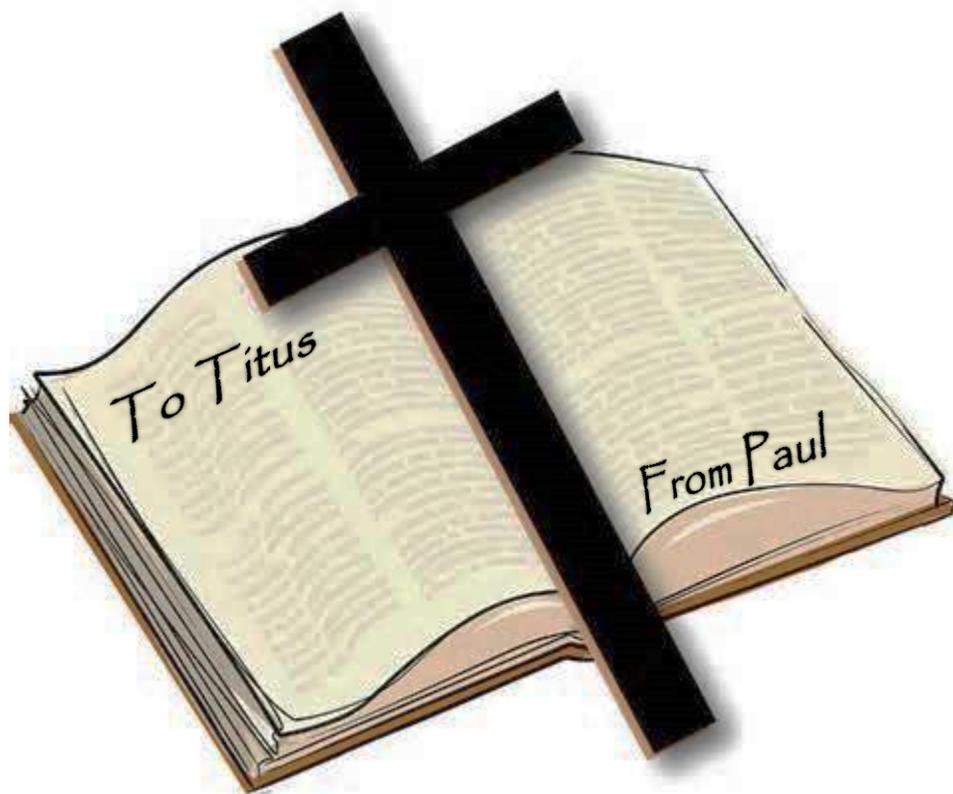


The Letter to Titus



GULF SHORES
CHURCH OF CHRIST
GULF SHORES, AL

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

Prepared by Ray Reynolds

A Study Guide for the Letter to Titus

GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST (Teacher: Ray Reynolds)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

<i>Author of the letter</i>	3
<i>Date of the letter</i>	3
<i>Theme of the letter</i>	3
<i>Audience for the letter</i>	3
<i>Key verses in the letter</i>	4
<i>Outline of the letter.</i>	4

BIBLE STUDY OUTLINES

I. **Instruction For Church Organization (1)**

<i>A. Preaching The Word of God (vs.1-4)</i>	5
<i>B. Ordaining The Elders of the Church (vs.5-9)</i>	5
<i>C. Silencing The False Teachers (vs.10-11)</i>	6
<i>D. Rebuking The Lazy Cretans (vs.12-14)</i>	7
<i>E. Knowing & Serving The Living God (vs.15-16).</i>	7

II. **Instruction For Christian Obligation (2)**

<i>A. Sound Doctrine For Older Men (vs.1-2)</i>	8
<i>B. Sound Doctrine For Older Women (v.3)</i>	8
<i>C. Sound Doctrine For Young Women (vs.4-5)</i>	9
<i>D. Sound Doctrine For Young Men (vs.6-8)</i>	9
<i>E. Sound Doctrine For Servants (vs.9-10)</i>	9
<i>F. Sound Doctrine For Saints (vs.11-15).</i>	10

III. **Instruction For Correct Operation (3)**

<i>A. Christians Are Subject To Authority (vs.1-2)</i>	11
<i>B. Christians Are Saved By God (vs.3-8)</i>	11
<i>C. Christians Are Steadfast In Good Works (vs.9-11).</i>	12
<i>D. Christians Are Serving The Kingdom (vs.12-15).</i>	12

This study guide was created by Ray Reynolds for the purpose of Sunday morning Bible classes at the Gulf Shores Church of Christ (Gulf Shores, AL). The material presented in this class series will be gleaned from personal notes, the New King James Study Bible, Dr. Coy Roper, Dr. Steven Guy, J.J. Turner, Tom Holland, Robert H. Gundry, B.W. Johnson, and other various sources.

A Study Guide for the Letter to Titus

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INTRODUCTION

Author:

Paul, the apostle (**Titus 1:1**), formerly Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 8-9**) identifies himself as the author of this letter. Traditionally we do not know much about the background and intent of the letter, but we know it was well received! The early church accepted it as from the authority of Paul, although modern day scholars like to debate other possible authors and intended purposes.

Date:

It is generally accepted that Paul wrote it around 62-65 AD from Macedonia at the same time and location that he wrote the first letter to Timothy. As the book of Acts concludes, it is evident that Paul is headed for prison, but wanted to encourage the younger preachers. Therefore, he wrote the first letter to Timothy and this one to Titus just in case he did not return from a Roman imprisonment (**Acts 26-28, Titus 3:13**). After his release, probably in the spring of 63 AD, Paul went east (**Romans 15:22**) and also planned to visit Timothy and Titus (**I Timothy 3:14, 4:13, Titus 3:12**). Since very little of this book deals with a heavy persecution upon the church, I Timothy and Titus were evidently written before Nero blamed the burning of Rome on the Christians (July, 64 AD) when the church was still in its infancy and the most significant problems they faced were within the fellowship, not without.

Theme:

This letter is associated with the “Pastoral Epistles” because of the content. Paul encourages Titus to keep working steadfastly. It was clearly meant for the preacher, not the congregation, but as with the letters to Timothy and Philemon, one can see that the whole church could benefit from its content. While Timothy is clearly identified as a younger colleague, Paul speaks to Titus with a different tone and with a shorter message, which gives the assumption that he was older and more mature. Like Timothy, Titus is given authority to appoint elders, rebuke the false teachers, and nurture the flock, but more emphasis is placed on daily living. Paul addresses church unity, morality, and Christian obligations in the community.

Audience:

The letter is personally addressed to Titus whom Paul considered to be a “*true son in our common faith*” (**Titus 1:4**). Paul had apparently left Titus on the island of Crete to serve the congregations (**Titus 1:5**) and set things in order. We are given insight into the mindset of those in this congregation and community from Paul’s own words: deceptive, ignorant, liars, evil, lazy gluttons. They were struggling with leadership, legalistic false teaching, idolatry, and immorality.

Key Verses:

Titus 1:2, 1:5-9, 1:15, 2:1-8, 2:11-14, 2:15, 3:1, 3:3-7, 3:9-11, 3:14

Outline:

- I. *Instruction For Church Organization (1)***
 - A. Preaching The Word of God (vs.1-4)
 - B. Ordaining The Elders (vs.5-9)
 - C. Silencing The False Teachers (vs.10-11)
 - D. Rebuking The Lazy Cretans (vs.12-14)
 - E. Knowing & Serving The Living God (vs.15-16)

- II. *Instruction For Christian Obligation (2)***
 - A. Sound Doctrine For Older Men (vs.1-2)
 - B. Sound Doctrine For Older Women (v.3)
 - C. Sound Doctrine For Young Women (vs.4-5)
 - D. Sound Doctrine For Young Men (vs.6-8)
 - E. Sound Doctrine For Servants (vs.9-10)
 - F. Sound Doctrine For Saints (vs.11-15)

- III. *Instruction For Correct Operation (3)***
 - A. Christians Are Subject To Authority (vs.1-2)
 - B. Christians Are Saved By God (vs.3-8)
 - C. Christians Are Steadfast In Good Works (vs.9-11)
 - D. Christians Are Serving The Kingdom (vs.12-15)

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GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST (Teacher: Ray Reynolds)
CHAPTER ONE: Instruction For Church Organization

Introduction: Paul begins his letter to Titus by identifying himself and the purpose of his apostleship. He acknowledges the work of the church and the ministry of Titus, the evangelist. Paul clearly wanted to keep things moving forward in Crete. Therefore, this first chapter deals with the organization of the church. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Preaching The Word of God (vs.1-4)

¹ Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, ² in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, ³ but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior; ⁴ To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

What is the significance of the standard Greek opening for this letter??

What do we know about Titus?

What does Paul say about God's people?

What is manifested through preaching?

How does Paul feel about Titus?

II. Ordaining The Elders of the Church (vs.5-9)

⁵ 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-- ⁶ if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. ⁷ For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, ⁹ holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

What was lacking and out of order in Crete?

What was Titus to do about this problem? Why?

What is so essential about having elders in the church?

Why is it important to fulfill the scriptural qualities for an elder?

What have we already noted in the book of Timothy about qualifications?

Why are the lists in Timothy and Titus different?

What can we learn about the qualifications of elders in relation to God?

Being blameless and above reproach (I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6)

Being able to teach (I Timothy 3:2, I Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:9)

Holding firmly to scriptural truths (I Timothy 3:9, Titus 1:9)

Not a new convert or new to the church family (I Timothy 3:6)

Being upright & holy (Titus 1:8)

Loving what is good (Titus 1:8)

What can we learn about the qualifications of elders in relation to others?

Respected by others (I Timothy 3:2)

Hospitable towards others (I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)

Not violent, but gentle towards others (I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

A patient person with others (I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

Not quarrelsome towards others (I Timothy 3:3)

Has a good reputation with outsiders (I Timothy 3:7)

Not a pursuer of dishonest gain (Titus 1:7)

A good steward of God (Titus 1:7)

Not overbearing towards others (Titus 1:7)

What can we learn about the qualifications of elders in relation to themselves?

Desires the office of an elder (I Timothy 3:1, I Peter 5:2)

A temperate person (I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:7)

A self-controlled person (I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)

Not a quick tempered person or a brawler (I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

Not given to drunkenness (I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

Not a covetous person (I Timothy 3:3)

Not a lover of money (I Timothy 3:3)

Not a self-willed person (Titus 1:7)

A disciplined person (Titus 1:8)

A lover of good men (Titus 1:8)

Not wanting to lord it over the church (I Peter 5:3)

III. Silencing The False Teachers (vs.10-11)

¹⁰ For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, ¹¹ whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

What does Paul say about the false teachers?

What does it mean when he speaks of those “of the circumcision”? Who are they?

Why was this an issue in Crete?

Why did their mouths need to be stopped?

IV. Rebuking The Lazy Cretans (vs.12-14)

¹² One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." ¹³ This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, ¹⁴ not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

Why does Paul quote the philosopher Epimenides (6-7th century BC)?

What had their own philosophers and poets said about them?

How can being lazy and being a liar become double trouble?

What are Jewish fables? Why were they dangerous?

How were they considered to be commandments?

Do we do this today in the church? How?

V. Knowing and Serving The Living God (vs.15-16)

¹⁵ To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. ¹⁶ They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Do you think Paul is thinking of the words of Jesus on purity in **Matthew 15:16-20** when he is writing these words?

What is the real test of purity?

What are the dangers of having a defiled mind and conscience?

How can our works reflect our faith?

Why should we have the mind of Christ (**Philippians 2:5**)?

Conclusion: The church of Christ (**Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 4:4, Romans 16:16**) is organized and structured just like the human body (**Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 4:4, Colossians 1:18**). When each part is working properly it will lead us to maturity (**Ephesians 4:11-16, I Corinthians 12-13**). It is interesting that the church in Crete is not instructed on how to appoint ministers or deacons. Apparently they had servants, teachers and evangelists, but were lacking on shepherds. In the next two chapters Paul will deal with teaching and correcting, both are things the elders should take seriously in kingdom work (**Acts 20:17-35**).

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CHAPTER TWO: Instruction For Christian Obligation

Introduction: This chapter deals with conduct and Christian obligation. The difference between those who follow sound doctrine and those who follow false teaching should be clearly evident. Titus needed to know that his teaching, ministry, and lifestyle choices would help or hinder the work of God in Crete. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Sound Doctrine For The Older Men (vs.1-2)

¹ But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: ² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

Why was it so important for Titus to teach sound doctrine?

How could he do that without the Holy Scriptures?

Why should the older men follow this list of qualities?

What does it mean to be sober?

Why were the older men commanded to be reverent?

Why were they told to practice self-control and be temperate?

How can older men be sound in faith, love, and patience?

What will happen if older men refuse to teach younger men?

II. Sound Doctrine For The Older Women (v.3)

³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—

Why are the older women commanded to be reverent in their behavior?

What is the danger of slander? Why is it such a dangerous sin?

Why are the older women told not to be given to much wine? Why not the men?

How can older women be teachers of good things?

What will happen if older women refuse to teach younger women?

III. Sound Doctrine For The Young Women (vs.4-5)

⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

What is the purpose of the older women teaching the younger women?

How can we know that “love” is of utmost importance in the home?

How can young women be discreet?

Which is more valuable to a young man: a woman who is chaste or chased? Explain.

What does it mean to be a homemaker?

How can young ladies learn to be good?

Why is it important to teach younger women to obey their husbands? What’s the danger?

IV. Sound Doctrine For The Young Men (vs.6-8)

⁶ Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷ in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

What does it mean to be sober minded?

How can young men show themselves to be a pattern of good works?

Why is it imperative to show integrity, reverence, and incorruptibility in sound doctrine?

How can we possess sound speech that cannot be condemned? What is the value?

V. Sound Doctrine For The Servants (vs.9-10)

⁹ Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

What is commanded of a bondservant?

Why should bondservants be obedient to their masters?

What else had Paul previously said about this subject (see Ephesians and Colossians)?

What is the danger of answering back or “back talking” a master?

What is pilfering? Why is that dangerous for a servant?

How can one show good fidelity?

In what ways can we adorn the doctrine of God? Explain.

How can bondservants glorify God in their work?

VI. Sound Doctrine For The Saints (vs.11-15)

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. ¹⁵ Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

How can God's goodness and grace motivate Christians?

Why should Paul remind Titus of God's grace?

Why is important to remember our salvation?

What things should we deny and put off if we are in Christ? What replaces them?

Why should we deny ungodliness and worldly lusts?

What was the purpose of living soberly, righteously and godly in the world?

What should we be looking for in this present age? Why?

Why should we remind ourselves of our blessed hope and the second coming of Jesus?

What is God going to do for His people? What can we do for Him?

How should Titus speak, exhort, and rebuke? Why?

Conclusion: This chapter deals with several different divisions of Christians within the church family. These verses should remind us that everyone is important in the kingdom. Everyone has a place and a purpose to bring unity to the body of Christ. No one is insignificant. All of us are given equal access to God's grace and salvation. Each of us are given talents to use in the Lord's work. What we choose to put on, and put off, is left up to us. However, Paul gives us plenty to think about in this section. May God help us to make the right decisions!

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CHAPTER THREE: Instruction For Correct Operation

Introduction: The final chapter of this book goes beyond personal responsibility. It reminds us that God must be in the equation. He will remind us that we are saved by grace, and led by God, to be full of the Holy Spirit and good works. Ultimately, Paul is hoping to compel the people to respect rulers, avoid foolish disputes, and be aware of divisive people. If we follow this pattern we will walk the line of the restored church. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Christians Are Subject To Authority (vs.1-2)

¹ Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, ² to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

Why should we be subject to rulers and authorities?

What does it mean to be ready for every good work? Is that possible?

Why should we avoid speaking evil to anyone?

Why should we be peaceable, gentle, and show humility to all men?

II. Christians Are Saved By God (vs.3-8)

³ For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ⁸ This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Why does Paul remind us of our past sins? Are we supposed to keep a record of wrongs?

What accusations could be laid at our feet? Are we the same? Explain.

Why should we remember God's love and kindness?

How were we saved? Why must we remember the mercy of God in our salvation?

When are we washed, regenerated, and renewed by the Holy Spirit?

What is the faithful saying in this passage? Explain.

How can remembering grace, hope, and good works be profitable?

III. Christians Are Steadfast With Good Works (vs.9-11)

⁹ But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

¹⁰ Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Why should we avoid foolish disputes?

How can we know that New Testament Christians were obsessed with genealogies?

What should we do about contentions and strivings about the law? Why?

When should we reject divisive people?

What can we know about individuals who are warped and sinning?

How can our own stubbornness and pride cause us to fall?

IV. Christians Are Serving The Kingdom (vs.12-15)

¹² When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³ Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. ¹⁴ And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. ¹⁵ All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

What two men are mentioned as helpers to Paul?

What other two men did Paul want to see? Why?

How can we maintain a pattern of good works?

Why should we meet the urgent needs of others?

How can we bear good fruit in the kingdom?

What can we learn from the final statements of Paul?

Conclusion: Through Paul's reminders he admonishes Titus, and the church family at Crete, of things they must not forget. Christians should be good citizens, good leaders, and good examples to their community. We must not forget to bear fruit for the kingdom of God and maintain good works. It is important for us all to practice hospitality and share the good news. It would serve us well to follow the wisdom of Paul given to Titus.