

THE BOOK OF TITUS

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INTRODUCTION

Paul wanted to encourage Timothy to help with his work in Ephesus where he was to stay as an evangelist. Paul's waiting for the result of his trial in 2 Timothy and makes some requests to Timothy to come and see him before he was put to death 2 Timothy 4:6. In 1 Timothy Paul gave him clear guidelines for choosing church leaders.

In his letter to Titus, Paul appears to be dealing with the same issue and so, he encourages him to use similar guidelines for choosing church leaders in Crete. So, in both cases, Paul's letters of encouragement would have helped them in their demanding tasks.

Paul wrote this to Titus who was in Crete so that he might set straight what was unfinished, Titus 1:5, he was possibly in Nicopolis, Titus 3:12. Titus was Paul's companion and fellow worker, Acts 15 / Galatians 2:1-3 / 2 Corinthians 12:18 / 2 Corinthians 8:16ff / 2 Timothy 4:10.

The Cretan's economy consisted of making and exporting wine and olive oil but they were notorious for their untruthfulness and so this wasn't a nice place to live.

Another reason for Paul writing this letter was to urge Titus to come to Paul as soon as there was a replacement, Titus 3:12. Zenas and Apollos are going on their way too with Titus' help, Titus 3:13.

THE LETTER

The letter itself, along with other letters which Paul wrote, especially 1 and 2 Timothy has brought about some criticism as to whether Paul actually wrote them or not, mainly for four reasons. 1. The historical problem. 2. The ecclesiastical problem. 3. The doctrinal problem. 4. The linguistic problem.

It's difficult to understand where the confusion comes from as Paul clearly tells us it was, he, himself who actually wrote the letter, 1 Timothy 1:1 / 2 Timothy 2:1 / Titus 1:1.

DATE

We don't know exactly when Paul wrote his letter to Titus but one thing, we do know is that he wasn't in prison at the time, so they were most likely written after his release. In Titus 1:5 Paul tells us that he visited Crete and later in Titus 3:12, he asks Titus to join him at Nicopolis. But by the time Paul writes 2 Timothy it's clear he's in prison awaiting trial, 2 Timothy 1:8 / 2 Timothy 2:9, he's very aware that his time on earth is coming to an end very soon, 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

As with most books of the Bible trying to date them exactly isn't the easiest of tasks but most scholars believe Titus was written around 60 A.D. when Paul was in prison in Rome. Remember he was put in prison and then released at the end of the Book of Acts but a short time later he was rearrested and was to be put to death, 2 Timothy. Paul must have written 1 Timothy and Titus during his short time of freedom.

TITUS

Titus is one of those faithful disciples we actually don't know a lot about, apart from the fact he was Paul's true son and shared a common, Titus 1:4. We also know he had Greek parents which meant he wasn't circumcised, Galatians 2:3.

As Paul addresses him as 'his true son', Titus 1:4, it's highly possible that Paul actually converted him to Christianity, Philemon 10. we don't know for certain, but we could speculate that he was from Antioch of Syria, as Paul refused to allow him to be circumcised there, Acts 15.

Although Titus seems to be very active within the Lord's church, and although he isn't mentioned anywhere in the Book of Acts, we do know that he was one of Paul's travelling companions, 2 Corinthians 7:14 / 2 Corinthians 8:23 / Galatians 2:3-5. He accompanied Paul to Ephesus, Corinth and Rome, 2 Corinthians 7:5-15 / 2 Corinthians 12:18 / 2 Timothy 4:10. However, there is no record of his death.

OUTLINE

Introduction. Titus 1:1-4

Appoint Qualified Spiritual Leaders. Titus 1:5-9

Rebuke All False Teachers. Titus 1:10-16

Speak Sound Doctrine. Titus 2:1-15

Maintain Good Works. Titus 3:1-11

Conclusion. Titus 3:12-15

CHAPTER 1

The theme of the book is relationships and it contains instructions for the congregation, instructions for their social life, instructions for family life and instructions for the individual's life.

'Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour.' Titus 1:1-3

Paul here describes himself as a servant, 'doulos', 'slave' of God, and he uses this term thirty times throughout his letters. Romans 1:1 / Philippians 1:1. The word 'kurios' means master, which means a slave is the absolute.

An apostle, 'apostolos' means one sent, Matthew 10:2 / Hebrews 3:1 / Galatians 1:19 / Acts 14:14. Paul was sent by Jesus Himself, Acts 9:15-16. Whether we like the term 'slave' or not, the Bible teaches that all Christians are slaves of Christ, a slave who goes about doing His work, Romans 12:1 / Galatians 2:20.

The faith of God's elect means to stimulate and promote the faith of God's chosen ones, God's elect, Romans 8:33 / Colossians 3:12 / Deuteronomy 7:6-11.

Knowledge, 'epignosis', of the truth leads to godliness, means recognising and understanding, John 8:32. Godliness is an active reverence toward God, Ephesians 5:1. Faith and knowledge rest on the hope of eternal life, our hope as Christians is that we will live forever, we will live after our physical death, Titus 3:7 / Romans 8:24-25 / 2 Timothy 1:1 / Hebrews 6:18 / 2 Peter 3:13.

God has always planned for us to have eternal life, even before the earth was created, we were never created to live forever earth on earth, Revelation 13:8 / Romans 1:2 / Romans 16:25 / 2 Timothy 1:9.

Our hope is for something much greater than living on this earth, Hebrews 6:18-19. Faith and knowledge lead to godliness, which leads to hope, 2 Timothy 4:7-8. Hope ‘elpis’ means a confident expectation and it has two aspects to it, a confident expectation for what we hope for and we will receive our desire, Hebrews 11:1.

HOW CAN WE TRUST THIS?

God promised it before the beginning of time, God can't lie or deceive, Numbers 23:19 / 1 Samuel 15:29 / Hebrews 6:13-20. God can't lie to Himself, He can't lie or deceive men because it's not in His character to do so, James 1:13 / 1 John 1:5.

At the right time, God let His Word be known, He revealed the plan of redemption through inspired men, Galatians 4:4-6 / Ephesians 3:3-5 / 1 Timothy 2:6. He also made known through His Word, that Jesus is the Way and what Christians need to do in order to live a life that pleases Him, John 14:26 / John 16:13 / Philippians 1:27.

We know that the revelation of His Word is now complete and final, Acts 4:12 / 2 Peter 1:3 / Jude 3 / John 14:26 / John 16:13. Unlike what some religious groups claim today, there are no new revelations from God, 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, if we want to know what God says, we simply need to read His Word, after all, His Word is all that we need for life, 2 Timothy 2:16-17 / 2 Peter 1:3. It's through reading His Word that we come to understand that God is our Saviour.

‘To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.’
Titus 1:4

We know that Titus wasn't Paul's son in physical terms but he's Paul's son in spiritual terms, which would mean there was a good chance that Paul actually converted him to Christianity, 1 Timothy 1:2 / Philemon 10.

Titus was Paul's true son in our common faith, the faith here is the body of teaching which we have today called the New Testament, John 14:26 / John 16:13 / 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 / 2 Peter 1:3 / Jude 3. It's this faith that joins all Christians together, Ephesians 4:5, it's this faith that helps us maintain pace with each other, Ephesians 4:3.

Grace is the cause and peace is the consequence, God offered His grace to us as a demonstration of His mercy, Titus 3:4-7 / Ephesians 2:1-10. As a result of God's grace towards us, we are now at peace with God, we can sleep peacefully at night knowing that we are saved by His grace, Romans 5:1-2.

Notice that Paul says that Jesus is our Saviour, earlier he said that God is our Saviour, Titus 1:3, these verse together, are denoting their equality. Jesus is God in the flesh, John 1:1-3 / John 1:14.

‘The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.’ Titus 1:5

Paul was reminding them this is why he left Titus in the first place, he left him there to edify and equip the church, 1 Timothy 4:11-12 / 2 Timothy 4:2, but also to put right, that which was left unfinished in every town, elders were to be appointed.

Because his task of appointing elders wasn't complete yet, there seems to be a sense of urgency to get the appointing done. Yes, the church in Crete had problems which included false teachers, Titus 1:10-11, and immoral behaviour among these young converts, Titus 2:1-10, but we don't know what was causing the delay in appointing elders.

We must remember up to this point in time, they didn't have any guidelines, but if we look today at the problems some churches have in appointing elders, even with the qualities and guidelines given within God's Word, maybe we can get a glimpse of what the problem was.

Paul had obviously started the process of appointing elders with Titus when he was in Crete, but Titus failed to finish what they started, maybe Titus needed more information to finish the task, [Titus 1:6-9](#) / [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#) / [1 Corinthians 11:34](#).

Titus himself wasn't to appoint the elders, he was given the responsibility of teaching the church what qualities men needed to serve as an elder, and the church would choose men who were qualified from within themselves, [Acts 15:22](#). To begin with, the apostles appointed elders, [Acts 14:23](#) / [2 Corinthians 8:19](#). Then, Paul delegated Titus to appoint elders in Crete, [Titus 1:5](#). But ultimately, it's the Holy Spirit who actually appoints an elder because it's the Spirit who sets out the qualities needed in order for them to serve, [Acts 20:28](#).

HOW MANY ELDERS ARE REQUIRED?

In every example we have in the New Testament, there is a plurality of elders in each congregation, never just one elder, [Acts 20:17](#) / [Acts 21:18](#) / [Titus 1:5](#).

When Paul told Titus to 'appoint elders in every city,' this didn't mean one elder could be over several churches or the churches in several cities. In the early days, there would only be one congregation in a city. Therefore, that congregation should have elders appointed to be over it.

WHY SHOULD A CONGREGATION HAVE ELDERS?

1. Un-scripturally organised. This means governed by something other than elders and deacons.
2. Scripturally unorganised. This means something that is expedient, useful or helps us. Business meetings, men's meetings, the church commits men to lead but this isn't right because the men aren't qualified. They have no scriptural authority which means they can't carry out scriptural discipline. Men need to be spiritually mature enough to do this.
3. Scripturally organised. This means God governs the church and elders are what God wants in place, [Acts 14:21-23](#). Each church, in pagan cities where was no Jews, no synagogues. We can't say that these elders had a Jewish background and were already familiar with God. Also, these elders were in place in 'Antioch of Pisidia', 'Lystra', 'Iconium', and 'Derbe' just three months after the churches in these places had been planted.

WERE THESE MEN NOVICES?

They had the gift of supernatural faith. [1 Corinthians 12:9](#). Elders were required in every town, this task was unfinished and not complete until elders were in place, [Titus 1:5](#). There is a sense of urgency.

THE OFFICE OF AN ELDER IS ONE THAT IS APPROVED BY THE GODHEAD

1. The Elder is described as God's Steward. [Titus 1:7](#)
2. The Pastor is an office held with the Son's approval. [Ephesians 4:11](#)
3. The Bishop, 'overseer', is appointed through the work of the Holy Spirit. [Acts 20:28](#)

WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF THE ELDERS?

Their role is described in the Bible names. 1. Elder, 'presbuteros'. 2. Bishop, 'episkopos'. 3. Pastors, 'poimen.

These words describe a man who is older and experienced in the faith, i.e., 'an elder', a person who is a decisionmaker, manager of church affairs, and leader i.e., 'bishop', and one who maintains a careful watch for the spiritual needs of all the members of the flock i.e., 'pastor'. Ultimately the role of an elder is to feed, tend, and protect and lead the church. [Acts 20:28](#).

They have a specific role in the work of the church, [Ephesians 4:11-13](#), the gift mentioned in [Ephesians 4:11](#) are the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. They are gifts given by the Lord Jesus [Ephesians 4:7-10](#). Spiritual gifts are only mentioned indirectly because the apostles and prophets of the early church had these gifts. The apostles were direct witnesses of Christ who then laid the foundation for the church. Accomplishing their duty, they remain with us through their writings in the New Testament.

The prophets existed to fill the gap between the establishment of the church and the recording of Christ's law. They too continue with us today through their writings, but as Paul stated there would not be new prophets once their work was completed, [1 Corinthians 13:8-11](#).

Evangelists, 'preachers, ministers', pastors, 'elders, bishops, overseers', and teachers continue to exist in the church teaching the things recorded by the apostles and prophets to build up the church. They are meant to provide leadership for the congregation according to the will of God, [1 Peter 5:1-3](#).

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ELDERS

From [1 Thessalonians 5:12-13](#), we clearly see that the congregation has a responsibility to 'recognise' the elders. In other words, if a congregation had elders, do you know who they are? Does the church recognize the elders as the leaders of the congregation?

This passage also tells us that a congregation has a responsibility to 'esteem' the elders. In other words, the congregation must give them respect. We need to look up to them. And the reason we look up to them is because of the work they are doing and make no mistake about it loves ones, the role of an elder can be very stressful, so an elder needs to be shown respect. [1 Timothy 5:17-20](#) tells us that the congregation has a responsibility to 'trust' the elders.

That's why Paul says that accusations should not be allowed to stand against the elders except with the testimony of two or three witnesses.

This passage also tells us that the congregation has a responsibility to 'correct' the elders. Paul says if it has been shown that an elder is in sin, he is to be publicly corrected.

Now, remember elders are not exempt from sinning and they need to be corrected from time to time as well. But this doesn't mean that any time an elder sins, we have to publicly expose it because it might just be something between

him and God. But if an elder commits a sin that can bring reproach on the Lord and His church, that elder needs to be corrected publicly, ‘in the congregation’.

If the elder is sinning and will not repent, he is to be publicly corrected. This passage also tells us that the congregation has the responsibility to treat the elders ‘equally’. We cannot act as if one of the elders is better, higher, or preferred above the others. There is no such thing as a ‘senior pastor’. Again, if an elder sins, he is to be corrected publicly, it does not matter which elder it is. We cannot let our friendships come between the need to help them get to heaven.

We need to remember that the goal of a Christian is to get to heaven, and we need to help other Christians get there and that includes the elders. Hebrews 13:17 tells us that the congregation has a responsibility to ‘remember’ the elders. So, a congregation needs to be mindful of them and the role that they are fulfilling in the Lord’s church. We are to remember their leadership and the things which they have said we must do.

This passage also tells us that the congregation has a responsibility to ‘obey’ the elders. We obey the elders because they are looking out for our own souls’ best interests. They are trying to get us to heaven, and we should obey them because they will help us get there. They are also trying to help others get to heaven, so we should obey them to give an example to others as well.

As the sheep, we go where the shepherds lead us and so this passage also tells us that the congregation has a responsibility to make the elders’ job as ‘easy as possible’. When the congregation willingly obeys the elders, it makes their job an easy one and they will be much happier in their role as elders. When the congregation, ‘usually just a few members’ causes problems, it can make the elders’ lives miserable.

Many elders have been so disheartened because of the reaction of the congregation that they simply quit, and I know of some elders that have been so depressed by the actions of the congregation that they have left the church altogether. A congregation should make it a point to make the elders’ job as easy as possible so that the whole congregation can be happier.

Hebrews 13:17 also tells us that the congregation has a responsibility to ‘imitate the elders’ example’. The elders should be living their lives in a way that others should follow. And yes, this should be true of all Christians as 1 John 1:7 reminds us but this should be especially true of the elders because the other Christians are to follow their example. The congregation has a responsibility to follow their ‘example of faith’.

Elders should be those who are not novices, but instead, mature Christians and all Christians should make it their goal to become more mature in Christ. The elders are supposed to be the example on earth for us to follow in order to get to heaven. Their goal is first and foremost to get to heaven and if we follow their example, it should be because we want to get to heaven as well.

‘An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.’ Titus 1:6-9

QUALITIES REQUIRED OF AN ELDER

‘Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to

drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.' 1 Timothy 3:1-7

First and foremost a man must 'desire', want to become an elder, we can't force this on anyone. 1 Timothy 3:1 "Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task." Now notice that they are broken down into three categories.

1. Physical. 2. Mental. 3. Spiritual.

PHYSICAL – HOME LIFE

1. Male elder, spiritually mature, a man with experience. Knowledge and wisdom. Titus 2:2 older men.
 2. Married means experience of marriage, this would include a widower, one wife not two, in other words, not a polygamist.
 3. Children that believe, faithful, faithful and show respect for their father. Titus 1:6 unruly, respect to do what their father says. Children means one or more.
- If you have five children and four have faith in God but one doesn't, does this stop a man from serving as an elder? That doesn't make sense. It's the experience that's important. Children are your responsibility whilst they are living under your roof not after they leave home. Ezekiel 18:20.

MENTAL

1. Knowledge means being able to teach, able to reason, and hence wisdom.
2. Knows the Word and can handle it properly.
3. Influence people by his use of the Word.

SPIRITUAL

1. Applies to all Christians.

BREAKDOWN OF THE QUALIFICATIONS

PHYSICAL – HOMELIFE

1. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:6. Male / Husband of one wife / Male / Faithful to his wife.

Obviously, an elder has to be a male otherwise the text would say the wife of one husband, and he needs to be faithful to his wife, in other words not cheat etc.

There are some ideas about the husband of one wife. Some people believe that this means that the man can only have been married once, and so someone who has been divorced or his wife has died wouldn't qualify. But we need to remember not to put words in Paul's mouth because the text doesn't say that.

If a man has been divorced through no fault of his own and then remarries, why should he be disqualified from being an elder, if he wasn't responsible for the marriage break up? Or if his wife dies, does this then disqualify him from being or continuing to be an elder? If divorce is legal and dissolves the marriage so that the one divorced can marry another, or his wife dies, and he marries another woman is the one remarried considered now to be 'the husband of one wife'?

It seems evident that legally such a remarried person is the husband of only one wife. He is not considered to have two wives. I believe this is speaking about a man who is not a 'polygamist', someone who has many wives, after all this was the practice of many in New Testament times.

The text doesn't say that the man only has to have been married once but it does say that he has to have only one wife. Remember it's all about having the experience of marriage. We should always try to get to the highest ideal, someone who has not been divorced, but we must never forget that what we did 'before' we were Christians or 'during' our Christian walk has been forgiven and we should also remember that circumstances change in all our lives which may well be out of our control.

POLYGAMY, BIGAMY, AND 'THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE'

Several writers have concluded that the phrase 'the husband of one wife' means that the man in view is not a bigamist or polygamist but is married to 'only' one wife. They stress that the force of the instruction lies on the concept of 'only' one and not multiple wives. It would seem prudent to argue, then, that the phrase is not inserted solely to exclude polygamists or bigamists from the eldership.

To clarify, however, the condition would exclude polygamists but would carry as much positive force for a man to be married to one wife as it would negative force not to have more than one. As McGarvey stated: 'That he should be the husband of one wife, forbids having less than one as clearly as it forbids having more than one' (p. 56).

ONLY ONE WIFE HIS WHOLE LIFE!

We have established, then, that the candidate for the eldership must be a man who is literally 'the husband of one wife.' Our work is not done, however, because questions still remain concerning the qualification.

Does 'the husband of one wife' mean that the candidate must currently be married to the only wife that he has had his entire life? If his wife dies and he remains single, is he still the 'husband of one wife,' since he was only married to

one woman in his life? Or, if his wife dies and he remarries is he no longer the ‘husband of one wife,’ since he has now been married twice to two different women?

First, let us state that the most ideal situation is one in which a man has been married to one woman for his whole life and they are still together during the time of his eldership. This situation would meet every conceivable challenge of the phrase ‘the husband of one wife.’ Of course, stating the ideal does not exclude other possibilities that might be less than ideal but still potentially viable.

Let us then deal with the situation in which a man has been married, his spouse has died, and he is currently in his second marriage. Is this man a candidate for the eldership? Those who suggest that he is not, often refer to 1 Timothy 5:9 where Paul discussed widows who were to be ‘taken into the number’ of the church. In that verse, Paul stated that only a widow who ‘has been the wife of one man’ should be taken in.

In light of this, some believe that having only been married to one person in one’s life has some type of spiritual significance, or at least offers a person some type of life circumstance that would be desirable for one who is an elder. Such an understanding seems to leave something to be desired based on the actual wording of 1 Timothy 3:2.

The qualification in 1 Timothy 3:2 states that a bishop ‘must be’ in the present tense. The Greek words ‘dei’ and ‘eivai’ combine to form the ‘must’ and ‘be’ so that each of the qualifications is one that must at the present be a part of the potential elder’s life or character. For instance, it would do no good to have an elder who at one time was hospitable but is no longer such.

Nor would it be good for a congregation to have an elder who in the past was able to teach, but currently is not able to do so. Ironically, the present tense force is conspicuously absent from 1 Timothy 5:9, and a widow could not be taken into the number of the church if she was married to a man who was living (for she would not be a widow). Yet the ideal for an elder is for him to be currently married.

Thus, it seems an unnatural and tenuous stretch to force the ‘parallel’ between 1 Timothy 3:2 and 1 Timothy 5:9 to mean that an elder cannot be remarried after the death of a spouse. As Glasscock wrote: ‘First Timothy 3:2 does not say ‘an elder must be married only once’ nor does it say, ‘an elder cannot remarry’ (140:247).

He further stated that if Paul had wanted to insist that an elder must be married to one woman his whole life, the inspired writer could have written, ‘having had only one wife.’ Since Paul did not make such a statement when it was in his power to do so, it goes beyond the bounds of the phrase ‘the husband of one wife’ to insist that it means ‘having had only one wife’ (140:247).

An understanding of the biblical teaching of marriage adds weight to the idea that a man can be qualified for the eldership, even if he has been married after the death of a spouse, 1 Corinthians 7:39. Marriage is a covenant that holds sway only as long as a person lives on this Earth in a physical, mortal body.

Once a person’s spouse dies, he or she is no longer married to that person. Jesus elucidated this fact in His discussion with the Sadducees. This particular Jewish sect did not believe in the resurrection of the soul. In order to trap Jesus, the Sadducees concocted a situation that they thought rendered the idea of the resurrection absurd. They presented to Jesus the situation in which a woman married a man, he died, so she married his brother.

Subsequently, his brother died, and she married the third brother. Eventually, she lived through seven marriages to seven brothers and finally died. The Sadducees then asked Jesus, ‘Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife will she be? For they all had her,’ Matthew 22:23-28

Jesus explained to the Sadducees that they did not understand the resurrection or the Scriptures. He stated that ‘in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven,’ Matthew 22:30 From Jesus’ teachings, we learn that a marriage contracted on Earth has no force in the resurrection. Thus, a person who was married to one wife on Earth, when she dies, is no longer married to that person. While she was his wife in

the past, she cannot rightly be called his wife now, since the covenant of marriage is over at the point of the death of a spouse.

Glasscock summarized this idea when he wrote: ‘Surely no one seriously believes that if a man’s wife dies that he is still bound to her in marriage; thus, if he marries a second time, he still has only one wife, that is, he is truly still ‘the husband of one wife’ (140:247).

As J.W. McGarvey stated: ‘It may be well to add that one living wife is clearly meant and that there is no allusion to the number of deceased wives a man may have had. If my wife is dead, I am not now her husband’ (1950, p. 57).

Therefore, if a man’s wife dies and he becomes a widower, the present tense force of being the ‘husband of one wife’ would seem to exclude him from being qualified for the eldership.

We must be careful to insist that such a situation does not make him any less of a Christian, any less spiritual, or any less valuable to the Lord’s cause. It simply is the case that a circumstance in his life has arisen that renders him no longer qualified to serve as an elder at a particular time.

To illustrate further, suppose a man was an exceptional teacher, but was in a tragic accident and lost his voice and his ability to communicate his thoughts properly. Could it be that such an accident would render him unable to teach? Certainly.

Since he is no longer ‘apt to teach,’ and would most likely not be in the physical condition to serve as an elder, would it be the best course for him to no longer be an elder? Yes. Is he less valuable to God, less spiritual, or in any way less ‘Christian’? Absolutely not.

It is simply the case that a circumstance in his life has rendered him unable to serve as an elder at a particular time in his life. The eldership is a functional role that requires a person to maintain the qualifications throughout the time of his tenure as an elder. On the other hand, if a widower were to remarry after the death of his wife and the woman, he remarried met the qualifications detailed for the wives of elders, 1 Timothy 3:11, the present tense force of being the ‘husband of one wife’ would allow him to be considered for the eldership.

CAN A MAN WHO HAS BEEN DIVORCED AND REMARRIED BE AN ELDER?

If a man who loses his spouse to death and remarries can be considered for the eldership, the natural question arises, what about a man who is divorced and remarried?

If the phrase ‘the husband of one wife,’ does not mean ‘having been married only once in his life,’ that would seem to admit the possibility that a man who has been divorced and is remarried to ‘one wife’ could be eligible. Before delving into this, let us restate the ideal.

The perfect situation is one in which there is a man who has been married once to the same woman and she is living during the time he serves as an elder. Is it possible, however, that a divorced man who is remarried may still be an elder? If a man can be married to a second wife, because he divorced his first wife scripturally, and not be considered by God to be committing adultery, then it follows that God must view the first marriage as dissolved and the covenant broken.

Therefore, it would still be the case that a man who divorced his wife scripturally and married another woman would/could be ‘the husband of one wife.’ It would appear logical that a man’s condition upon the death of a wife, or due to a scriptural divorce, would be the same, and a subsequent marriage would not disqualify him from being the ‘husband of one wife.’ Like or unlike the other qualifications?

To me, the really central question is this: is the ‘husband of one wife’ qualification a reference only to the present or does it stretch back to the remote past, including the pre-Christian past?

I think the presumption should be that this question would be fundamentally like, as opposed to unlike, all the other qualifications listed since the text does not set it apart as being essentially different. And all the other qualifications, I think, of necessity apply to the present (which inevitably includes the recent past), not to the distant past.

Do we believe ‘husband of one wife’ means he must always, even as an unbeliever, have had no more than a total of one wife in his lifetime? If so, then wouldn’t we need to also extend the same understanding to the other qualifications, so they include his distant or pre-Christian past?

Let’s test it, adding that same interpretive phrase to all the other qualifications, and see what it would mean. This would mean that any elder must: Have always, even as an unbeliever, been above reproach. Have always, even as an unbeliever, been sober-minded. Have always, even as an unbeliever, been self-controlled. Have always, even as an unbeliever, been respectable. Have always, even as an unbeliever, been hospitable.

Have always, even as an unbeliever, not been a drunkard. Have always, even as an unbeliever, not been violent or quarrelsome. Have always, even as an unbeliever, not been a lover of money. Have always, even as an unbeliever, managed his household well.

This would make no sense. Don’t we agree that a man can be an elder who once was: a drunk, a murderer, a violent man, lacking self-control, etc.? Of course, we believe he must have demonstrated clear change, and this change, by implication, must have been borne out over a significant period of time.

In the same sense that an elder should not be a recent convert, no matter how genuine his conversion, so he should not be—regardless of how long he’s been a Christian—a recently-transformed drunkard, murderer, fornicator, etc., no matter how genuine his transformation.

2. 1 Timothy 3:11. His wife / Worthy of respect / Not gossips / Temperate / Trustworthy.

An elder’s wife has at least four requirements.

1. Semnos. This means honourable, honest or grave.

a. The word here means the same as with reference to the elders. It means to be prudent, appropriate, dignified, quiet, of sound judgment, not giddy. Some versions translate the word ‘worthy of respect’. This can especially be shown by her dress, 1 Timothy 2:9-10.

b. A grave person is not one that is severe, stern, or unhappy. She is admired by all. The wives of elders must not be foolish, unconcerned, and indifferent to the work of their husbands, but instead serious about its progress and a good helper and companion.

2. Me Diabolos. This means not gossips, not slanderers or false accusers.

a. No form of slandering is pleasing to God. Wives of elders, as well as all Christians, must be able to control their tongue and not be busybodies or tale-bearers of idle gossip.

b. The wives of elders may at times know sensitive information about members of the congregation and one can imagine the kind of damage that it would do if it was told to members of the congregation.

c. Backbiters and talebearers are dangerous both to themselves and to the church, [Proverbs 18:8](#) / [Proverbs 26:20](#).

3. Nephaios. This means temperate, vigilant, and sober. Someone who is trustworthy. On an even keel.

a. This word means the same as with reference to the elders and deacons. The wives of these men must be temperate, self-controlled, and self-possessed. They must ‘hold themselves in’ and not be frivolous and irresponsible, [1 Peter 1:13](#) / [1 Peter 4:7](#).

b. A lack of soberness on the part of the wives will be a bad influence upon their husbands, their children, and their congregation.

4. Pistos. This means trustworthy or faithful. [1 Timothy 3:11](#) Faithful in all things.

a. The wives of elders must be faithful to God in all relations as a Christian. She must be faithful in worship, faithful in Christian living, faithful to her husband, faithful to her children and faithful to all others in the church.

b. A faithful wife can be a great blessing to an elder. An elder’s wife must learn to share with her husband the duties of his work. Her willingness to serve will help him with his willingness to serve. She must be hospitable, and her home should be available.

Also notice that every qualification actually applies to all Christian women seeking to achieve their role in God’s plan.

3. [1 Timothy 3:4](#) / [Titus 1:6](#). Manage his family well / Children that are not open to charge and believe.

Epimeleomai means to manage, rule or be in charge, [Ephesians 5:25-28](#). His wife has a specific role too, [Ephesians 5:22-24](#). His child or children have a specific role too, [Ephesians 6:1-3](#). Children that are not open to charge and believe.

Remember the use of the word children means it’s not a matter of age, it’s a matter of character, [Proverbs 22:6](#). How many children does an elder require? If I were to ask everyone in this room who has children to leave, who would go? Everyone who had either one child or a few children would go. So, it doesn’t matter if the man only has one child.

DO THE CHILDREN HAVE TO BE CHRISTIANS?

Elders don’t necessarily have to have Christian children. Pistos means trustworthy, faithful or believe. Pistis means faith, religious conviction.

Notice the wife is to be ‘faithful in all things’, [1 Timothy 3:11](#) this is not asked of for the children. Remember we’re dealing with the physical, the home, and the whole context points towards being faithful to their father, not God.

Note again [Titus 1:6](#) “With faithful children and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient”.

Note again also [1 Timothy 3:4](#) “And see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.”

His children behave well and show the proper respect. How does the parent deal with their kids when their kids misbehave or are involved in a sin?

According to Barrick, when the adjective pistos is used to modify a noun (as it does in [Titus 1:6](#)), it always carries the meaning ‘faithful’ or ‘trustworthy/credible.’ In contrast, when the adjective is independent and functions as a substantive, it means ‘believing one’ or ‘believer’ (Barrick, ‘[Titus 1:6](#)’).

Therefore, the meaning ‘faithful’ in [Titus 1:6](#) would be more consistent with the use of the word elsewhere in the New Testament.

Against this view, it has been argued that every time *pistos* is translated ‘faithful’ in the New Testament, it refers to believers who are faithful, and never unbelievers. Therefore, it is said, ‘*pistos*’ must refer to children who believe regardless of the precise way it is translated. In response, the fact that *pistos* is not used elsewhere in the New Testament in reference to unbelievers does not mean that the adjective cannot be used in reference to unbelievers (which is what this argument needs to show in order to be compelling).

To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing inherent in the word itself that precludes it from being used to describe an unbeliever. Used in this way, it would describe an unbeliever who, though unregenerate, is faithful and obedient to the one in authority over him (e.g., the soldiers described in [Matthew 8:9](#)).

The view that ‘*pistos*’ means ‘believing’ raises some practical difficulties as well. For example, if a man has a two-year-old daughter who has not repented of her sins and believed in Christ, is that man unqualified to serve as an elder? Most interpreters who say that ‘*pistos*’ means ‘believing’ in [Titus 1:6](#) would answer No, but on what basis? If *pistos* means ‘believing,’ wouldn’t a child who has not exercised saving faith disqualify the father (since ‘believing’ does mean ‘believing’)?

Some would respond by saying that only an unbelieving child who has reached the age of accountability would disqualify the father. Aside from the fact that [Titus 1:6](#) says nothing about such an age, what exactly is that age? Many believers give testimony to having believed at a very young age, even as young as five, so is five the age of accountability? If not, why wouldn’t it be, since children seem capable of believing at such an early age?

In addition, it seems possible that identifying an age as the cut-off might establish something of a high-pressured countdown for an elder whose unbelieving child is approaching that age (i.e., ‘If my child doesn’t profess Christ by this March, I’ll need to step down from serving as an elder!’). These difficulties are only compounded by the fact that so many children profess faith but do not truly possess it.

It is often difficult to know for certain whether or not a child, especially one raised in a Christian home, is truly regenerated. In many cases, elders would be deemed qualified because their children seem to be saved even though they are not regenerated. On the other hand, it is much easier to observe whether or not a child is obedient to his or her father.

These kinds of practical considerations, of course, are secondary to the exegetical ones discussed above, but they are worthy of our consideration. Overall, then, it seems to me that Paul’s intention in [Titus 1:6](#) is to communicate not that an elder’s children must be saved for him to serve as an elder, but rather that his children must be faithful and obedient to their father, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.

Indeed, as Barrick notes, a believing child is far better dispositioned to be obedient and submissive to the authority of his parents than an unbelieving child, and in this way, the two views may end up overlapping to a great extent—but saving faith per se is no more in view in [Titus 1:6](#) than it is in [1 Timothy 3:4](#) (Barrick, ‘[Titus 1:6](#)’).

What do we make of an elder who has several believing children, walking faithfully with the Lord, but one who is not? If most of his children are believers, is he not a good manager of his household? Or does the one unbelieving child call into question his overall managerial ability? If it does, then why did any of his children turn out to be believers?

We need to let Paul himself explain what he means by faithfulness and obedience, and he explains it negatively in terms of public behaviour, ‘not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient’ rather than spiritual faithfulness to the Gospel. Paul says that an elder’s ‘children [must be] believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.’

At first glance, the answer looks obvious. Paul says that an elder's kids must be believers. But note the footnote in the ESV, 'believers' can also be translated as 'faithful'. It's important to pay attention to footnotes in the translations of biblical texts, as they alert us when there are other equally valid translation options.

The Greek word here is 'pistos', which can mean either 'believing' or 'faithful' in the pastoral epistles. For example, see 'believing masters' in [1 Timothy 6:2](#) and 'faithful men' in [2 Timothy 2:2](#). Word studies alone can't solve this; it depends on the context. But let's be clear on the two big options. Paul either meant that

1. an elder's children have to be 'believers', or
2. an elder's children must at least be 'faithful, submissive, and obedient'.

HOW DO WE DECIDE?

The Reformers rightly insisted that we allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. Here we have one author, Paul, writing separately to two young church planters, Timothy and Titus, talking about the same subject, elder qualifications. How do the two passages about family life compare?

When we look at Greek, we see how similar the language is between [1 Timothy 3:4](#) and [Titus 1:6](#). You can see the similarities even if you don't know Greek. While [1 Timothy 3:4](#) says that an elder must 'manage his own household well...keeping his children submissive,'

[Titus 1:6](#) seems to go even further when it says that an elder's children must be 'pistos and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.'

While some translations, like the King James Version, translate 'pistos' as 'faithful,' most major English translations translate it as 'believing.' Because of this, some people argue that the New Testament teaches that an elder's children must be Christians. There are several problems with this view.

1. Considering how closely the two passages parallel one another it is reasonable to suppose that the phrase 'having faithful/believing 'pistos' children' in [Titus 1:6](#) means the same thing as 'keeping his children submissive' in [1 Timothy 3:4](#).

This would mean that the final part of [Titus 1:6](#) 'not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination' is an explanation of what 'pistos' means, faithful in their behaviour, submitting to their parents, and not being unruly, [1 Timothy 3:4](#). In other words, 'pistos' in [Titus 1:6](#) probably means 'faithful in behaviour,' not 'believing.'

2. [1 Timothy 3:5](#) explicitly grounds an elder's qualification on the man's managerial ability as displayed in how he runs his household, [1 Timothy 3:4](#).

Yet saving faith cannot be produced by any amount of godly parenting. Obedience and submission, generally speaking, can. The man's qualification as an elder rests on his ability to govern his home, of which his children's behaviour is a reliable measure, not his children's salvation, which he cannot bring about. [Ezekiel 18:20](#).

3. All of the requirements for eldership listed in these passages, 'being a one-woman man, being temperate, sensible, respectable, and so on' are matters of personal responsibility.

To require that an elder's children have genuine, saving faith is to hold one person responsible for the salvation of another, which is nowhere taught in Scripture. This would assign humans a role in salvation that belongs only to God.

4. The grounding question of [1 Timothy 3:5](#) explicitly connects the elder's qualifications with his managerial skills in verse 4. There is something sanctifying about being the child of a believing parent, [1 Corinthians 7:14](#). It doesn't guarantee salvation, but this relational reality sets the child apart in some way.

A godly home with the Gospel at the centre doesn't automatically produce a believing child, but God has designed things such that this is often the case. In God's providence, the modelling of belief and the aroma of the Gospel in the home are often the means of producing salvation by grace.

None of this means, however, that there is a one-to-one correspondence between saving faith and good spiritual housekeeping. We see from both Scripture and experience that good and godly leadership doesn't always prevent children, whether spiritual or natural, from falling away.

5. Even the best pastoral managers have unbelievers within their church or under their sphere of influence, Galatians 1:6!

It's possible for a pastor to manage the church, 'household of God' well, even though not everyone in it is a believer. If this is so, then it seems that one can manage his family, 'the smaller household' well, even though not all within it genuinely believe.

6. Insisting that having believing children is a requirement of eldership leads to some uncomfortable questions. What do we make of an elder who has several believing children, walking faithfully with the Lord, but one who is not?

If most of his children are believers, is he not a good manager of his household? Or does the one unbelieving child call into question his overall managerial ability? If it does, then why did any of his children turn out to be believers?

7. All of the requirements for eldership listed in this passage, 'being a one-woman man, being temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, a good teacher, not a drunkard, not a lover of money, and not a recent convert', are actions of personal responsibility. We would expect the requirement regarding his children to be in the same category.

Requiring that his children have genuine saving faith is to require personal responsibility for the salvation of another, something I don't see taught in Scripture.

The whole point of these qualifications in this first section is found in 1 Timothy 3:4-5. 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are referring to the general submission and behaviour of the elder's children. God has so designed the universe that the parental role of disciplinarian, model, authority, and servant-leader generally has a profound effect upon the behaviour of the children.

Paul doesn't spell out what this looks like in every case, nor does he spell out all of the specifics of what will disqualify an elder. The general case, however, is clear. What mustn't characterise the children of an elder is immorality and undisciplined rebelliousness if the children are still at home and under his authority.

Paul is not asking any more of the elder and his children than is expected of every Christian father and his children. However, only if a man exercises such proper control over his children may he be an elder.

MENTAL – BIBLE KNOWLEDGE AND USE

1. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:9. Able to teach / Encourage with sound doctrine.

Didaktikos means being able to give instruction, they must have knowledge of the truth. He has to have the ability to share it with others, 1 Thessalonians 5:12. Those who 'have charge over you' would certainly include the elders, Hebrews 13:7 / 1 Timothy 5:17. It can be seen here that, 'at least some' elders were 'teaching and preaching.' Therefore, it is evident that the elders who were presently serving in this work were doing both 'teaching and preaching' within the body. A man who has already shown to possess the other qualifications for the work of an

elder, and also possesses this ability, and ‘desire’ to teach, would certainly be a man who would be reliable when it comes to teaching and living the word, ‘holding fast the faithful word’.

A saint in the congregation in which he serves would certainly be able to approach him with problems and questions about God’s truth. Could he ever make a mistake? Certainly!

Some of the most scripturally knowledgeable men in the church will tell you that they have been incorrect in some of the things that they once taught, but having studied these things further, they have come to a different understanding. But there is a vast difference between studying out of error and never knowing the Word.

2. Titus 1:9. Keep hold of the truth.

Antechomai means to hold oneself to, to care. The phrase ‘hold fast’ literally means to ‘hold on to,’ or to ‘cleave to.’ The word implies ‘support,’ therefore representing a man who rests his support upon the Word of God. All Christians are to rest upon the Word of God, but it seems that Paul is simply instructing Titus to be certain that it is a faithful godly soundman that is set apart for this work.

The overseer must be a man who ‘rests his entire faith and hope upon God’s Word,’ and therefore will not allow any false doctrine or false practices to happen, Titus 1:9.

Parakaleo means encourage, to call near ‘as to receive or give help’ to implore, entreat, ‘to urgently ask, for mercy or help’, to exhort, ‘to urgently counsel, encourage or admonish’ to comfort.

Encouraging involves more than just ‘speaking’ or ‘teaching’. Exhortation involves a special urging or even imploring for someone to behave in such a way. I might encourage someone to pay more attention to Bible study and prayer, while not teaching you anything that you don’t already know.

Perhaps exhortation is done most frequently from the ‘pulpit’ as the evangelist ‘exhorts’ the congregation to remain steadfast in what they already have been taught. The overseer is to be a man who is able to ‘exhort in sound doctrine,’ therefore relying on the written Word for his source of exhortation. Therefore, it is essential that he hold fast to the Word of God!

‘Refute those who contradict’.

The King James Version translates the word ‘convict,’ while holding to the context of ‘convincing’ one of error. It seems from the context that the ‘convicting’ or ‘convincing’ would involve both those who were doing the contradicting as well as those who were witnesses to the false teaching.

One who aspires to the work of the elder must be equipped and prepared to ‘refute’ any false teaching that may arise from within, ‘or without’ the church. Therefore, it is essential that he hold fast to the Word of God!

3. 1 Timothy 3:6. Not a recent convert.

Neophutos means a novice, young convert. This is common sense. In the Book of Acts, some were converted from Judaism and so they were familiar with the law and the scriptures and were brought up in the Lord. They will be able to teach and oppose error, 1 Timothy 3:6.

A lot of Christians have dealt with the problem of his or their pride, 1 John 2:16-17. Yes, sin is often the result of worldly pride. It seems that even the devil also was perhaps led into sin by his pride. So, the warning given to Timothy regarding the eldership deals with the temptation of pride.

A new Christian often holds on to his pride. A more mature Christian has often found a reason not to be so proud. A new Christian has much to learn in this area. This is very true concerning the trials and hardships that we face in our Christian lives. Mature Christians teach us that it is the Lord upon whom we should rely upon not ourselves, 1 Corinthians 10:12. Pride comes before the fall and pride was the devil’s problem and it was his downfall.

SPIRITUAL – REQUIRED OF ALL CHRISTIANS

1. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:6. Blameless / Blameless / above reproach / free from accusation.

Anegkletos means subject to blame. It doesn't mean they have to be sinless but someone who is seen to be righteous, 1 Timothy 3:10. Deacons are to be tested, is there anything to worry about? Those who are leading spiritual lives, 1 Peter 5:3 / Philippians 3:6. What about past sins? 2 Corinthians 5:17. How are you above reproach? Follow on the rest of the qualifications.

2. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:7. Temperate / Not quick-tempered.

Nephalios means temperate or vigilant, someone who is trustworthy. On an even keel. Me Orgilos means not quick-tempered, slow to anger, James 1:19-20.

3. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:8. Self-control / Self-control.

Egkrateia means self-control, sober-minded, someone, who can think clearly, someone who can balance judgement, 2 Peter 1:5-7.

4. 1 Timothy 3:2. Respectable.

Kosmios means respectable, orderly, well behaved, and always considerate.

5. 1 Timothy 3:3 / Titus 1:8. Hospitable / Hospitable.

Philoxenos means hospitable, a lover of guests, given to hospitality, loving strangers. To care for and protect a guest, Romans 12:13 / Hebrews 13:1-2.

6. 1 Timothy 3:3 / Titus 1:7. Not given to drunkenness / Not given to drunkenness.

Me Paroinos means not staying near wine, the behaviour that wine would lead to, not near wine. It is more than obvious that an elder is not to be given to drunkenness as is evident from the fact that drunkards will not even inherit the kingdom of heaven, 1 Corinthians 6:10 / Galatians 5:19-21.

7. 1 Timothy 3:3 / Titus 1:7. Not violent / Not violent.

Me Amachos and Me Plektes means not to be brawler but peaceable. Not violent but in control of his temper, doesn't settle problems with his fists. Me Pugnacious means not quarrelsome but peaceable. Violent in public or privately. Me Orgilos means not quarrelsome, not easily angered, 2 Timothy 2:24.

8. 1 Timothy 3:3. Gentle.

Epieikes means gentle, able to endure ill-treatment, forbearing, long-suffering, appropriate, considerate, modest, mild, Ephesians 4:2.

9. 1 Timothy 3:3 / Titus 1:7. Not to love money / Not pursuing dishonest gain.

Me Aischrokerdes means disgraceful gain, Hebrews 13:5 / Colossians 3:5 / 1 Timothy 6:8-10 / 1 Corinthians 5:11. A man who wants to be an overseer is not to be greedy, money-grubbing, money-hungry and miserly, but is instead to be generous, unselfish, charitable, giving and considerate, 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

Therefore, the instruction isn't that a man seeking the work of overseer cannot be 'rich,' but that he is not one who makes riches his guide or purpose in life. As we read in 1 Timothy 6, he is to fix his hope on God. A man who desires this work must possess this characteristic, which will be evident in the works of his life, Matthew 6:19-21.

10. Titus 1:7. Not overbearing.

Me Authades means not self-pleasing, not arrogant, self-willed, impose your will on others, Matthew 20:25-28.

11. 1 Timothy 3:7 / Titus 1:8. Good reputation with outsiders / Good reputation with outsiders.

Marturia means reputation, the evidence needed. Philagathos means promoter of good, love what is good. Well thought of by those who aren't in the church. The way they dealt with things they did wrong in their lives. His primary function will be 'shepherding' those who are of the flock, he will as well be dealing with those who are not Christians. It is of great importance that the church is able to reach those who are outside of the church.

Every single non-Christian is a prospective convert. Every lost soul is a potential saint. Leaders that don't have a good reputation i.e. 'good character, an example of Christ-like behaviour' with those who the church is attempting to reach will have little or no success in soul-winning.

However, one who exemplifies the nature of Christ and His church will have much greater success in reaching those who are seeking the Lord. Another reason that this man's 'reputation with those outside the church' is important is that this characteristic shows his consistent behaviour as a saint whether among saints or among sinners.

One who lives the devoted Christian life lives his life for God at all times. An elder is judged by Christians by the word of God but judged by the world by his conduct. Lagios means holy, separated. This person is separate from sin, Matthew 5:16 / Acts 2:47 / Acts 5:13.

12. Titus 1:8. Upright. Dikaios means good character, just, equitable, even-handed, a fair-minded man.

Basically, one who is 'just' is one that 'obeys the rules.' He can be said to be a man who 'observes what is right.' Of course, this would be true in the context of 'right conduct,' as it relates to obedience to God.

An elder who is 'just' and 'impartial' will certainly do everything in his power to see that righteousness is observed and the flock obeys their Lord.

13. Titus 1:8. Disciplined.

Egkrates means strongly in control of himself, or self-controlled, 1 Corinthians 6:12 / 1 Peter 4:7.

For a more detailed study on elders, please click [here](#)

'For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain.' Titus 1:10-11

WHY ARE ELDERS NEEDED IN THE CHURCH?

To protect the flock from the enemies of the Gospel, false teachers. These were mainly Jewish Christians who demanded that all Christians should be circumcised, they believed in the Gospel of Christ but wanted to add circumcision to it, Acts 15:5 / Galatians 5:2-6.

Paul says they are rebellious, which is against the Gospel teaching, they are full of meaningless talk, and deceptive, in other words, they taught lies and their motives were all wrong.

Paul says they need to be stopped, hence why the church needed elders, Titus 1:6 / Ephesians 4:11-16. These people were ruining whole households, why did they do it? Dishonest gain, financially and emotionally. These false teachers

were busy gathering some support from other Christians so that they could continue to divide the church, 1 Timothy 6:5, they went from house to house, burdening their own doctrine upon young Christians and as a result, they were splitting the church, Romans 16:17-18 / 2 John 1:10.

‘One of Crete’s own prophets has said it: ‘Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.’ This saying is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth.’ Titus 1:12-14

Coffman suggests the following concerning one of Crete’s own prophets. Paul here quoted a Cretan poet, Epimenides, who lived approximately 600 B.C. and it is rather astonishing that Paul referred to him as ‘a prophet.’ It should be noted, however, that Paul did not say he was a prophet ‘of the Lord,’ but ‘a prophet of their own,’ that, of course, being strictly accurate.

This is the general character of the people of Crete, they are liars, evil brutes and lazy gluttons. During this time when Paul was writing, the Cretans were well known, possibly even famous for their lying, they behaved like evil brutes, like animals and they were lazy gluttons, thinking about the physical things in life rather than the spiritual.

When someone these days, is tight-fisted, in other words, they don’t share their money too easily, some people call them Scottish because some believe the Scots clench their money in their fists so that no one else can get it. And just like calling someone, a Corinthian was like calling someone crude, calling someone a Cretan became synonymous with calling someone a liar.

Paul says they need to be rebuked, and the way to do this was through clear and divisive teaching from God. Again, this would be the responsibility of the elders, Titus 2:2 / 1 Timothy 1:10 / 1 Timothy 3:9 / 2 Timothy 4:3.

These Jewish myths were exactly that, myths, they were imaginary teachings made up by the circumcision group, 1 Timothy 1:4-6. These human commands were not God’s commands and if anyone accepts the human commands, they are in effect rejecting God’s commands, Mark 7:1-9 / Colossians 2:20-22. Paul’s point is that these Jewish myths and human commands actually led people away from God and not towards Him.

Remember that Crete was heavily populated with Jews, and because Paul appeals to Epimenides, it’s clear that these false teachers had brought together the unrighteous characteristics of the Cretans with their own legalistic views of faith and religion.

‘To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.’ Titus 1:15-16

As Christians we tend to trust most people because we believe that most people are trustworthy and honest just like we should be, Luke 11:41 / Romans 14:13-23 / 1 Corinthians 6:12 / 1 Corinthians 10:14-33.

We usually trust them until we’re given a reason not to trust them any longer. Paul says the same principle is also true of those who are corrupt, if they are corrupt, they will believe that everyone else around them is corrupt and as a result, they have become impure, Romans 1:28 / 1 Timothy 6:5 / 2 Timothy 3:8.

I’ve taught for many years now that we shouldn’t just tell people we’re Christians we should show them that we’re Christians. These false teachers were proclaiming to know God, but their actions were telling the world otherwise, Matthew 7:15-20. Their lives weren’t reflecting their relationship with God, Matthew 7:21-22 / 1 John 2:4 / 1 John 5:2-3.

In God’s eyes, people who proclaim one thing but live their lives opposite to what they proclaim are ‘detestable, disobedient and unfit to do anything’. They are hypocrites, Matthew 23:13-26, who teach one thing but practice another. They are all these things because they’re actually denying the power of the Gospel to change their lives, Romans 1:16.

Someone once said, ‘the church is full of hypocrites, but there’s always room for one more’. I understand what they’re trying to say here, in terms of there being no one ‘perfect’ within the Lord’s church. The problem with that phrase is that almost implies that hypocrisy is accepted within the Lord’s church, but after reading Jesus’ word in [Matthew 23](#), we know this clearly isn’t the case.

The Bible is full of warnings about living a double life, and we’re told over and over again that we must practice what we preach.

If people are to see Jesus in us, [Galatians 2:20](#), and our lives are to reflect His glory, [2 Corinthians 3:16-18](#), and our lives are to display the fruit of the Spirit, [Galatians 5:22-23](#), then we have to conclude that there is absolutely no room for a hypocrite in the Lord’s church.

I’m not saying everyone should be ‘perfect’ but what I am saying is that we all should be striving to do our best, to live right for God.

CHAPTER 2

THE OLDER MEN

‘You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.’ Titus 2:1-2

Paul commands Titus to ‘teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine,’ in other words, his teaching must be relevant and healthy and beneficial to their soul, [1 Timothy 1:10](#) / [2 Timothy 4:3](#). One of the problems in the church in Crete was their ungodly attitude and behaviour as Christians, which he goes on to describe.

It appears the older men in the church have some behavioural problems, which Titus was to address in his teaching to them.

Titus is to teach them to be ‘temperate’, which means not given to excess in anything, ‘worthy of respect’, means a calm and sensible attitude at all times, ‘self-controlled’, means sober-minded, someone who can think clearly.

‘Sound in faith’, means to cling on to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, ‘in love’, means the highest kind of love demonstrated in our actions towards others, and ‘endurance’, means patience, the ability to be constant. Paul often refers to these last three in his letters, [1 Corinthians 13:13](#) / [1 Thessalonians 1:3](#) / [1 Thessalonians 1:3](#).

THE OLDER WOMEN

‘Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.’ Titus 2:3

The older women also appear to have some behavioural problems which Titus will address in his teaching to them. They are to be ‘reverent in the way they live’, which means befitting of something sacred, ‘not to be slanderers’, means not false accusers, not to be ‘addicted to much wine’, means not to become enslaved by wine, don’t drink too much.

They have also to ‘teach what is good’, this would be what they teach the younger women, [Titus 2:4-5](#).

THE YOUNGER WOMEN

‘Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.’ Titus 2:4-5

Once the women have been taught how to live and act properly, they should go on to teach the young women how to live and act properly.

Paul here gives us a list of seven things that he urges the older women to teach the younger women.

1. They should teach them to love their husbands.
2. They should teach them to love their children.
3. They should teach them to exercise self-control in order to conduct themselves with dignity.
4. They should teach them to live a pure and holy life.
5. They should teach them to take responsibility in their homes, in caring for their husbands and children, [1 Timothy 5:14](#).
6. They should teach them to concentrate on having a good character, [1 Peter 3:1-6](#).
7. They should teach them to be submissive to their husbands in order to present a good home in which children can be nurtured, [Ephesians 5:22-23](#) / [Colossians 3:18](#) / [1 Timothy 2:11](#) / [1 Timothy 2:14](#).

WHY ARE THE OLDER WOMEN TO TEACH THE YOUNGER WOMEN THESE THINGS?

Simply because their behaviour as Christians will reflect the God they serve. If they truly belong to God, then their lives must reflect Who they belong to. If they act like godly women, this will set an example to others around them, in order that others won't have a legitimate reason to speak against God and His holy Word.

As Christians, we all must set the right example to those around us, whether it be in our homes, at work or in the supermarket.

THE YOUNG MEN

‘Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.’ Titus 1:6

The young men aren't exempt in their behaviour, Titus is to encourage them to be self-controlled, which is sober-minded, someone who can think clearly.

TITUS HIMSELF

‘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

Notice that Titus is to set the young men an example in the way he lives, [Philippians 3:17](#) / [1 Timothy 4:12](#). Anyone who preaches and teaches or leads the church in any way must lead by example, if the church is shown a bad example, then the flock will follow. If godly living isn’t important to leadership, then godly living won’t be important to anyone in the congregation. Leaders must set an example no matter how much opposition they receive from others, [2 Timothy 2:25](#).

It appears that Paul is not only concerned with Titus’ behaviour but his teaching too. It’s a Biblical rule that all those who teach must teach what is in accordance with what God says in His Word, [1 Corinthians 4:6](#). If it’s an opinion, then say it is an opinion but if God clearly says it, then say this is what God says.

Titus is to teach in such a way that he will be free from accusation, and if he sets a good example, then anyone who makes any accusations against him will be shamed.

THE SLAVES

‘Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.’ Titus 2:9-10

Paul now instructs Titus to teach the slaves, ‘doulos’ to be obedient to their masters, [Ephesians 5:24](#) / [Ephesians 6:5](#) / [1 Timothy 6:1](#).

HOW DO YOU BECOME A SLAVE?

Well, you could become a slave in one of three ways.

1. Your father was a slave and if his dad was a slave and he was born into that family, he was the owner’s property. The owner could sell him and do whatever he wants with him.
2. Maybe he was a thief who stole money and under Jewish or even Roman law, if you stole and couldn’t pay it back, then they can take you as a slave.
3. Maybe he was a murderer, but instead of killing him, they would decide to give him to the victim’s family and the family could take him or sell him or do whatever they liked.

So whatever reason, a slave has no rights whatsoever, he was a piece of property, and his master owned him. And at the slave market they would auction them off, then someone would buy them for so many shekels and now the slave belongs to him.

Imagine when the slave’s new master takes him home. Who is going to supply a bed for the slave? His master is going to supply a place for him to sleep. In the morning, where is the slave going to get food from? The slave doesn’t have any food with him, so his master has to feed him.

The master has to feed and clothe and provide a place for his slave to sleep. The slave depended completely on the master for his life, he had nothing if the master did not provide it for him. That meant that the slave didn't worry because he simply depended on the master, Deuteronomy 15:12-17.

The importance of the slave's obedience and behaviour is that they might win their master over for Christ. The slaves 'shouldn't talk back' to their masters, they shouldn't criticise them because all this does is undermine their master's will.

The slave shouldn't 'steal' from their masters, the slave would often be entrusted with goods, but this didn't mean they belonged to the slave, Acts 5:2-3. Trust is always an important part of any relationship, if a Christian slave can't be trusted then the master would conclude that God Himself couldn't be trusted.

Once again, it's all about setting the right example so that others may see the impact Christ has had in our lives which in turn would lead them to want to know Christ, Matthew 5:16 / John 13:34-35. If we live this way, we show the beauty of the Gospel to others.

'For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, 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

Paul tells us that despite God forging people's sins in the Old Testament period, it wasn't until Christ came, Luke 3:6 / Romans 5:15 and died was His grace revealed to mankind, Romans 5:8 / Ephesians 2:1-10. God wants everyone to respond to His grace, 2 Peter 3:9 and He wants us to be thankful for His grace, 2 Corinthians 4:15.

When we become Christians and receive God's grace, it's not a licence for us to live our lives however we like, Romans 6:1-2, God's grace teaches us to say 'no' to anything which goes against God's will, it says 'no' to the world and 'no' to self, Romans 12:1.

Everything we do in our Christian lives is purely out of gratitude for what God has done and given us, we don't do things because we have to, we don't do things because we want to. We're not obedient because we have to, we're obedient because we want to, and God's grace is our motivation, 1 Corinthians 15:10 / 2 Corinthians 4:15.

All this training, encouraging and rebuking is what any parent does for her child. God wants us to live self-controlled, righteous lives so that we can show the world that we take God seriously.

Ah, 'the blessed hope,' the hope that Jesus is coming back to bring an end to this world and take the faithful with Him to heaven, 2 Peter 3:10-13 / Romans 5:1-5 / 1 Corinthians 1:7 / 1 Timothy 1:1.

Notice that Jesus is described as 'our great God and Saviour' and He will come again in all His glory, Acts 1:9-11 / Colossians 3:4 / 1 John 3:2. Lenski says, 'Jesus Christ is here called our God and Saviour. One person is referred to and not two.'

What a humbling thought, 'Jesus gave Himself'. Not only did He redeem us from our sins, but the day is coming when He shall redeem us from this world, Isaiah 53:12 / John 10:17-18 / 2 Corinthians 5:15 / Galatians 1:4 / Galatians 2:20 / 1 Timothy 2:6 / Hebrews 12:2 / 1 Peter 2:21-24.

The reason He redeemed us is simply because we couldn't redeem ourselves, no matter how many good deeds we do, Mark 10:45 / 1 Timothy 2:6. He redeemed us and purified us from our sins, with His precious blood which was shed at Calvary, Ephesians 5:26-27 / Hebrews 9:14 / 1 John 1:7-9 / Revelation 21:9-11, and because of what Christ did, and our obedience to the Gospel, we are His people, we belong to Him, Exodus 15:16 / Exodus 19:5-6 / 1 Peter 2:5 / 1 Peter 2:9-10 / Acts 20:28.

Christians should always be 'eager to do what is good', out of appreciation for everything Jesus has done for them and is doing for them, and what He will do in the future for them 1 Corinthians 15:10 / 2 Corinthians 4:15 / Galatians 4:18 / Galatians 6:10 / Ephesians 2:10.

Remember Christians do God's work, not for their salvation but because of it, [Philippians 2:12-13](#) / [1 John 4:19](#). If anyone is trying to get to heaven solely based on their works, then they've missed the point. We work for the Lord, not because we have to but because we want to, and the driving factor of our works is the grace of God.

Jesus gave, He volunteered, He gave Himself, He gave everything He could give. He redeemed us, He paid the ransom. We are redeemed from sin for His service. Remember the ransom wasn't paid to Satan because our souls don't belong to Him but to God.

The One to whom we owe a debt because of our sin is God, not Satan. Jesus paid the debt, or perhaps put even better, He paid the penalty for our sins. We earned the death penalty, spiritually, for our sin, and Jesus paid that 'debt' when He died on the cross for our sins, [Romans 6:23](#).

'These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.' Titus 2:15

Everything Paul has spoken about regarding the older men, older women, young men, younger women, slaves is what Titus is to teach them. He was to encourage them and teach them with the authority of the Scriptures because that's where the Christians' authority comes from, not man, [Matthew 28:18](#) / [1 Timothy 4:16](#) / [1 Timothy 5:20](#) / [2 Timothy 4:1-2](#).

When Titus teaches from God's Word and lives in accordance with God's will, he doesn't need to feel despised by anyone because what he's teaching and the way he's living are commanded by God Himself.

CHAPTER 3

'Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.' Titus 3:1-2

Paul reminds Titus to remind the people about how they are to live, He says, to remember to live as a Christian should. This is something we all need reminding of from time to time, especially when it comes to those in authority over us. We should have respect for those who have authority over us and be ready to do whatever is good, in light of what Christ did for us, [Titus 2:11-14](#).

We're to be subject to rules because Jesus was subject to the Father, [John 3:16](#), we also need to be obedient to those in authority, [Romans 13:1-10](#) / [1 Peter 2:13-21](#).

Just like Titus was to teach the older men, older women, younger men, younger women and the slaves, [Titus 2:1-10](#), it's all about setting a Christ-like example to those around us, here it's those in authority.

Christians should always be ready to do whatever is good, [Galatians 6:10](#) / [Ephesians 2:10](#) / [Colossians 1:10](#) / [Hebrews 13:21](#) / [1 Peter 3:15](#). Paul here is telling Titus that they should always be ready to do good towards anyone in authority, [Matthew 17:24-27](#).

Christians shouldn't slander anymore, that is, they shouldn't be abusive to those in authority, [Philippians 4:8](#). They should be peaceable, [Romans 12:18](#) / [Hebrews 12:14](#), considerate, put others before yourself, [Philippians 2:4](#) and gentle towards everyone, [1 Timothy 3:3](#) / [1 Corinthians 6:11](#) / [Ephesians 2:1-5](#) / [Ephesians 5:8](#) / [Colossians 3:7](#) / [1 Peter 4:3](#).

'At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our

Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.’ Titus 3:3-

7

I love Paul’s honesty here, as he includes himself in this list of sinfulness. This is humility, humility is seeing it was God working in us. He asks us to remember what we were once like. Just as there were seven Christian virtues given in [Titus 3:1-2](#), there are seven negative qualities listed here.

We were ‘foolish’ because we’ve now come to realise that we’ve been sinning against God. We were ‘disobedient’ because we’ve now come to realise that we’ve been sinning against God, [Luke 1:17](#) / [Titus 1:16](#).

We were ‘deceived’ by our own thoughts of salvation, our own desires for the lust of the flesh, [Galatians 5:19-21](#). We were enslaved by all kinds of evil lusts and pleasures, [Luke 8:14](#) / [1 Timothy 5:6](#).

We lived in malice and envy, we wanted to hurt others because we were jealous of them and what they had, [Ephesians 4:31](#).

We were hated and we hated one another, which means that our lives were so sinful and so full of self, that we got to the stage where we hated ourselves and those around us hated us even more.

I love the word ‘but’ because it shows the contrast between the way we once lived and how we should live now because of God’s kindness and love towards us. A person can truly change when they begin to understand what God has done for us and if they become a Christian they could look back at their own personal spiritual journey and be amazed at how God has transformed their lives, [1 John 4:19](#) / [2 Corinthians 4:15](#).

We couldn’t save ourselves, it’s all about God’s love for us, it’s all about His grace and mercy. We couldn’t do anything to save ourselves, not even our good works, can’t save us, [Romans 5:8](#) / [Romans 3:20](#) / [Galatians 2:16](#) / [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) / [2 Timothy 1:9](#).

There’s only one way to receive God’s grace and mercy which is by ‘the washing of rebirth’. After a person hears the Gospel, [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#), the natural response should be to do what Jesus did physically, in a spiritual manner. Jesus died, was buried and rose again and so anyone who wants to receive God’s grace and mercy must do the same spiritually, [Romans 6:3-6](#).

Baptism is the point when the person comes into contact with the blood of Christ which washes them clean of their sins and is the point in which they receive the ‘gift’ of the Holy Spirit Himself to dwell in them and help them live a life which pleases the Father, [John 3:3-5](#) / [Acts 2:38](#) / [Acts 22:16](#) / [Ephesians 5:26](#) / [Colossians 2:12](#) / [1 Peter 3:21](#). Although the Holy Spirit was poured out only on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, [Acts 2:16-17](#), later all those who were obedient to the Gospel received the Holy Spirit as a gift from God, [Acts 2:38-39](#).

What Paul is saying here is that anyone who hasn’t been born again, that is baptised, then they haven’t been justified before God, [Romans 8:23](#), and has no hope of eternal life with Him. We shouldn’t never underestimate the significance of baptism, [Matthew 28:19](#) / [Mark 16:15-16](#) / [Galatians 3:27](#) / [1 Corinthians 6:11](#) / [Ephesians 5:25-26](#) / [John 3:5](#) / [Acts 2:38](#) / [1 Peter 3:12](#) / [Matthew 3:16](#) / [Romans 6:3-5](#).

‘This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.’ Titus 3:8

Coffman has the following to say about ‘this trustworthy saying’. This is not a formula for introducing either a hymn or a proverb, despite the widespread prejudice to that effect. See under [2 Timothy 2:13](#), above. This is merely Paul’s equivalent of the ‘Amen, Amen’ sometimes used by Jesus. Scholars cannot agree upon whether it should be applied here to what precedes, or what comes after.

Many refer it to the epic pronouncement in [Titus 3:5-7](#); but Hervey was sure that: Here the faithful saying can only be the following maxim: ‘That they which have believed in God may be careful to maintain good works,’ the words, ‘these things I desire that thou affirm confidently,’ being parenthetically added to give more weight to it. Scholars who insist upon applying it to the foregoing ‘affirm that it is ungrammatical to refer it to the following.’

But as Conybeare said, ‘This objection is avoided by taking ‘that’ as a part of the quotation,’ as Hervey did, above. Perhaps the biggest objection to construing it as a reference to the preceding is that there is no agreement on ‘what part’ of the preceding is meant.

The faithful saying is reminding us all Christians need to continue to do the good works which God has planned for us to do, [Galatians 6:10](#) / [Ephesians 2:10](#), whilst remember that we don’t do these good works for our salvation but because of our salvation, [Titus 2:14](#) / [2 Corinthians 4:15](#) / [James 2:14-26](#).

Remember Paul told the Philippians to work ‘out’ their salvation, not work ‘for’ their salvation. If we remember this trustworthy saying, it can only do us and everyone we meet good.

‘But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.’ Titus 3:9-11

We don’t know what these ‘foolish controversies’ were, maybe it has something to do with Jesus being the Christ, we simply don’t know. As we know ‘genealogies’ were important for the Jews, that’s why the Bible is filled with them and if anyone wanted to serve as a priest, they had to be able to prove their Levitical lineage before serving.

Again, we don’t know exactly what they were ‘arguing about and quarrelling’ about but it had something to do with the Mosaic law. It’s possible they were arguing about the importance of circumcision, hence these false teachers were possibly promoting it.

It never ceases to amaze me the number of times people want to get involved in useless debates which amount to nothing. There are some things that some would call ‘salvation issues’, but there always seems to be a lot of debate about ‘matters of opinion’, things which have no bearing on our salvation. Sadly, some people make these matters of opinion a matter of salvation, [1 Timothy 1:4](#) / [2 Timothy 2:14](#).

Paul says to avoid these things, because they are ‘unprofitable and worthless’, in other words, they are a waste of time and nothing good can ever come out of them. To put it simply, if the Scriptures don’t mention a particular topic that goes against the basic principles taught in the Scriptures if it’s an opinion, then then they’re not worth arguing about.

I’m sure that Paul himself would have experienced this kind of thing on his travels, hence why he’s so serious about it, when warning Titus.

Anyone who just goes on and on about a matter of opinion and tries to put their beliefs on others needs to be warned and warned again, [Romans 16:17-18](#) / [Matthew 18:15-18](#) / [2 John 1:10](#), because all they’re doing is causing division within the Lord’s church.

Paul says ‘have nothing to do’ with trouble makers like this, because they are warped and sinful not only in their thinking but also in their behaviour. They’re basically trying to steal the real freedom we have in Christ, [Galatians 5:1](#).

As a result of ‘majoring in the minors and minoring in the majors’, they do nothing but condemn themselves by their thinking and behaviour, [Matthew 23:23-24](#).

I’ve personally witnessed this kind of thing happening, where a brother insisted that the whole church should fast because we’re commanded to. Even after studying with him and showing him that nowhere does Jesus command that Christians should fast, he continued to push his views on the church. The result was the joy, just got sucked right out of the place very quickly.

Paul reminds Timothy to stay on course, he’s to focus on the Word of God. We have to have nothing to do with people who want to cause division and have false teachings. This isn’t just for our own spiritual benefit but for the benefit of the whole church.

‘As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.’ Titus 3:12-14

Notice the people Paul mentioned here in his final greeting to Titus Tychicus who was from Colossae, [Colossians 4:7](#) / [Acts 20:4](#) / [Ephesians 6:21](#) / [2 Timothy 4:12](#), he was with Paul at the time of the writing of his letter to Titus. What’s more interesting, is that he also mentions, Artemas, Zenas, and Apollos, as someone once pointed out to me, these are all names of famous pagan deities. Artemas is from Artemis, the famous guardian goddess of Ephesus, Apollos is from the well-known sun god and Zenas is from Zeus.

We know nothing at all about the two Christians, Zenas and Artemas but their names tell us little about their background. We know a few things about Apollos.

We know that he came to Ephesus, [Acts 18:24](#), he knew and taught the Scriptures really well, but only taught about John’s baptism and so a couple named Priscilla and Aquila ended up teaching him the way more adequately, [Acts 18:26](#). After being more equipped to teach, he went on to vigorously refute any Jews who opposed him, [Acts 18:28](#). He’s mentioned over and over again in 1 Corinthians and must have been a very influential speaker, [1 Corinthians 1:12](#) / [1 Corinthians 3:3-6](#) / [1 Corinthians 3:22](#) / [1 Corinthians 4:6](#) / [1 Corinthians 16:12](#).

Paul wanted Titus to come to Nicopolis, a place in Macedonia, before winter, why? We can’t be certain, but some believe that Paul’s arrest and final imprisonment came soon after what was written here, [2 Timothy 4:21](#).

Paul wants Titus to help Zenas and Apollos on their journey to Nicopolis, this would probably be some kind of financial assistance, or supply them with food, water and other supplies they may need.

Notice again that Paul reminds Titus that God’s people must ‘devote themselves to doing what is good’, [Titus 1:8](#) / [Titus 2:7](#) / [Titus 2:14](#) / [Titus 3:8](#) / [2 Corinthians 2:15](#). Paul is giving us the idea that the Christians in Crete were very good at ‘talking the talk’, but not much good at ‘walking the walk’.

There are ‘urgent needs’ to be met but because they’re not meeting those needs, their lives have become ‘unproductive’, [Titus 1:16](#) / [1 Timothy 2:10](#) / [1 Timothy 5:10](#) / [1 Timothy 6:18](#) / [2 Timothy 2:21](#).

‘Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.’ Titus 3:15

We don’t know who was with Paul when he sent his greetings, but we do know his greetings were for those who loved them in the faith, which may suggest that there were others, possibly those false teachers, who didn’t love them as they appear to hold a different faith, [Romans 14:1-2](#) / [Jude 3](#).

Paul ends by saying grace be with you all which was a common final greeting of Paul, [1 Timothy 1:21](#) / [2 Timothy 4:22](#). Paul asks them to receive the greatest blessing of all, the grace which comes from God and oh, how we still need it today.

CONCLUSION

People often speak about the church in Corinth and some Christians say, ‘they wouldn’t like to be a part of that congregation’, others say, ‘if the Corinthian church existed today, they would disfellowship them and have nothing to do with them’.

I don't believe the church which met in Crete was much better than the church in Corinth, they had their problems like most churches have their problems. The church in Crete appears to be very lazy, disorganised, had a really bad reputation and everyone from the old to the young needed to be trained in matters of importance.

They needed good spiritual leaders in place, the old men, old women, young men and younger women and the slaves all needed to be reminded of the Gospel of Christ of which they professed.

The false teachers needed to be dealt with and Titus himself needed to be careful about what he taught and how he lived so that he too, could be an example to those around him.

Most of all, the Cretans needed to learn to appreciate their salvation, if they did this, they would certainly be more active in their good deeds. They would come to realise that Christians don't work FOR their salvation, they work BECAUSE of their salvation, they work out of appreciation of what God has done in their own lives, Ephesians 2:10 / 2 Corinthians 4:15.