

Bible Study Discussion Guide

Titus

Titus had for many years been a co-worker with Paul. Paul left him behind on the island of Crete to sort out some major problems within the Cretan Church. In this short letter, Paul advises Titus about the criteria for selecting elders, and stresses the need to confront wrong teaching within the church. Paul then advises Titus about how to teach different groups within the church and to encourage them to live lives worthy of the gospel.

The Knowing God Bible study discussion guides are provided to facilitate small group Bible study. We encourage everyone in the group to read or listen to the Bible text about ten times over the course of the study. We recommend providing a copy of these notes to each member of the group and selecting an individual to lead each week's study.

The book of Titus takes approximately 8 minutes to read.

This discussion guide provides questions for three sessions.

Principles for use:

1. Encourage everyone in the group to read Titus many times.
2. Trust God to help you understand and apply his Word.
3. Focus on what the book reveals about God/Jesus.
4. Focus on what it clearly reveals about how God wants us to live.
5. Don't get bogged down on minor, uncertain or controversial issues.

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In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned.

Titus 2:7-8

Introduction

Audience: Titus had for many years been a co-worker with Paul. Galatians 2:1-4 mentions Titus as an early travelling companion. He was an uncircumcised Gentile, who was later sent by Paul as a delegate to Corinth during the time when Paul was facing conflict with the Corinthian church. In 2 Corinthians 7:6-7; 7:13-14; Paul describes how delighted he was with the report that Titus brought about the Corinthian church. Paul then has high praise for Titus and his companions: ‘these brothers are representatives of the churches. They are splendid examples of those who bring glory to Christ’ (2 Corinthians 8:23).

Titus had been left by Paul on the island of Crete. It is unlikely that Paul himself had spent much time on the island of Crete, although he had stopped there briefly on his trip to Rome and may have visited after his release from his Roman imprisonment. Jews from Crete had also been present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11). The people of the island had a reputation of dishonesty, cruelty and greed. Paul quotes a prophet from Crete who said ‘The people of Crete are all liars; they are cruel animals and lazy gluttons’ (Titus 1:12). Titus was given the difficult task of overseeing the churches in this environment.

Occasion of Writing: The letter to Titus is very similar to 1 Timothy and it has been suggested that both letters were written at the same time. This would date Titus to around 63 A.D. Paul wrote to Titus to provide him with some practical suggestions for leadership.

Themes: Paul addresses several issues facing Titus. He urges Titus to confront wrong teaching and to instead train people in the truth. He advises him to appoint capable men as elders in each of the churches. Titus was instructed to choose men of sound character for this role. One of the clear roles of the elders was to teach the people and oppose wrong teaching. Paul then advises Titus about how to teach different groups within the church. Church members of all ages were to be instructed to live lives worthy of the gospel. All people regardless of age or gender had a role within the church.

Session One: The Importance of Godly Leaders

What particularly stood out to you as you read the book of Titus?

Paul introduces himself as a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. Would you describe yourself in the same way? If so, what implications does this have for your life? If not, how would you describe your relationship with God?

According to Paul, what characterizes a godly elder or church leader? How can a local church congregation raise up godly elders or leaders?

One of the roles of an elder/leader is to teach sound doctrine and refute those who teach what is false. See Titus 1:9. What can an elder/leader do to ensure they are well equipped for this task?

An elder or leader must be blameless or above reproach (Titus 1:6-7). What's the difference between blameless and sinless?

One of the modern debates is whether women are able to fill the role of elders/church leaders. As a group, can you identify the key arguments for and against the role of women in leadership?

Would you like to be an elder/church leader? Why or why not? Is there anything you could be doing to equip yourself to fill this role in the future?

Session Two: The Importance of Correct Beliefs

When you hear a sermon, listen to Christian teaching, or read a Christian book, how do you determine if it is Biblical teaching or false teaching?

See chapter 1:10-16. Do you know any examples today of people benefitting financially from promoting false teaching?

What can you do to help yourself identify and resist false teaching?

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Titus 2:7-8

In what settings do you yourself advise/instruct/guide/teach other people, either formally or informally? What can you do to equip yourself to pass on sound Biblical teaching in your everyday conversation, within a small group or within any other ministry setting?

Have you ever had the opportunity to train up a new believer or a younger person? Why or why not? Have you ever considered it?

Session Three: The Importance of Living a Godly Life

Paul instructs Titus ‘In everything, set them an example by doing what is good’ (Titus 2:7). Why do our actions matter to God?

What changes has God brought to the world through the person and work of Jesus Christ?

11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. (Titus 2:11-14)

Discuss the changes in 2:12-14a that happen to a genuine believer as God’s grace transforms them.

What outward changes in your life testify to the hidden work of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-7)?

Would you say that you are setting an example for other believers (Titus 2:7)? Are you ‘eager to do what is good’ (Titus 2:14)? What is one further thing you could do that would make you a better example for other believers?