titus to pass it along to others who would then pass it on again. This model is as relevant and effective today as it was in Paul's day. A key to the effectiveness of this model is consistency, specifically between lifestyle and

doctrine. Today we will explore this consistency in Titus and its role in our efforts to pass on the faith.

How We Live Should Be Consistent With What We Believe

(Titus 2:1-10)

In the opening verse of chapter 2, Paul told Titus to teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. He then described the behaviors and attitudes that are in accord with sound doctrine. From the outset Paul had established that beliefs and lifestyle should not be separated. With the first verse of the letter (1:1) he declared that knowledge of the truth accords with godliness. He did not say that knowledge is the same as godliness, but that these things ought to be in accord with one another. To be godly, one must know the truth about who God is and what He has communicated to us. To know truth should then lead us to live in harmony with that truth.

To be clear, the doctrine certainly mattered. In verses 10-16 of chapter 1, Paul detailed the false teaching that had been present among them. He included the need for the lives of the Cretan believers to change from what was common in their culture to that which accords with godliness.

Paul left Titus in Crete to bring order to the church by selecting and overseeing elders who could address the doctrinal problems that were present there. Of paramount importance in this process was the character and behavior of those chosen as elders (1:5-9a). Significant corrections were needed among the Cretans to combat the efforts of false teachers and help the Cretans become sound in the faith (1:13), but this could not happen if the lives of the elders were not in accord with the true doctrine they were to teach (1:9). Titus needed to select elders who could help him demonstrate this to the Cretans as they worked together to pass along the true doctrine of the gospel as a correction to false teachings (1:10-16).

The need for consistency as a part of effective influence towards godliness is of primary emphasis in the first ten verses of chapter

2. Titus was to teach the believers the qualities and conduct that lined up with true doctrine and equip the elders to do so as well.

Maturity was expected from the older men. They were to think clearly, rather than being impulsive or clouded by emotion, and to take the important things of life seriously (2:2). They were to conduct themselves with dignity, living in a manner worthy of respect, exercising self-control in an effort to be mindful of those around them (2:2). They should know what they believe, care genuinely for others, and be dependable in their daily lives (2:2).

The qualities to be demonstrated by the older women were similar. They, too, were to be reverent, not flippant about the serious things of life (2:3). (Paul was not saying that we must always take ourselves seriously, but that we should take things worthy of reverence seriously. That will demonstrate their value

to us.) They should be mindful of their words, always ensuring that what they said was true (not slander, 2:3). Like the instruction for the older men to be sober-minded, the older women were not to be controlled by wine (2:3), but rather be in control of their thoughts, words, and behavior, using all those things to teach others what is good (2:3-4). They were to actively seek to influence the younger women and help them know how to fulfill their roles well.

All these efforts and attitudes are, according to Paul, necessary so that the Word of God may not be reviled or dishonored (2:5). Their lives were to be a testimony of the truth of the gospel among the Cretans. If their lives aligned with the precepts of the gospel, it would bolster their efforts to pass along their faith. If their lives did not, their hypocrisy would create disdain for the Word of God.

This need for a consistent testimony extended to all ages and walks of life. The younger men were to exercise self-control, not using their youth as an excuse to indulge in foolish or selfish practices (2:6). They were to stand out from their peers because of the influence of the Word upon their lives. Titus was to be mindful of his example, his teachings, and the manner in which he conducted his oversight so as to give no reason for his efforts to be disregarded (2:7). He needed to demonstrate with his conduct that what he was telling them was true and worth listening to. Titus was to be a man of integrity, dignity, and sound speech, consistent in all his efforts and relationships with godliness (2:7-8). He was to model for the Cretans how to take away any roadblocks to the gospel created by hypocrisy (2:8). Those who were slaves were charged with this as well (2:9). A humble attitude, good work ethic, agreeableness, and honesty (not pilfering) were all to be hallmarks of a believing bondservant (2:9-10). The reputation of the Cretans as lazy liars

(1:12) might have been expected among those on the low end of the societal spectrum, but the gospel calls all believers to become sacrificial servants. Paul wanted all the believers to understand that each of them were to serve for the glory of God, where even the bond- servants did everything in a manner that adorned (reflected well upon) the doctrine of God our Savior.

Sound doctrine is about more than sound beliefs. Sound doctrine is about a sound life, one that is consistent with the character of God as revealed by His Word. If we do nothing more than teach others facts about doctrine and theology without demonstrating and teaching how those things affect the way we are to think, talk, and live, we have failed to properly pass on a living faith. Titus was charged with teaching the Cretan believers to live in a manner consistent with the message of the gospel so that the gospel could spread through them. This meant modeling consistency between true doctrine and daily life. All this holds true for us today. Just like the Cretans, when our lives are

consistent with sound doctrine, it will strengthen our effectiveness in passing on our faith.

Explore:

- The Cretans had a really bad reputation, as evidenced by Paul's agreement with the assertion by one of their own prophets that Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons (1:12-13). In fact, the Greeks created the term "to Cretize" as a synonym for lying. Paul wanted the followers of Christ to have a reputation that reflected Christ, not their culture.

Explore:

Our Efforts Should Be Consistent With God's Purposes

(Titus 2:11-15)

Older men and older women. Younger women and younger men.

Leaders and bondservants. Each of these groups is addressed

similarly in Titus 2:1-10. The gospel was the same for all of them and should have an impact on how they lived. Paul then reminded them in verse 11 that it was by grace that the message had been brought to them and to all people. He also explained that the gospel calls for transformational change in our priorities. We should go from worldly passions and ungodly pursuits to godly priorities and conduct (verse 12). These truths were presented for all the believers in Crete, regardless of age, gender, position, sphere of influence, job, etc.

We should live in such a way to influence all those around us toward salvation. Just as the gospel's transformational power applies to all, so should we seek to pass along our faith to anyone and everyone we can. Every area of our lives should be shaped by the priority of passing on the gospel.

Eagerly awaiting their great hope, the second coming of Christ, would spur believers to conduct themselves in godly ways (verse

13). Their efforts in this world were to be done with the world to come firmly in mind. This would motivate them to change their behavior from self-indulgence (lazy gluttons, 1:12; worldly passions, 2:12) to self-control (2:12), mindful of how their actions would impact their gospel witness. It was also necessary to change their reputation from evil beasts (1:12) to those who were upright (2:12).

Paul further reinforced this concept by reminding them that Jesus sacrificed Himself to redeem them from a life of disorder (lawlessness) to one of new purpose (2:14). This new purpose was two-fold: 1) to purify for Himself a people for His own possession—they were to reflect the eternal purposes of God through a completely changed life; and 2) who are zealous for good works—they were to actively do good for the glory of God. Consistency between God's purposes and their efforts continued to be an emphasis for Paul through the rest of the letter. He

addressed their conduct in the public sphere in general (3:1-2) before reminding them of what they once were and had been saved from (3:3). He then reminded them of how God had saved them not because of their merits, but by His mercy because of His love (3:4-5). This reminder served to highlight the marked difference that was to exist between their lives and their culture because of their salvation. Once again, their salvation gave them a clear purpose: to devote themselves to good works (3:8). Paul then closed the letter by warning them not to get bogged down in the things that would distract from this purpose (3:9), and with an admonition not to allow divisiveness to persist and interfere with this purpose (3:10-11).

Passing on our faith should be a primary focus of our lives, and we shouldn't allow the cares of this world to distract us from this purpose. Our efforts toward godliness should be motivated by what God has done for us and with hope for what He will do for us when His kingdom fully comes. This coming eternal kingdom

and God's desire that everyone be saved ought to shape how we live so we can be as effective as possible in passing on our faith.

Explore:

God's purpose of sharing the gospel with others reminds us that God established the home and the church to make disciples and transfer the faith.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ-followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 4

What happens when Christians fail to live out what we say we believe?

Question 2 of 4

How can we acknowledge our struggles without using a "Do as I say, not as I do" mentality to pass along our faith?

Question 3 of 4

What kinds of conduct can open up opportunities to pass along our faith?

Question 4 of 4

How can we better integrate passing on our faith into our daily activities?

