

Easy-to-Read Version

Language: English

Provided by: Bible League International

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PDF generated on 2017-07-07 from source files dated 2017-07-07.

9417f999-1fb5-525b-a123-d5d84a7f35e1

ISBN: 978-1-5313-1294-7

Titus

Like Timothy, Titus was a co-worker of the apostle Paul among non-Jewish people. Paul had left Titus on the Greek island of Crete to work with churches there. And like Paul's first letter to Timothy, this letter to Titus deals with specific problems that were causing disagreements among the believers.

Paul is concerned about some false teachers who are creating problems for the believers. But Paul does not begin with the problems. He begins with part of the solution. He tells Titus to choose respected leaders. These leaders will be responsible for taking care of God's work. Paul says these "elders" will be able to teach what is true. And they will show how wrong the false teachers are. Paul describes these teachers as Jews who claim to know God. But the way they live and what they teach show that they don't really know God.

Paul tells Titus to teach different groups of people in the church how to live in a way that pleases God. He is especially concerned that all the believers live in a way that honours God. This means that they will teach and act in ways that cannot be criticized. Then people outside the church will respect them and their teaching about God.

Like most Greeks, the people of Crete believed in the gods of ancient Greek legends. But they had their own ideas about these gods. They believed that Zeus was actually a man from Crete! So it would have been easy for the Cretans to misunderstand what Paul told them

about Jesus. They might confuse the story about the man Jesus with what they had already heard about Zeus. So Paul tells Titus to teach these people that God has made known to the world the true man who is God. This man, who is "our great God and Saviour," is Jesus the Christ (God's Chosen King). And because Jesus has made God known, followers of Jesus can live the way God wants (2:13-14).

Near the end of the letter, Paul writes one of his clearest statements of the Good News. It describes God's act of love through Jesus to save us from our sin and make us his children (3:4-7). And then he tells Titus to make sure everyone understands how important these teachings are.

In this letter to Titus, Paul...

Greets Titus (1:1-4)

Describes how a church leader should behave (1:5-9)

Describes the problems in Crete (1:10-16)

Describes how to teach different groups in the church (2:1-10)

Says God's kindness makes us able to live for him (2:11-15)

Gives Titus important truths and warnings to share (3:1-11)

Gives final instructions and greetings (3:12-15)

1 Greetings from Paul, a servant belonging to God and an apostle sent out by Jesus Christ. My work is to help God's chosen people trust him more and understand the true teaching about Jesus. This teaching will lead them to live in a way that honours and pleases God. ²And then they can expect to live with God forever. Before the world began, God promised that life to his people. And God does not lie. ³At the right time, he made that Good News known. God our

Saviour gave that message to me and commanded me to tell everyone what he said.

⁴I write to you, Titus. You are like a true son to me because we both agree on what we believe. I pray that God the Father and Christ Jesus* our Saviour will give you grace and peace.

Titus' Work in Crete

⁵I left you there in Crete to complete what still needs to be done. And I want you to appoint elders to serve as leaders in every town. ⁶Look for someone who is not known for doing wrong. He must be faithful to his wife.[†] And his children must be faithful to God.[‡] They must not be known as children who are wild or refuse to obey. ⁷Every elder[¶] has the duty of taking care of God's work. So he must not be someone who is known for doing wrong. He must not be a stubborn person. He must not have a bad temper. He must not be a person who gets drunk or likes to fight. And he must not be someone who cheats people for money.

⁸An elder must be a person who welcomes people into his home. He must love what is good. He must think carefully about the way he lives and do what is right. He must be a person who lives to please God. And he must be able to control himself. ⁹He must be faithful to the same true message we teach.

Then he will be able to encourage others with teaching that is true and helpful.[§] And he will be able to show those who are against this teaching that they are wrong.

¹⁰That kind of teaching is important because there are many people who refuse to listen to anyone. They talk about their own useless ideas and lead others away from the truth. I am talking mainly about some of the Jewish believers.** ¹¹You must stop these people. They are destroying whole families by teaching things they should not teach. All they want is to trick people into giving them money. ¹²Even one of their own people, a prophet from Crete, said, "The people of Crete are always liars. They are no better than wild animals. They are always ready to eat, but they are never willing to work."

¹³And every word he said is true. So tell such people that they need to change. A firm warning will help them do better in following the true teaching. ¹⁴Then they will stop paying attention to the Jewish stories they are hearing. And they will stop following rules made up by people who have turned away from the truth.

¹⁵To people whose thinking is pure, everything is pure. But nothing can be pure for unbelievers whose sin has made them filthy. Their thinking is all wrong, and their conscience does not work as it should. ¹⁶They say they know God.

***1:4 Christ Jesus** Or "King Jesus". The term "Christ" is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah", a royal title. See Mark 15:32; Luke 23:2. See also Christ and Messiah in the Word List.

†**1:6 faithful to his wife** Literally, "a man of one woman". This could also mean, "married only once".

‡**1:6 faithful to God** This word can also mean "trustworthy" or "believers". Here, both meanings may be included. Compare this verse with 1 Tim. 3:4.

¶**1:7 elder** Here, literally, "overseer". See elders in the Word List.

§**1:9 true and helpful** Literally, "healthy". Also in 2:1.

****1:10 some of the Jewish believers** Literally, "those of the circumcision". See Acts 11:2; Gal. 2:12.

But their evil ways show that they don't really know him. They are disgusting. They refuse to obey him and are useless for doing anything good.

Following the True Teaching

2 But you, Titus, must tell the believers how to live. They should live in a way that agrees with teaching that is true and helpful. ²The older men should keep themselves under control. They should act in a way that is worthy of respect. They should think carefully about the way they live. The way they trust God, love others and never give up will show that they are doing well.^{††}

³Also, teach the older women to live the way people who serve the Lord should live. They should not go around saying bad things about others. They should not be slaves to alcohol. They should be good teachers. ⁴Then they can remind the younger women how they should live. The young women should show love to their husbands and children. ⁵They should think carefully about the way they live. They should keep themselves pure. They should manage their homes well. And they should be willing to serve their husbands. Then other people will not be able to say anything bad about the teaching God gave us.

⁶In the same way, tell the young men to be careful how they live. ⁷You should be an example for them in every way by the good things you do. Your teaching must be true and worthy of respect. ⁸That is, you should teach what is clearly right so that no one can criticize your teaching. Then anyone who is against us will be ashamed because they have nothing bad that they can say about us.

⁹And tell those who are slaves how they should live. They should be willing to serve their masters at all times. They should try to please their masters and not argue with them. ¹⁰Slaves should never steal from their masters but always show that they can be trusted. Then, in everything they do, they will cause people to respect the teaching about God our Saviour.

¹¹So this is the way we should live, because God has shown us his grace that can save everyone. ¹²By showing us his kindness, God teaches us to refuse to live against him and to give up any desires we have to follow the evil ways of the world. His kindness causes us to think carefully about how we live on earth now, to do what is right and to live in a way that honours God. ¹³We should live like this while we are waiting for the wonderful blessing we hope for. That blessing will be to see our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ when he comes with glory. ¹⁴He gave himself for us. He died to free us from all evil and to make us pure. He wanted us to be people who belong only to him and who always want to do good.

¹⁵These are the things you should tell people. Encourage them, and when they are wrong, correct them. You have full authority to do these things. Do not let anyone think they can ignore you.

The Right Way to Live

3 Remind your people that they should be under the authority of their rulers and government leaders. They should obey these leaders and be ready to do whatever good they can. ²Tell them not to say bad things about anyone but to live in peace with all

^{††}2:2 *The way ... doing well* Literally, "being sound in faith, love and endurance".

people. They should be kind and polite to everyone.

³In the past we did not obey God and acted like fools. The things we believed were wrong. We were like slaves to the many things we wanted and enjoyed. We were cruel to people out of jealousy. Everyone hated us and we hated them.

⁴But then God our Saviour made known to us his kindness and love for people.

⁵He saved us because he is merciful, not because of anything we did to earn his approval.

He washed away our sin, giving us a new life through the Holy Spirit.

It was like being born again.

⁶God generously poured out on us that Spirit through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

⁷By his grace God decided to free us from sin and to adopt us as his children.

So now we look forward to receiving what he has for us— life that never ends.

⁸These words are all so true. And I want you to make clear to everyone how important these teachings are. Then those who believe in God will be careful to use their lives for doing good. This kind of life will be pleasing and helpful to everyone.

⁹But stay away from people who argue about stupid ideas and use lists of

ancestors to prove their arguments. Stay away from anyone who causes trouble and argues about what the Law of Moses teaches. Those arguments are useless. They do not help anyone. ¹⁰Warn anyone who causes such arguments. Try to correct them. If they continue to cause trouble after a second warning, then stay away from them. ¹¹If they will not change, you know that something is wrong with their thinking. They continue to sin, and this proves that they are guilty.

Final Instructions and Greetings

¹²I am sending Artemas or Tychicus to you. As soon as one of them arrives, do your best to join me in Nicopolis. I have decided to stay there this winter.

¹³Please do all you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos get ready to leave. Make sure they have everything they need for their journey. ¹⁴By doing this, you will also help our people learn to use their lives for doing good. They will see how to help people when there is a real need. And this is a way for them to have a good influence.

¹⁵Everyone here with me sends you greetings. Give our greetings to the believers there who love us.

I pray that God's grace will be with you all.