
A Guide for Christian Leaders

An EasyEnglish Commentary (2800 word vocabulary) on Paul's Letter to Titus

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This commentary **has been** through Advanced Checking.

Words in boxes are from the Bible.

A word list at the end explains words with a *star by them.

About this letter

What we know about Titus

Titus was a *Gentile Christian (Galatians 2:3). Titus had probably become a Christian when Paul taught the good news about Jesus Christ. So Paul described Titus as his 'true son' (1:4). Paul described Titus as a partner and a worker with him (2 Corinthians 8:23).

1 Titus went to Jerusalem with Paul. Paul insisted that Titus need not obey the very strict *Jewish laws (Galatians 2:1-4).

2 Paul had to send a severe letter to the Christians in Corinth. (This letter may be 1 Corinthians. But it may be a letter that is not in the Bible.) They were allowing one of the Christians to act in a wicked way. They were not doing anything about it. Titus took the letter. He also helped to sort out the serious situation (2 Corinthians 7:8-15).

3 Titus had a special responsibility. Many poor Christians lived in Jerusalem. Titus had to organise the people in Corinth who collected money for the poor people (2 Corinthians 8:16, 17).

4 Titus had been working with Paul on the island called Crete. (This happened after Paul had been in prison in Rome in Acts 28.) Paul did not have time to complete the work himself. So he left Titus to finish it. Many people considered that the people in Crete had bad characters. Paul was aware of this opinion.

The reason why Paul wrote the letter

1 Titus had to appoint men to lead the churches. Paul reminded Titus about the kind of character that a leader should have.

2 Paul advised Titus how he should teach different groups of people. These groups were the old people, the young people and slaves.

3 Titus had to emphasise the true message about Jesus Christ. He had to tell the Christians how to behave in the right way. He had to warn them about false teachers.

Chapter 1

Paul's greeting

v1 This letter is from Paul. I am a servant of God. I am an *apostle of Jesus Christ. I help the people that God has chosen. I help them, as they believe. I help them to really know the truth. It shows them how to respect and please God. **v2** This is the truth. God's people can confidently expect to live for ever. Before time began, God promised *eternal life. God cannot lie. **v3** At the right time God let people know this good news. And he trusted me to tell it to everyone. God, who saves us, ordered me to do it. **v4** I write to you, Titus. You are my true son because we both believe God's good news.

God is the Father. Jesus Christ saves us. I pray that they will give you *grace and peace.

Verse 1 The author described himself as 'a servant of God'. A servant is loyal to his master. And he obeys his master. This title showed that Paul was humble. He thought that it was an honour to serve God. Paul also described himself as 'an *apostle of Jesus Christ'. An *apostle is someone whom God sends. So Paul had God's authority.

'The people that God has chosen' refers to Christians.

Paul worked for Jesus in two ways:

1 Paul had told people the good news about Jesus. As a result, people believed and trusted Jesus.

2 Paul taught the Christians more about God's true message. He taught them how to live in the right way. He wanted them to become mature Christians. Then they would not believe the false teachers.

Verse 2

'*Eternal life' is the life that comes from God himself. Christians already have *eternal life (John 5:24). It begins on earth. It continues in heaven after a Christian's physical body dies. So, Christians know that they will live for ever with God. Even before the world began, God promised *eternal life. He never lies. Christians can trust God's promise completely.

Verse 3

The 'good news' is the message that God gives *eternal life by means of Jesus (1 John 5:11-12). Jesus can forgive people's *sin and forgive their wicked deeds. Then they can receive *eternal life. Paul said that 'God, who saves us' had told him to declare the good news. In verse 4, Paul referred to 'Jesus Christ who saves us'. God the Father loves people so much that he sent Jesus to this world (1 John 4:10). Jesus obeyed his Father. So, both God the Father and God the Son save people. They rescue people from their evil ways.

Jesus came 'at the right time'. God's always chooses the right time when he acts. God had given messages to the *prophets in the *Old Testament. They had prepared people. The *prophets had told people that God would send a *Messiah (Jesus). So the *Jews were expecting him to come.

There were also practical reasons why it was the right time. The *Romans ruled most of the countries in that area of the world. The good news about Jesus could spread quickly because:

1 The *Romans had built good roads, so it was easy to travel.

2 The *Romans had stopped wars. There was peace in the countries that the *Romans ruled. Therefore, people could travel safely.

3 Most people understood the *Greek language. So, it was easy for Christians to teach the good news everywhere.

Verse 4

Paul calls Titus his 'true son'. Titus probably became a Christian when he first heard Paul teach about Jesus. So, Paul felt that he was like a Christian father to Titus. However, they both belonged to same Christian family. So, God was the Father of both Paul and Titus.

Paul gave the usual greeting. *Grace is a gift that God gives. We do not deserve it and we cannot earn it. *Grace' means that God the Father is kind and generous to his children. God helps and protects people. God's *grace comes to people by means of Jesus. He gives his people everything that they need for their Christian life.

'Peace'. In the *Hebrew language this word is 'shalom'. It is a traditional blessing in the *Old Testament (Numbers 6:24-26), and among *Jewish people today. 'Peace' is not just the opposite of war or noise. Peace means that God gives a person a calm spirit. This affects every part of a person's life and relationships. Nobody can have God's peace without his *grace.

The work that Titus had to do

v5 I left you on the island called Crete. We had not finished our work there. So I want you to put everything in order. You should appoint *elders in every town as I told you to. **v6** An *elder must be a good man. Nobody should be able to blame him for doing anything wrong. He should have only one wife. His children should be loyal to God. They should not behave in a bad way but they should obey. **v7** A leader is a manager for God. The leader must be a good man. Nobody should be able to blame him for doing anything wrong. He must not please himself. He must not have a bad temper. He must not drink too much alcohol. He must not fight. He must not be greedy to get more money. **v8** Instead, a church leader should enjoy having guests in his home. He must love everything that is good. He must be sensible. He must behave in the right way. He must be holy. He must be able to control himself. **v9** He must firmly believe the true message that we taught. Then he can encourage people as he teaches the truth. And he can answer the people who oppose the truth.

Verse 5

Paul and Titus had visited Crete. The book of Acts did not record the visit. So, it probably happened after Paul had been a prisoner (Acts 28:16). Paul may have visited Crete for only a short time. He did not have enough time to complete his work. But he had told Titus what to do. Therefore, Titus had Paul's authority to do the work.

Titus had to 'put everything in order'. He had to organise the church properly. His first job was to appoint *elders in every town. *Elder' is another name for a Christian leader. Groups of Christians met in many of the towns in Crete. Each group needed good leaders who were in charge of the Christians. *Elders were often older mature men. However, a young man could be an *elder if he was a strong Christian. Paul had already told Titus how to appoint *elders. So, in this letter, Paul told Titus what qualities *elders and leaders should have. These qualities and standards still apply to Christian leaders today.

*Elders and leaders

This list is very similar to the list in 1 Timothy chapter 3.

The qualities that an *elder should have:

Verse 6

1 An *elder should behave well. He should not *sin on purpose. A leader who pleases God always tries to obey God. 1 Peter 5:3 says that a leader should be a model for other Christians. If a leader behaves badly then Christians will not learn to respect God. They will not learn how to behave properly. And other people will accuse the *elders too.

2 An *elder should have one wife. This means that a married *elder should be loyal to his wife. He must not have affairs with other women. However an *elder can marry again if his wife has died. It may also mean that all *elders should be married, not single, men.

3 An *elder's children should behave well too. An *elder should be able to teach his children about God. He should teach them how to behave properly. People would not respect a man who could not control his own family (1 Timothy 3:4-5). This probably refers to *elders whose children still live at home.

Verse 7

Some English Bibles translate the word 'leader' as 'bishop'. But the words '*elder' and 'leader' refer to the same job. Paul was referring to a leader in a local church. A manager is responsible for something that belongs to another person. God trusts leaders to do his work properly. All Christians belong to God's family. So leaders care for God's family. That is why leaders should be able to care for their own families first.

Paul repeated that leaders should behave well. He listed 5 bad things that leaders should not do. Then, in verses 8-9, he listed good things that leaders should do.

What a leader must not do:

1 He must not please himself. A selfish man pleases himself. He takes no notice of what other people need. Jesus showed that a leader should serve other people (John 13:1-17).

2 He must not have a bad temper (James 1:19-20). A man who gets angry quickly often insults people. He argues and does not listen to people. Instead, a leader should be patient as he helps people.

3 He must not drink too much alcohol. Instead, he should control himself properly.

4 He must not fight. A leader should help to unite people. He should be gentle.

5 He must not be greedy to get more money. He must not try to get money in ways that are not honest. People who love money may turn away from God. Instead, a leader should be content and generous (1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19). He must not be like the people in Crete, who were greedy for money (verse 11).

What a leader should do:

Verses 8-9

1 He should be ready to welcome strangers into his home. In those days, small hotels were dirty and expensive. Christian teachers and other travellers often needed somewhere to stay. Both Paul (Romans 12:13) and Peter (1 Peter 4:9) urge Christians to welcome guests.

2 He must love good people and good things. He must act in ways that will help other people.

3 He must be sensible. This means that he should control what he says and does. He must think about the possible results of his words and actions.

4 He must behave in the right way towards other people. He should have a high standard of behaviour.

5 He must be holy. This means that he should be sincere and be loyal to God.

6 He must be able to control himself. Then he will be able to rule other people.

7 He must firmly believe the true message. Paul had taught the true message about Jesus to the people in Crete. But there were many false teachers who did not teach the truth. And many people opposed the Christians. So, Titus had to appoint leaders who had continued to believe the truth. Those leaders would teach the truth to Christians. The leaders would also be able to explain the truth to the false teachers.

The good character and qualities of Christian leaders were important. They had to be different from the false teachers in Crete.

How to deal with the false teachers

v10 There are many people, especially from among the *Jews, who refuse to obey God's truth. They talk about things that have no value. They lead people away from the truth. **v11** You must stop these people. They are upsetting whole families. They teach things to these families that they should not teach them. They do it for financial profit. **v12** One of their own prophets (speakers) has said, 'People who come from Crete always tell lies. They are like evil wild animals. They are lazy people who eat too much.' **v13** This is true. Therefore, correct these people very firmly. Then they will be strong when they believe the truth about Jesus. **v14** Then they will not give attention to the *Jewish false stories. And they will not obey the commands from the men who have opposed the truth. **v15** Everything is pure (morally good) to the people who are pure. But nothing is pure to the people who are not morally pure. They do not trust God. Their mind and their conscience are full of evil things. **v16** They say that they know God. But they deny him by the way that they live. They are very bad people. They do not obey. They cannot do anything that is good.

The false teachers

Verses 10-11

There were many false teachers in Crete. Many of them were *Jews. They probably went to the Christian meetings. But they caused a lot of trouble among the Christians. Many false teachers said that Christians must obey the *Jewish rules. For example, they should avoid certain food. They also should wash in a special way before they ate meals. The *Jews had accused Jesus' *disciples because they did not obey these rules (Mark 7:1-5). However, the false teachers would not obey God's word, and they would not obey the church leaders.

The words of these false teachers were not useful. They did not cause people to live a good life (verse 16). They told false stories (verse 14). They led people away from God's truth. The false teachers had a bad effect on family life. They were teaching lies that ruined families. The false teachers taught those things for the wrong reason. They were greedy for money and they wanted to become rich. They did not care about other people. They cared more about money.

Paul said that Titus should stop the false teachers. The word 'stop' means to shut their mouth. The false teachers' lies could have ruined the church.

Verse 12

Even one of their own famous speakers described the people in Crete as bad. His name was Epimenides. He was a teacher and a poet. He lived about 600 years before Jesus was born. He said that:

- 1 They always told lies. The common phrase 'to speak like a person in Crete' meant 'to tell a lie'.
- 2 They were as cruel as wild animals.
- 3 They were lazy people. They ate too much and drank too much wine.

Verse 13

Paul knew this famous phrase about the people who lived in Crete. Paul believed what Epimenides had said. Paul also knew it from his own experience, especially with the false teachers. So Titus had to deal with them firmly. They would continue to cause trouble if they did not know the truth. Paul did not want the false teachers to leave the church. Instead, he wanted them to know the truth about Jesus. Paul did not want Titus to punish the false teachers. He wanted to save them from the lies. Then they would be strong Christians. When someone *sins, we should always try to correct him or her (Galatians 6:1-2).

Verse 14

The '*Jewish false stories' are probably the same ones that Titus 3:9 and 1 Timothy 1:4 refer to. Some *Jews had made up stories about people in the *Old Testament. Then people wasted time as they discussed these false stories.

The 'commands' were probably traditions and rules that men had invented. But the men who invented these rules refused to obey the truth. The *Jews had made up extra rules about the kind of food that people could eat. They told people what they could touch or do. *Jews said that Christians must obey these traditions and rules. Paul listed some of these rules in Colossians 2:16-23 and 1 Timothy 4:1-5. The *Jews said that their rules explained God's laws. But they had made up the rules.

When the false teachers believed the truth, they would not be interested in the lies any more.

Verse 15

In this verse, the word 'pure' means innocent and without *sin. A pure person is good. He is not a mixture of good and evil. The *Jews said that a person should obey all the *Old Testament commands. And they said that he should obey all the *Jewish traditions. That person would then be 'pure' or 'clean'. Jesus said that those commands and traditions could not make a person pure (Mark 7:1-23; Luke 11:37-41). A person becomes pure in his spirit when he trusts Jesus. Jesus affects the person's mind and conscience so that he is full of good things. Nothing physical can make him less pure in his spirit. However, if a person is not pure in his spirit, nothing physical can make his spirit pure.

Verse 16

A person who truly knows God will behave in a good way. But the false teachers behaved in a very bad way. This showed that they did not really know God. They declared that they were pure. But they could not do anything that was good. Therefore, they were no use to God or to other people.

Chapter 2

What Titus had to teach

v1 But you, Titus, must teach the things that are true. **v2** Teach the older men that they should not drink too much wine. Other people should be able to respect them. They should be able to control themselves. They must believe what is true. They must love and be patient. **v3** In the same way, you should teach the older women to live a holy life. They must not speak badly about other people. They must not drink too much wine. But they should teach people that which is good. **v4** Then they can teach the young women to love their husbands and their children. **v5** The young women should also learn how to control themselves. And they should be pure (morally good). They should be busy at home. They should be kind. They should obey their husband. Then people cannot say evil things about the good news that comes from God.

The Christian character

Verse 1

Titus had to teach the Christians who lived in Crete. The false teachers had taught the Christians many wrong things. Titus was different from the false teachers. He had to teach what was true. He taught the different groups of people how to behave in the right way.

The older men

Verse 2

Older men should be mature. They should not behave in a foolish way. Younger people often copy older people; so older people should be good models.

1 They should not drink too much wine. People often behave badly when they drink too much wine. Then they cannot think clearly.

2 They must be men whom other people can respect. They should be serious and they should not be silly. They must realise that life on earth will come to an end. Then they will live in the right way to prepare for heaven.

3 They must be able to control their words and actions. They should think about the results of their behaviour. They should be sensible.

4 They must trust God completely as they believe the true *gospel message.

5 As they trust God, they will love him more. Then they will be able to love other people more. They should be able to understand people more. Then they can give more sympathy to those people who need help. Some old people tend to complain about people more. But this should not happen to Christians.

6 They should be patient. They should have courage when life is difficult.

Paul links faith (what people believe), love and patience in two other personal letters. (See 1 Timothy 6:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:10.)

The older women

Verse 3

The older women should behave in a mature way, too. They should always try to please God. The result of their good character should be their good behaviour. An older woman may have more spare time because her children have become adults. In that society, women often met together to gossip about other people. They also drank too much wine. To 'speak badly' means to say evil things and to lie. Paul said that Christian women should be different. They should be good models for other people to copy. They should use their time wisely. Paul wanted these women to teach in their homes. They should always speak about good things.

Verse 4

Paul did not tell Titus to teach the young women. The older women had to teach them. The older women had a lot of experience and wisdom. They had learned how to be good wives and mothers. So, they could advise the younger women when they had problems in married life. They could teach the young women how to be kind to their children. When a woman loves someone, she does not just have good feelings. Paul describes more about the qualities of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

The young women

Verse 5

In that society, most of the young women were married. Some were widows. But Paul suggested that the widows should marry again (1 Timothy 5:14-15).

1 The young women should learn how to control themselves. They should be sensible. They should behave well.

2 They should be pure. They should avoid *sin and they should have a good character. They should be morally good.

3 In those days, a married woman worked in her home. She was responsible for everything that happened in her home. Therefore, she should not be lazy. Instead, she should be willing to work hard and serve her husband and her family.

4 They should be kind. A kind woman is helpful. She tries to please other people, so she is not selfish.

5 They should obey their husband. A wife knows that her husband is the head in their home (Ephesians 5:22-24). It is much easier for a wife to obey her husband if she loves him. And she should respect him too.

Women must behave in these ways so that no one can say evil things about the Christian message. This may refer to wives whose husbands are not Christians. Their husbands might believe the good news if their wives made a safe and happy home. And they would be more likely to believe if their wives obeyed them (1 Peter 3:1-2). It could also mean that the Christian good news would attract other people.

v6 In a similar way, urge the young men to control themselves. **v7** In every way you should be a model to them. You should do what is good. Be honest and be serious as you teach. **v8** Speak the truth so that nobody can say bad things against you. Then the people who oppose you will be ashamed. They will not have anything bad to say about us.

The young men

Verse 6

Paul used the strong word 'urge'. It means to teach and to persuade. Young people, especially young men, are often tempted to do wrong things. They may be too confident because they do not have enough experience or wisdom. They do not understand what can go wrong with a bold plan. They may live or work away from the discipline of a good home. They may be careless about the friends that they choose. If they are not yet married, they can please themselves. If they have a wife and family, they may not realise their responsibilities.

It is very important that all Christians should control themselves properly. They should control:

- 1 how they act
- 2 what they say
- 3 what they think about
- 4 how they express their emotions
- 5 their desires

Verse 7

Paul told Titus to be a good model. Paul said this to Timothy too (1 Timothy 4:12). Titus had to be a model 'in every way'. He had to teach the truth and he had to behave in the right way. This would show that he taught the truth. The false teachers said that they taught the truth. But they behaved in a bad way.

'Be honest' also means to be sincere. Titus had to show that his intention was good. He had to teach for the right reason. (The false teachers taught for financial profit, 1:11.) He also had to be serious. As a teacher, he had an important job. He had to be aware of his responsibility.

Verse 8

Titus had to be careful about everything that he said in public or private conversation. He had to be sensible. He always had to speak the truth. Many people opposed the Christians. People watched Titus and they listened to him. They were ready to accuse him. But Titus could show that they were wrong. If he lived in the right way, he would be innocent. They might still oppose him. But they would have to respect his good behaviour. People would see that Titus was different from the false teachers. As a result, some of them would believe the good news about Jesus.

v9 Teach slaves always to obey their masters. They should try to please their masters. They should not argue with their masters. **v10** Slaves should not steal from their masters. Instead, slaves should prove that their masters can trust them. This will show that the good news about God our *Saviour is attractive in every way.

Christian slaves

Verses 9-10

Today, most people believe that people should not be slaves. But in those days, there were many slaves in society. Both men and women were slaves. Paul accepted it as part of normal life. In Colossians 3:22-4:1, Paul taught Christian masters and slaves how to behave in the right way. Both slaves and masters serve Jesus Christ. He is their master who is in heaven. So slaves are actually working for the *Lord.

1 A slave must obey his master. Paul did not say whether the master was a Christian. But the slave should even obey a master who is not a Christian. However, no one should do anything that God's law opposes (Acts 5:29). If the master is a Christian, the slave must still respect his master (1 Timothy 6:2).

2 A slave must be eager to please his master. A slave must be willing to do his duties. He should work well.

3 A slave should not argue with his master. He should respect his master. A slave should not insult his master. His master is the boss.

4 A slave must not steal. Many slaves stole some of their master's property. They probably thought that their master would not notice. A Christian slave must not steal even the smallest thing.

5 A slave must be completely honest and loyal. A master should be able to trust his Christian slave.

In those days, people thought that slaves were useful. But people did not consider that slaves were important as people. So, Paul showed that Christian slaves had an important responsibility. They could show that the Christian good news is powerful. 'God our *Saviour' is powerful. He can change the way that people behave. Christian slaves should behave much better than other people in their society did. Slaves who acted in the right way would make the Christian message more attractive to everyone. And more people would become Christians. Today, many countries do not allow people to be slaves. But these verses also apply to anyone who works for a boss.

Paul referred twice in this letter to God as '*Saviour' (2:10; 3:4) and also in his letter to Timothy (1 Timothy 2:3; 4:10). In Ephesians 2:4-5, he said that God loved people so much that he rescued them from their *sin. Therefore, Christians should behave in the right way. They should be different from the false teachers, who behaved in the wrong way.

v11 For God's *grace, which can save everyone, has appeared. **v12** God's *grace teaches us to refuse anything that opposes God. It teaches us to refuse our wicked desires for things in this world. Instead, we should control ourselves. We should do what is right. We should please God while we live in this world. **v13** We should live like that while we look forward to a wonderful future event. God our *Saviour, who is Jesus Christ, will appear with great *glory. **v14** Jesus Christ gave himself for us. He freed us from all our *sin and from our wicked ways. He made us clean (forgiven) so that we could belong to him. And so, we should be eager to do what is good.

***Grace and *Glory**

Verse 11

The reason why every Christian should live a good life is because of God's *grace. '*Grace' means that God is kind to us (see notes on 1:4). God's *grace 'appeared' when Jesus came to earth. 'Appeared' describes the way that the sun rises at dawn. This word links with Luke 1:79. 'God our *Saviour' (verse 10) wants to save everyone from his or her *sin. But every person has to decide whether to believe and trust God.

Verse 12

God's *grace trains us in two ways. It teaches us to give up anything bad. It guides us to do good things. When someone becomes a Christian, he or she starts a new life. In Colossians 3:9-10, Paul said that a person 'takes off' his old character. Then he 'puts on' his new character, which is like Christ's character. After that, Christians have to learn how to behave in the right way. As they understand more about God's *grace, they learn how to please God.

God's *grace teaches us to refuse the bad things:

1 People can oppose God in their behaviour, words and thoughts. They also oppose God when they neglect God and his truth.

2 Christians should not satisfy their wicked desires (1 John 2:15-16). These desires are selfish.

God's *grace teaches us to live in the right way:

- 1 towards ourselves. We will control all our desires. We will control how we behave.
- 2 towards other people. We will be fair and honest with other people.
- 3 towards God himself. We will behave in a way that brings honour to God. We will do only the things that please God. This right behaviour shows that a person is a true Christian.

Verse 13

Christians should always think about the future. One day, Jesus will return to this world (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 2 Peter 3:10-13). It is like waiting for a royal visit. In the past God's *grace appeared. This happened when God sent Jesus into the world (verse 11). In the future, God's *glory will appear when Jesus returns to this world. Jesus Christ, who is both God and *Saviour, will return in splendid power. It will be a magnificent event. We know that it will certainly happen. Christians will then live for ever with God. So, we should be happy as we look forward to it.

Verse 14

In John 8:34, Jesus said that everyone who *sins is a slave to *sin. *Sin is like his master. God had to punish all *sin. The punishment for *sin is death (Romans 6:23). But God has not punished people, because he is very kind to them. Instead, God punished Jesus. God planned that Jesus would have to die (Acts 2:23). Jesus never *sinned but he was willing to obey God's plan. Jesus 'gave himself for us'. This means that he died instead of us. He freed us from everything that is evil (1 Peter 1:18-19). The word 'freed' describes how a person bought a slave from a bad master. The slave was free from his old master. The slave then obeyed his new, good master. When Jesus died, he 'paid' for us with his blood (his life).

When we trust Jesus, Jesus frees us from every bad and evil thing. Jesus forgives our *sins and makes us 'clean'. Jesus is now our new master and we belong to him. So we should have a strong desire to please him. Then we will behave in the right way. Paul describes more about this in Romans 6:16-22.

Three tasks

v15 Teach all these things. Encourage people and correct them with all authority. Make sure that everyone respects you.

Verse 15

Paul urged Titus to continue what he had been doing. 'Teach' means to continue to speak about those things. Titus had to keep telling the Christians what God had done for them. He had to keep telling them how to behave in the right way. 'All these things' refers to 2:1-14.

- 1 He had to encourage Christians. This means that he had to be kind to them He had to help them and to urge them.
- 2 Titus, as a Christian leader, had authority that came from God. Some Christians believed the wrong things. They had probably listened to the false teachers. Some Christians behaved in the wrong way. Maybe some Christians still behaved in the way that they used to (1:12). Titus had to correct the people who were wrong. He had to be firm with them.
- 3 People had to respect Titus. He was teaching God's message. He was behaving in the right way (1:7-9). This order may have been for the Christians who lived in Crete. Someone would have read Paul's letter to them. Then they knew that they should respect Titus and his work. Paul gave similar orders to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:12).

Chapter 3

The Christian citizen

v1 Remind the people about these things. The people should let the government and the rulers have authority over them. The people should obey. And they should be ready to do what is good. **v2** They should not say evil things about anyone. They should not fight with anyone. Instead, they should be gentle and humble with everyone.

Verse 1

The people who lived in Crete often argued. They also caused trouble. They were angry because the *Romans ruled them. The Christians had to live in a society that the *Romans had organised. Paul had already taught the people how to live as Christian citizens. But Titus had to remind them again. Christians have to obey the government that rules their country. (However, Christians should never do something that is against God's laws.) In Romans 13:1-7, Paul said that all authority comes from God. God wants rulers to protect citizens. Rulers of a country should make good laws. Then that country will be a safe and a peaceful place. Rulers should punish the people who do not obey the laws. Paul did not want the Christians to involve themselves in political arguments. Instead, the Christians should be prepared to do good things. In that way, they would serve the people in their society. It would also help their government.

Verse 2

Many of the people who lived in Crete had bad characters (1:12). So the Christians had to behave in a better way. They had to be careful about what they said. They had to be careful about what they did. People often insulted or said bad things about other people. But Christians should not insult people back (1 Peter 2:23). Christians should be kind to people because God is kind. Christians can have opinions. They do not have to agree with everyone. But they should not be angry and they should not have fights. A humble person is patient. He does not insist on his own rights. He cares about all kinds of people. 'Everyone' included rulers, people who had bad characters and slaves. In those days, people considered that slaves were property rather than people.

v3 There was a time when we too were foolish. We did not obey. We did not know the truth. We were like slaves to many kinds of evil desires and feelings. We spent our lives hurting other people. We were jealous of them. People hated us, and we hated each other. **v4** Then God our *Saviour appeared to us. He is kind and he loves people. **v5** He saved us. He did not save us because we had done good things. But he saved us because he cared about us. And he was kind to us. He saved us when he washed away our *sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit gave us new *spiritual life.

v6 God generously poured out his Holy Spirit on us by Jesus Christ our *Saviour. **v7** God says that we are not guilty. He says that we are *righteous. He did this because of his *grace. We know now that certainly we will receive the life that never ends. **v8** These things that I have told you are all true. I want you to emphasise them to the people who have trusted God. Then they will be careful always to do the right thing. These things are good and they will help everyone.

What the people were like before they became Christians

Verse 3

Paul had described how Christians should behave. In these verses, he described what they were like before. He said 'we'. So he included himself, Titus, the Christians in Crete and other people who believed. Paul reminded them why Christians should never be proud. They had all behaved badly before they became Christians. Therefore, they should not have a severe attitude to people who were not Christians. The people who lived in Crete had bad characters. But Titus should not give up. Even wicked people could become Christians because of God's *grace. In Ephesians 5:8, Paul had written 'once you were darkness, but now you are light in the *Lord'.

Before they heard the good news, they were foolish. They did not understand God and his commands. So they did not obey God. Christ is the way to God (John 14:6). But they had followed the wrong way. They could not control themselves. Instead, their strong desires and feelings controlled them. Their lives were full of cruel words and actions. They were jealous of what other people were like. They were jealous of what other people owned. When people hate each other, it causes problems for society.

The work of God's *grace

Verse 4

'God our *Saviour' is Jesus Christ. In those days, *Roman rulers declared that they were 'god' and '*saviour'. But Paul showed that this was false. God is always generous. He is kind and he loves everyone. God's behaviour is different from the behaviour in verse 3. God did not want people to continue to live in that bad way.

Verse 5

Verses 5-7 may be part of a song that they sang at a *baptism.

Christians should be grateful that Jesus has rescued them from their *sin. People cannot save themselves. And God does not save them because they have made themselves good enough. Nobody is good enough for God. God loves people so much that he sent Jesus to this world (John 3:16). God is kind to people because he loves them. That is why God saves people. Paul emphasised God's kindness (his '*grace') in other letters (Ephesians 2:4-9; Galatians 2:16).

When a person washes in water, his body becomes clean. When God forgives a person God 'washes away' the person's *sins. *Baptism shows what happens in a person's spirit (Romans 6:3-7). His old life dies and the Holy Spirit gives him new life. The person leaves his old life behind and he begins a new Christian life. Life begins again like a new birth. The Holy Spirit gives people power to please God.

Verse 6

God has 'poured out' his Holy Spirit on all true Christians. This started in Jerusalem on the day of *Pentecost (Acts 2). God's gifts are always generous. God has a rich supply of gifts for us from the Holy Spirit. A person must receive Jesus Christ as his or her *Saviour first. Then he or she receives the Holy Spirit.

Verse 7

It was God's purpose that by his *grace he should save us. When Jesus Christ died, God forgave our *sins. Then he made us *righteous (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). He did this because he loves us. He did this because he is kind to us. We are now God's children. Therefore, in this present world we have the right to enjoy a new quality of life. And when our bodies die, our spirit will live with Christ for ever.

Verse 8

'These things' refer to what Paul taught in verses 4-7. The false teachers said that they knew God. But their actions showed that they did not really know him. They did not behave in a way that pleased God (1:16). All Christians should understand what God has done for them. God loves them and he has been very kind to them. When Christians really know God, then they will behave in the right way. They will always try to please God. They will have to avoid the things that are wrong. That requires effort. They will have to think about what they do. As a result, their actions will benefit other people. They will help even the people who are not Christians. This is how Christians can affect their society.

<p>v9 Avoid foolish discussions. Avoid long lists about the history of people's families. Avoid arguments. Avoid quarrels about the law. These things are worth nothing. They do not help anyone. v10 If someone keeps causing arguments, warn him once. Then warn him a second time. After that, avoid him. v11 You know that a man like that is evil and *sinful. His own *sin shows that he is guilty.</p>
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Behaviour that is not useful

Verse 9

We can contrast this with what Paul wrote in verse 8. The *Jews had stupid arguments and disagreements about what the *Jewish laws meant. The *Jews made up many extra laws too. They made up false histories about people in the *Old Testament (see the notes on 1:14). They became angry about things were no use at all. Christians and *Jews believe the '*Old Testament'. But the *Jews had many discussions that helped no one. So Christians had to avoid those discussions.

Verses 10-11

When a person keeps arguing, he can cause trouble. He is proud and he will not listen to other people. He has decided that he alone is right. His attitude is *sinful. A person who is like that can confuse new Christians. And he can divide a group of Christians. His wicked actions show that he is guilty. Paul advised Titus about how to deal with a man like that. Titus had to warn him once or twice. To 'warn' means to show the man where he was wrong. That gave the man a chance to change. He might realise that he was wrong. If he was humble, Titus could teach him the truth about God. But if the man continued to cause trouble, he would become a false teacher. Titus and the Christians had to avoid him.

Last instructions

v12 I am going to send Artemas or Tychicus to you. When he arrives, try to come to me in the city called Nicopolis. I have decided to stay here during the winter. **v13** Do everything that you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey.

They should have everything that they need. Make sure that they do. **v14** Our people should learn to spend their time doing good work. Then they will be able to provide for other people. And they will have useful lives.

v15 All the people who are with me send their greetings. Greet all the Christians who love us. May God's *grace be with all of you.

Verse 12

Paul had decided to spend the winter in a city called Nicopolis. People did not travel far in the winter because of the bad weather. Paul wanted Titus to try to go to Nicopolis too. However, Paul did not want to leave the church in Crete without a leader. Therefore, Paul was sending Artemas or Tychicus to be the leader instead of Titus. We know nothing about Artemas. Tychicus often travelled with Paul (Acts 20:4). Tychicus took a letter from Paul to Colossae city (Colossians 4:7). Tychicus also took a letter from Paul to Ephesus city (Ephesians 6:21-22; 2 Timothy 4:12).

Verse 13

Zenas may have been a *Roman lawyer. Or he may have been a *Jew who was an expert in the law of Moses. He had become a Christian. Apollos was a well-known Christian who had worked in Ephesus (Acts 18:24) and Corinth (1 Corinthians 3:6). These two men were probably in Crete. They may even have brought Paul's letter to Titus. Paul does not say where the two men were going. But Paul wanted them to have what they needed. In those days, Christian workers often travelled a long way. Many people had helped Paul while he was travelling (Acts 15:3; Romans 15:24; 1 Corinthians 16:5-6).

Verse 14

'Our people' refers to Christians. Paul wanted all the Christians, not just Titus, to be generous. The Christians in Crete had to work hard and not be lazy (1:12). They would be able to provide for their own families. They would also be able to provide for other people. God is pleased when Christians do this (3 John 5-6). Selfish people produce nothing good. But generous people can help many other people.

Verse 15

Paul ended his letters with a greeting. It helped to unite Christians. Many people worked with Paul and they prayed for the churches. That must have encouraged the people in the churches. This letter had just a short greeting. Paul did not say who was with him.

Paul wanted all the Christians in Crete to receive God's *grace and kindness.

Word List

apostle ~ someone whom God sends to teach about Jesus and to lead his church.

baptism ~ when they put a person into water to show that he or she belongs to Jesus Christ.

disciple ~ someone who follows Jesus; someone who learns what he teaches.

elder ~ a leader in the church.

eternal ~ something that has no beginning or end.

Gentile ~ anyone who is not a *Jew; anything to do with someone who is not a *Jew.

glory ~ the beautiful light round God. It shows how good and powerful he is.

gospel ~ the good news for everybody that God saves people from *sin by Jesus Christ; the good news of the things that Jesus has done for us.

grace ~ a gift from God that we do not deserve; we cannot earn it; what God gives because he is generous and kind; the help and protection that God gives.

Greek ~ the original language of the *New Testament.

Hebrew ~ the language of the *Jews and of the *Old Testament.

Jews ~ people in the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their children.

Jewish ~ anything to do with a *Jew.

Lord ~ the name for God or Jesus in the Bible; it means that he is above all other things; a name that we use for Jesus; we use it when we obey him.

Messiah ~ a special servant of God; a name for Jesus Christ; it means the person whom God sent; he sent him to save people from the anger of God because of our bad ways.

New Testament ~ the second part of the Bible. It is about the things that Jesus did and taught. It is about the church.

Old Testament ~ the first part of the Bible; the holy things that the writers wrote before Christ's birth.

Pentecost ~ a special day for the *Jews 50 days after Easter.

prophet ~ a person who hears God's words, and tells them to other people. A person who spoke God's words. Some prophets wrote books in the Bible.

righteous ~ to do what is right and good; people that God sees as pure and not his enemies.

Roman ~ people who lived in or who came from the city called Rome; that which belonged to Rome. Rome was a powerful city at that time. It had a strong army. The Romans ruled many countries. Those countries had to obey Roman law and pay Roman taxes.

Saviour ~ Jesus, the person who saves us; the one who rescues; someone who will bring us back to God from the bad things that we have done; someone who saves us from the bad things that other people have done to us.

sin ~ (1) to do wrong against God or against other people; (2) the evil things that are in us.

sinful ~ evil and wrong.

spiritual ~ belongs to the spirit rather than physical things; belongs to God's Spirit or to heaven.

Book List

William Barclay ~ The letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

John Calvin ~ 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus ~ Crossway Classic Commentaries

Donald Guthrie ~ The Pastoral Epistles ~ Tyndale Commentaries

Philip H. Towner ~ 1 & 2 Timothy & Titus ~ IVP New Testament Commentary Series

William Hendriksen ~ Timothy and Titus ~ Geneva Series Commentary

New Bible Commentary 21st Century edition ~ IVP

The Bible Knowledge Commentary ~ IVP

Various translations of the Bible

Cobuild English Dictionary ~ Collins

W.E. Vine ~ Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

Strong's Enhanced Lexicon

For the Computer

Expositor's Bible Commentary on CD ROM ~ Zondervan

Logos Bible Software

New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology ~ edited by Colin Brown ~ Zondervan

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