



## *Women's R&R Bible Study 2024-2025*

"YOUR WORDS WERE FOUND, AND I ATE THEM, AND YOUR WORD WAS TO ME THE JOY AND REJOICING OF MY HEART."

JEREMIAH 15:16

### **LIVING IN HOPE LESSON 19**

This week we will begin our study of the third "Pastoral Epistle," written by Paul. It's always so exciting to start a new book. We're going to meet a new character, a man named Titus. He is not as well-known as Timothy, but just as important to the ministry of the early church. He was also a "son of the faith" to Paul. There are some similarities between Timothy and Titus, as well as some definite differences. I'm totally excited to learn more about Titus and his role in the church.

This letter has been called "a priceless and unrivalled manual of pastoral advice." Even though this book is considered a "Pastoral Epistle," it is extremely practical for every professing believer. Martin Luther said, "This is a short Epistle, but yet such a quintessence of Christian doctrine, and composed in such a masterly manner, that it contains all that is needful for Christian knowledge and life." It's only three chapters in length, but I pray those chapters make a deep impact on our hearts. Remember to pray before you study each day, asking the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart in each verse. May we be changed as we then apply those truths to our everyday life. Have fun!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you ..." Titus 1:5

Today we will be learning some of the history behind the book of Titus. It will involve some reading, but it's important for us to understand who wrote this book, why it was written, to whom it was written, and other facts. When we understand more of the purpose behind the book, every

chapter makes a lot more sense. So, sit back, get comfortable (but not too comfortable), and have fun reading.

### **Who is Titus?**

1. Read the following verses. What do they say about Titus?

- A. Titus 1:4-5
- B. 2 Corinthians 2:13
- C. 2 Corinthians 7:6-7, 13-15
- D. 2 Corinthians 8:16-17
- E. Galatians 2:3
- F. 2 Timothy 4:10

Titus was one of Paul's most trusted and faithful companions. Although his name is not found in the book of Acts, Paul mentions him 13 times in his Epistles. The name Titus was a common Latin name in that day. His parents were both Greek, and they may have lived in Antioch of Syria (Galatians 1:21, 2:1). It is thought that Titus was most likely converted through Paul's ministry. Here is a brief character sketch of Titus, written by Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa:

"This convert of Paul ('my true son in our common faith') was probably from Syrian Antioch, if he was one of the disciples of Acts 11:26. Paul brought this uncircumcised Greek believer to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:3) where he became a test case on the matter of Gentiles and liberty from the Law. Years later when Paul set out from Antioch on his third missionary journey (Acts 18:22), Titus must have accompanied him because he was sent by the apostle to Corinth on three occasions during that time (see 2 Corinthians 2:12-13, 7:5-7, 8:6, 16-24). He is not mentioned again until Paul leaves him in Crete to carry on the work (Titus 1:5). He was with Paul during his second imprisonment but left to go to Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10), possibly on an evangelistic mission. Paul spoke of this reliable and gifted associate as his 'brother' (2 Corinthians 2:13), his 'partner and fellow worker' (2 Corinthians 8:23), and his 'son' (Titus 1:4). He lauded Titus' character and conduct in 2 Corinthians 7:13-15, 8:16-17. Sometime after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment, he spread the Gospel on the island of Crete and left Titus there to finish the work of organizing the churches."

Titus did not get circumcised, as Timothy did. Charles Swindoll calls him a “living reminder of salvation by faith alone -- and of God’s opening up of His Kingdom not only to the Jews but to every nation, tribe, and tongue.” Unlike Timothy, Titus was not timid or fearful. Not only was Titus capable of handling the problems in Corinth, the island of Crete -- where Paul instructed him to go -- was full of problems and sin. Titus proved himself to be courageous, zealous, and wise. “He knew how to handle the quarrelsome Corinthians, the mendacious Cretans, and the pugnacious Dalmatians.” (Merrill C. Tenney)

### **The Island of Crete**

The Island of Crete was a Roman province, located southeast of Greece. It is 160 miles long and 30 miles wide. Seafaring traffic from around the world stopped at this island. This coastal town was heavily populated and was described by a writer as “neither peaceable among themselves, nor very patient of foreign dominion.” The Cretans had a bad reputation, both morally and socially. It was not an easy place to minister. The Cretans were known for untruthfulness and immorality. A poet named Epimenides, who was a native of Crete, wrote this in the sixth century; “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” Paul quotes this in Titus 1:12. Leonides wrote, “Cretans are always brigands and piratical, and unjust.” The phrase **“to act a Cretan”** came to mean **“to play the liar.”** Do you have a sense of this place where Titus was to begin organizing churches? Not a pretty picture. But Titus stuck it out, zealously ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this place that needed to hear the Truth in a big way.

We don’t know for sure how the church in Crete began. We don’t know if Paul started it, or whether some Jews who were present at Pentecost took the Gospel back to their land (Acts 2:11). Paul didn’t go to Crete on his missionary journeys but visited it briefly after his release from his first Roman imprisonment. This is when he left Titus there to organize the church. Paul wrote this letter about the same time he wrote 1 Timothy, around 62 A.D., perhaps from Corinth. He then wrote 2 Timothy during his second imprisonment.

### **Likenesses between Timothy and Titus:**

Both were young and gifted

Both were co-workers of Paul

Both served in difficult church situations

### Differences between the two:

<b>Timothy</b>	<b>Titus</b>
Half-Jew	Wholly Gentile
Circumcised by Paul	Uncircumcised
Served at Corinth and Ephesus	Served at Corinth and Crete
Nervous and retiring personality	Strong and stern personality
Prominent in Acts	Not mentioned in Acts

2. Read the first chapter of Titus. Notice any repeated words or thoughts? What is the main thought of the chapter?
  
3. What specific problems do you think Titus may have been facing in Crete as he organized the ministry?
  
4. Does the book of 1 Timothy or Titus seem more personal? Which one was centered more on doctrine? On conduct?

Both 1 Timothy and Titus contain encouragement, instruction for church leaders, and how to deal with false teachers. It seemed like Paul emphasized good doctrine in 1 Timothy, whereas in Titus he emphasizes good conduct. (Although he doesn't leave doctrine out entirely.) It is said that the main theme of Titus is "the maintaining of good works as a demonstration of saving faith" (2:11-14, 3:4-7).

5. What are some main points of his greeting?
  - A. What does Paul call himself?
  - B. Who is God's elect? (Ephesians 1:4)
  - C. How is "godliness" acknowledgment of the truth? (In other words, how do the truth and godliness go together?)
  - D. What hope does our faith give us?
  - E. What do we base that hope upon?
  - F. What is something God cannot do?

The preaching of God's Word was committed to Paul, and now he commits it to Titus, just as he had to Timothy. Another baton passed in Paul's spiritual relay race!

6. Why does Paul call their faith "common" in verse 4? Why is that important in light of what Paul says in verses 10-16?
  
7. How does knowing that we trust in a God "who cannot lie" encourage you today?
  
8. What do we know about God's promises?
  - A. 1 Kings 8:56
  - B. Romans 4:20-21
  - C. 2 Corinthians 1:20
  - D. 2 Timothy 1:1
  - E. 2 Peter 1:3-4
  - F. 2 Peter 3:4-10
  - G. James 2:5
  - H. James 1:12

We can stand on God's promises in His Word. That is so comforting and encouraging. As believers, He promises us so much: eternal life, access to the Father, our names written in the Book of Life, joint heirs with Him, the ability to overcome trials, and much more. I am so grateful that we serve a God who cannot lie, who never changes, and who never leaves us. What more can we possibly ask for?

9. Take some time to meditate on the promises of God. Pick one or two and ponder them throughout the day. I pray that God will comfort Your heart with His Words of truth.
  
10. Why did Paul leave Titus in Crete? What was he supposed to do?

It appears that Paul had already given Titus directions on choosing leadership when they were together. He now reinforces that command. Perhaps he tells Titus again to refresh his memory, to confirm his authority in case there was a problem, and for the generations to come.

**The phrase “set in order” is a medical term, which refers to the setting of a broken limb.**

- 11.** Describe how a doctor would set a limb. (Hopefully!) Why do you think Paul chose this word?
- 12.** Remember from our study in 1 Timothy, the words bishop and elder are interchangeable. List the qualifications for elders that Paul mentions. Compare them with the ones given in 1 Timothy chapter 3. Are there any new ones mentioned?

This young church in Crete was in desperate need of some godly leadership. Titus was to appoint, or ordain, men for leadership whose character was in line with the principles of God’s Word. Paul knew that God doesn’t like unfinished business, and there was much to do in Crete.

- 13.** What qualities must an elder “not” have?
- 14.** Describe what it means to be “self-willed.”
- 15.** Would you consider yourself to be a self-willed Christian?
- 16.** Why shouldn’t an elder be quick to anger or hot tempered?
- 17.** What does it mean to be “a lover of what is good”?

- 18.** Are you a lover of good, or a lover of ... not so good? (Do you love that which is virtuous? Do you love to do what is beneficial to others?)  
**Does your life reflect that love?**

William Hendriksen defines self-controlled as “possessing the moral strength to curb or master one’s sinful drives and impulses.” The elders are supposed to cling to and apply the sound doctrine found in Scripture, as well as be able to expose the error of those who rebel or contradict the truth.

We see again the need for Godly leadership. We are also reminded that good doctrine encourages good behavior. Let’s “hold fast the faithful Word as we’ve been taught,” shall we?

- 19.** Answer the following questions concerning the false teachers:

- a. What was their character like?
- b. What did they actually do?
- c. What was their motive?
- d. How do we know they weren’t believers?
- e. What was the result of their teaching?
- f. What was Titus supposed to do? How was he to handle this problem?
- g. Was this a small problem? (vs 10)

Early churches often met in people’s homes, which explains why “whole households” could be affected. Their lies were dangerous and needed to be stopped. Paul quotes the poet, Epimedes, in verse 12, and agrees with his summary of the people of Crete. They were liars, evil, and lazy. They were condemned by one of their own prophets. Paul said “their mouths must be stopped.” This phrase meant to “stop the mouth by means of a bridle, muzzle, or gag.” This was to be done by Titus and the elders.

**20.** What was the motive of rebuking them? What was the goal? (vs 13)

**21.** What do you think “those of the circumcision” were doing? (vs 10)  
Who were they?

The Jews taught man-made laws concerning things that were “clean” and “unclean.” They were calling certain food unclean that God had declared clean, or permissible to eat. They were teaching that the Jewish dietary laws still applied to Christian believers (1 Timothy 4:3-5). Jesus Himself said, “It’s not what goes into a man but what comes out of him that defiles him” (Matthew 15:11). Paul also said that “nothing is unclean in itself” (Romans 14:14). Here in verse 15, Paul is saying that every creature was created by God and not unclean for consumption. It is not the impure thing which makes men impure, but it is impure men who make every pure thing impure. “Defilement takes its rise within, not through things from without” (Mark 7:15).

Paul is saying that it’s the teachers that have defiled minds and consciences, and sin had defiled their vision. Wiersbe says, “It’s not the foods which are defiling the teachers; it is the teachers who are defiling the foods.” Their own conscience has been seared with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:2).

**22.** Check out your heart. Is it filled with the truth? Is your faith backed up by your works? Look over the qualifications again. Are there any you need to work on? How would Paul describe you to Titus?

Remember that when we read the character traits that are expected from leaders, we must always look at our own lives first. Shouldn’t these traits be evident in our lives as well? Rather than judge anyone, let’s spend time evaluating our own hearts.