

STAY TUNED.....

Group Time Questions

These questions are not intended to restrict your group, but to aid it. Feel free to discuss the passages in any way that is helpful to you. It is perhaps wise before you begin to nominate one person as leader.

READ TITUS chapters 1 and 2 again before you begin.

Chapter One:

Paul's teachings about Elders and Overseers (ch1: 6 - 9) obviously apply not only to Church Leaders but also to all Christians; the leaders are merely meant to be superb examples. Which are the hardest parts of this passage for you?

How realistic is it to be 'blameless' or 'transparent'? What does it mean in practise?

'Hold firmly to the trustworthy message and.....refute those who oppose it' within the church (v9). How well is the 'trustworthy message' proclaimed today, and what are the opposing doctrines within the church that we should be standing against?

The circumcision group (v10 - 16) taught that it was necessary to obey the ritualistic laws of Judaism to become a true Christian. Are there similar 'false doctrines' in the church today? How can we spot them? Can we ever confidently say of someone that they 'claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable....' (v16)?

Chapter Two:

Do not get into a long debate about sexism, etc. Paul pointed out the weaknesses in each group of people in his day, but the instructions apply to all groups at all times (so, for example, young men as well as older women should not be slanderers).

Think of Christians you know in each of the categories mentioned (Older men, older women, young women, young men, slaves (employees)). Try to think of one way in which each of those people set a good Christian example, and perhaps one way in which they 'let you down' in their example.

Now also think of one way in which you believe *you* set a good example, and also where you fail.....and share them!

Concentrating on the teaching for young women and young men (verses 4 - 8), what are the practical consequences of these to you in 1994?

v11...how does 'the grace of God' teach us to say "NO" to ungodliness and worldly passions? Can you give an example or three about how you learnt to say 'no' more during 1993?

Can you think of occasion in the last year when you have been encouraged or rebuked justly by another Christian (v15)? And an occasion when you encouraged someone else? rebuked someone else justly?

You may find it useful to look at each of the points in these chapters and, on the opposite page, draw a ruler like the one below for each of them and put a cross where you think you are at the moment in relation to that command. EG if you feel you live up to it well the cross would be near the right side.:

REBELLIOUS

OBEDIENT

....THERE'S MORE TO COME!

STAY TUNED.....

Notes on Titus

Chapter One

1 The letter is from Paul, who describes himself as:

Servant of God and

Apostle of Jesus

The word Apostle meant 'to send from' and was usually used of a fleet or admiral (APOSTELLE). Its use in the New Testament in applying to leaders is NOT limited to 'The Twelve' but also includes others (Paul, James the brother of Jesus, Barnabas and still others). In a real sense all 'sent on a mission' are Apostles, though many today believe that the ministry of the Apostle died out with the first apostles and that there are no Apostles as such today: in one sense at least this is beyond question: no-one today writes scripture as did some of the original apostles.

The letter is for

building up faith in the Chosen and increasing the knowledge of Truth, so leading to godliness.

2 This faith and knowledge are built on, rest on and are founded on the hope of eternal life.

Hope = ELPIS which Vines says means: 'the full manifestation of that eternal life which is already the believer's possession'. In other words it is not a hope that is like wishful thinking but a sure and certain revelation in full of what we now have in part (1 Corinthians 13).

So certain is it because it is based on God's Promise. Paul reminds us-why should he have to?-that this promise is the promise of God who does not lie (literally the Truthful God) APSEUDES = A PSEUDES A = Not PSEUDES = False. God is anti-false, anti-liar. He is INCAPABLE of deception.

The promise is longstanding - made before even time began...eternal life is that promise.

3 And at the right time this promise was revealed to Titus through Paul's preaching; just as at the right time it is revealed to all who will receive it through faithful preaching. God's word this comes to light.

And preaching is entrusted to us - God puts the most important task in His Kingdom (in the Universe) into our hands.

God our Saviour. Paul affirms that the Saviour and God are one and the same (see also next verse).

4 The letter is to Titus, a true son in common faith. True = loyal,

genuine.

Paul saw Titus as a son, he seems to have been a convert under Paul's ministry.

Paul does not greet in his own name, but in the Name of the Father and the Son. He writes as if he is passing on their message (which, of course, he is).

Note that in v3 God is called our Saviour and in v4 Jesus is given that title....again Paul affirms that Jesus Christ is God.

5 Titus had worked with Paul but now had been left to work alone, completing the setting up of the church on Crete as Paul had moved on.

Each town needed its own elders and leaders (presbyters) in the church.

6 Now comes a list of qualities required by such leaders [Yet they are qualities desired of any Christian. Leaders are not EXTRA in their qualities, but must be sincere Christians]:

BLAMELESS.. impossible for anyone to find fault with (not tried and acquitted but beyond any charge)

FAITHFUL IN MARRIAGE..

BELIEVING CHILDREN.. Trusting, Godly. An elder must show his qualifications by having raised his children well.

7 Overseer. Elder refers to a person (an older Christian), Overseer (Bishop) to the post or ministry. Persons called to the position of overseer in the church need to have the qualities of elders already stated. The word for Overseer is EPISKOPON; they are unlikely to have overseen more than one church so the term should not be confused with modern day usage of 'Bishop' or 'Moderator'.

The overseer is entrusted with God's work, literally a steward of it. Hence he must be blameless too.

NOT OVERBEARING.. not forceful or arrogant

NOT QUICK TEMPERED.. placid

NOT GIVEN TO DRUNKENNESS.. in control, no addictions. Not seeking to be drunk, but avoiding it actively

NOT VIOLENT.. peaceful

NOT DISHONEST.. especially in finance

8 Instead such a person should be:

HOSPITABLE.. welcoming

....THERE'S MORE TO COME!

STAY TUNED.....

LOVER OF THE GOOD AND RIGHT THINGS..

SELF-CONTROLLED.. in contrast to drunk

UPRIGHT.. have integrity

HOLY.. set apart for God, avoiding Godless things

DISCIPLINED.. in control of own life, body, behaviour; not falling at every temptation.

9 FIRMLY HOLDING ON TO THE GOSPEL.. no variation, keep to the Word as received

an ENCOURAGER OF OTHERS.. building others up, strengthening their faith

SOUND IN DOCTRINE.. as they firmly hold on to the Gospel

REFUTING OPPOSITION.. no fudging or compromising, giving a strong testimony of the Truth when challenged.

10 There are many who oppose, rebel against, the Truth. They deceive through their words. In Crete the 'Circumcision Group' was the main group of rebels.

What they were teaching essentially was a doctrine of salvation OTHER THAN by Grace. By demanding circumcision they were teaching against the Gospel 'for by grace we are saved through faith,.....not by works, so that no-one can boast' (Ephesians 2:8,9). Their view was the need of physical circumcision; but the Bible makes it clear this is not necessary for salvation.

There are similar groups today who teach 'add-ons' to the Gospel* the need to attend so many masses or communions per year or in a lifetime, to do penance after sin, to be baptised in a certain way, to speak in tongues, etc. None of these is wrong in itself but neither are none NECESSARY for salvation. Beware the 'Circumcision Parties' of the 1990s!

11 Not only beware, but refute them (v9) as they can lead many away from Christ. In the Cretan case they were doing so too for dishonest gain (but this is not always the case, they are often sincere in their beliefs).

12 The spirit in Crete was (is?) to lie, to be lazy and gluttonous.

Lie... to teach what is not the Truth. Lazy... to avoid the 'hard work' of holy living, substituting it for something relatively easy (its more demanding to live life as in verses 6-9 than to have been circumcised) Gluttonous... they did it for dishonest gain, to make themselves rich.

Truth did not come naturally to the Cretan people. Titus had to change this in the church there by soundly preaching the Word of God and allowing the Holy Spirit to change lives.

13 He had to 'sharply rebuke' them, no kid glove stuff. too often we allow each other to get away with things as Christians. We should be prepared to receive (and occasionally give) sharp counsel.

The Greek word here is APOTOMOS. APO = from TEMNO = cut. Like a surgeon's knife Titus was to cut from the Cretan Christians all falsehood, none was to be left or it would grow again like cancerous cells.

14 So totally was the cut to be made that they would be safe to leave and would pay no more attention to the false teachings that they heard in the future. They would have been disciplined, brought to the state of being able to walk with god on their own without a human pilot.

15 The Jewish myths in question would have included teachings about clean/unclean foods and peoples. But to the 'pure in Christ' all of God's provisions are pure. However, for those whose lives are based on corrupt teaching, even pure food is useless since it cannot save them.

If we are made clean in Christ we cannot be soiled by what comes from outside of ourselves. Neither can a pagan be cleansed from either eating a particular food or abstaining from another one.

16 Knowing God is reflected in Christian Truth being evident in our lives. Those without Him are detestable, and unfit.

1 Corinthians 1:18 says

For the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The word perishing is the same as is used of, say, a tyre when it perishes. The Power of God is DUNAMIS, from which we get dynamic or dynamite. The Greek word for 'spiritual' is PNEUMATIKOS, so a Christian is a PNEUMATIKOS person, whilst a perishing person is not. Imagine trying to fill a perished tyre with air. Foolishness! But a good tyre is pneumatikos, and receives the air giving it the power (dunamis) to fulfil its role (or was that roll?!).

So those without God cannot display the properties of a Godly life, because the power of God CANNOT fill them. They are unfit, and good only for destruction. Pray that we do not become deceived by false teaching and end up unfit for God's Dunamis in our lives.

Chapter Two

1 So, we are reminded, we must teach what is in accordance with sound doctrine (healthy teaching). It must be the teaching of God, as outlined already in chapter one.

....THERE'S MORE TO COME!

STAY TUNED.....

2 Paul breaks it down into age and gender groups, but it is ALL relevant to all. He is simply recognising the particular weaknesses in certain areas of the certain types of people (true in 1st Century Crete, and possibly, but not necessarily, still true). So he emphasises those things to those types but we need to take account of ALL of the teaching.

OLDER MEN (especially, but not only) should be

TEMPERATE.. all need to avoid drunkenness. It was a particular failing of older men at that time, perhaps it is a more general fault today. Temperate means not given to excesses in anything, not just alcohol. We should not become under the influence of drink, drugs or other stimulants (eg sexual gratification, or anything that causes us to act in a 'mindless' non-thinking manner)

WORTHY OF RESPECT.. not all older men are worthy of respect. We all need to live in such a way that others in the Church will respect us naturally. We should not expect respect but live so that we deserve it.

SELF CONTROLLED.. Sensible, prudent, serious. Well Disciplined.

SOUND IN FAITH.. healthy in faith. Full of faith in the Truth of Jesus.

LOVE.. demonstrating love to all, especially to God and the rest of the Body of Christ.

ENDURANCE.. not giving up at the first (or even second) hurdle. Able to stand and go on standing in all circumstances.

3 OLDER WOMEN (especially, but not only) should be

REVERENT.. respectful, revering God in their words and in their lifestyles

NOT SLANDERERS.. or Gossippers. Not speaking evil of others whether it is true or false

NOT ADDICTED TO WINE.. or any other substance.

but to TEACH what is good.. the WOMEN had a role in teaching. They are included in this ministry, not excluded.

They have to pass on the Gospel and the 'sound doctrine' to those in their care, just as the men do.

4 In particular the older women have a teaching ministry to the younger women. This was a facet of society at the time, the girls would be taught at home by their mothers and older women. In Jewish society the boys had instruction in the scriptures from the rabbis but the girls were taught homecrafts by older women. Paul says here that they are also to be taught in doctrine and the scriptures too.

Also, through example and word the older women are to instruct the YOUNGER WOMEN (especially, but not only) in the areas that they were especially weak in, namely:

to LOVE their husbands and children.. the failing of many women at the time was, largely through arranged marriages, to despise their husbands and to talk ill of them with their friends. Paul teaches that love must be the hallmark of Christian marriage, as marriage is a reflection of Christ's relationship with us

5 BE SELF-CONTROLLED and PURE.. in all areas, especially sexually

BE BUSY, NOT LAZY.. making sure that they get done all they need to

KIND.. to their children and families

SUBJECT TO THEIR HUSBANDS.. which would include not running him down amongst the other women. It is not 'be subservient' to him but subject to him as we are subject to Christ. The relationship is one of deep love and affection, and in that we submit ourselves gladly to that love. Women, too, needed to submit themselves to their husband's love and not rebel against it.

All of this was so that no-one could speak ill of 'the Word of God', because it should be plainly demonstrated in the Christian family. Our entire lifestyle is to promote God, glorify Him, prove His word to be excellent.

We should not just live like the ungodly do and be content with that but actively be proving God's word and His ways in our lives; proving it to be true and the best. We need to show that it works and that it is worth following.

Whilst this verse is directed towards women and their relationships with their families it applies just as much to men....men are not exempt from any of the commands: we too need to be loving, self-controlled, pure, busy not lazy, kind and submitted to our wives' love.

6 Young men (especially, but not only) should be

SELF-CONTROLLED.. whole in mind with sober thinking (Greek: SOPHRONEO: SOZO-PHRENO = to make whole or to save the mind).

7 The Elders should do all this by setting a good example. Their actions and lives should be model of good works (Godly deeds) and their teaching and lifestyles should match; their commitment to the message should be plain.

8 Even speech should not be beyond reproach. (Gulp). I must be sound and contain no cursing, swearing, or complaining but only good and wholesome comments (Gulp).

Such should be our lives that the opposition will be UNABLE to find anything bad to say about us (Gulp). Leave them no room for attack! Be pure of speech and let your lifestyle match your

....THERE'S MORE TO COME!

T STAY TUNED.....

Biblical teaching!

9 All who are Slaves (sub-ordinates, servants, employees) need to be subject to their masters (lords, bosses, higher ranking officers, deputy heads, etc). To do as instructed with no backchatting or bad mouthing. Their aim should be to PLEASE; not just to do a task grudgingly but to do it superlatively.

10 Neither should an employee (slave) steal from their boss, either materially or by giving/doing less than their best. There should be no doubt that they can be fully trusted. The boss should have the same trust or faith in them that we are to have in God. The word used is the same: PISTIS. It means a firm persuasion or conviction based on hearing.; such should be the trust in the servant had by a master. In this way the Christian employee makes God's teaching attractive.

11 Yet the above are not to be seen as legalistic rules, which we obey for fear of damnation. Rather, they are the way our lives should reflect the grace that has been lavished on us. We live God's way because we love Him, not because we are cared of Him.

For God's grace that brings salvation has appeared to all people in Jesus. The Greek actually says: for the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. No-one (young, old, male, female, slave, lord) is beyond it nor should act as though it did not apply to them.

12 Through this grace we learn and are taught to say NO to ungodliness and worldly passion.

Ungodliness = ASEBEIAN which is a disregard for or defiance of God's *person*.

Worldly Passion = KOSMIKAE EPITHUMIA Worldly Lust
(of the world) (strong desire)

So we are to move from a defiance towards God and strong desires for things which are inconsistent with following Him. Instead we need to be

Self-controlled (sensible) = SOPHRONOS: Self restrain to govern all our passions and desires, that we may be conformed to the mind of Christ.

Upright = DIKAIOS: no prejudice or partiality. Just.

Godly = EUSEBOS (well-devout). To do that which is well pleasing to Him.

Note that we must not get into another guilt trip hear. It is God's Grace which teaches us to say no to these things. Only as we come to a deeper understanding of His love for us will we be truly able to turn from ungodliness to upright living. It is not through our works but through His gift of Himself. He will change us!

13 We aim to become like this whilst we wait for the Lord's return and our final victorious rest. NOte that it calls Jesus '*our great God and Saviour*, an explicit pronouncement of Christ's deity.

14 Just as Paul has been urging Titus (and us) to give ourselves to

Christ 100%, so he now reminds us that '*our great God and Saviour...gave Himself for us to redeem us*'. He did it to buy us back. We had sold ourselves to sin now He redeems us. (LUT-ROO, to release on receipt of a ransom).

Having bought us, He purifies us to make us pure from all impurities we may have become mixed with. Hence we become His very own, eager to do what pleases Him.

Note again that it is GOD who buys us, GOD who purifies us, and GOD who makes us His own. It's HIS business, He will change us. All we have to do is give ourselves to Him and spend time with Him!

15 All this is the very basis of the Gospel, the stuff we should teach. If we are leaders then we must both encourage and rebuke with all authority (all the authority vested in us by Jesus). We must not let others look down on us (despise us) but act in Christ's authority.

Look down on = PERI PHRONEO., literally 'to think around'. Don't let anyone 'think around you', or try to bypass you, to go behind your back. All should be done in the church in Crete through Titus as the appointed head.

We should not try to 'get around' God appointed authorities.

Chapter Three

1 Literally *remind the people to be arranged under rulers and authorities*, and to honour and serve them. Without authority, and respect for it, there is anarchy and chaos, and these are not consistent with Christian living. Christians, though of another kingdom, are nonetheless to obey the authorities of the country they are 'visiting'.

We should be ready to 'do what is good' against even the immoral backdrop of society.

2 We should speak evil of no-one, neither be quarrelsome, but gentle and considerate; being courteous and full of humility (meek) towards all people.

3 Just like the people around us, we (Paul and Titus, and all converts to Christ) were also once foolish - blind to the Truth; disobedient (to all authorities and also to God); deceived (as to the Truth); and slaves to passions and pleasures.

Such people live lives full of malice, hatred and envy....just as others lived towards us and still do.

4 BUTwhen God's kindness and love came to us...!!!!

5 He saved us and delivered us.

Saved = SOZO, to make whole.

And He did not do this because of the righteousness that we had done (and to which we are now called), for we had done nothing righteous at all. But He did it because of His mercy - His manifestation of love - *we deserved none of it!!!*

Salvation comes through rebirth ('again-born') when we are

....THERE'S MORE TO COME!

STAY TUNED.....

washed in the Blood of the Lamb and renewed by the Holy Spirit.

These two go together, always in that order. First we are washed in the Blood, then we are anointed by the Holy Spirit. You can't have the Holy Spirit except where you are repentant!

A good book to read on this is *POWER IN THE BLOOD* by Benny Hinn, published 1993 by Word at £4.50. ISBN 0-85009-619-7.

Salvation is therefore something done *to* us and *for* us, not *by* us. We are never able to claim it by our own merit or because we deserve it.

Yet, *as a result of it*, we need to seek to do *whatever is good* (vv1,2)

6 Washed in the Blood, the Holy Spirit is poured out on us generously (richly) through Jesus Christ. We have more than enough of Him in our lives but only as and where we allow the Blood to wash us through offering of ourselves to Jesus Christ our Saviour.

7 and so we can become heirs of God. Again, it is by His grace that we are justified. All our life is made acceptable in His sight, undeservedly. So we are heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.

8 We can have complete confidence in all of this, and we should stress it all to others, to those who have trusted in God. We need to be devoted to doing what is good, not to earn our salvation (by now it should be clear that that is an undeserved gift), but as an act of love to God and out of gratitude. In this excellent way all (including ourselves) profit.

9 Paul again stresses the uselessness of foolish arguments (1:10-16). They get us nowhere and are not central to the Gospel.

10 We should be careful not to let such quarrels start. If someone persists, in the end we should have nothing to do with them

11 for they have nothing to do with God.

Indeed, Christians need to avoid all things that have nothing to do with God. That does not mean becoming hermits, but not getting too involved with people, things or situations that are not of God. Again, this is not to either earn or keep our salvation but for 'our profit' here and now. The best way of life is to live it for God and to spend it with Him.

12,13 Practical matters of life should not be overlooked.

14 We must devote ourselves to good things, looking out for each others' needs. Lives should be productive (and here he is talking about material produce as well as spiritual fruit; the necessities of life).

15 It is good to greet and to encourage other believers.

And especially, in the light of all Paul has written, to *know* God's

GRACE!

I am reminded after that chapter of a story of a slave auction in America a century or so ago.

The slaves were bound and lined up; one by one bids were made for them.

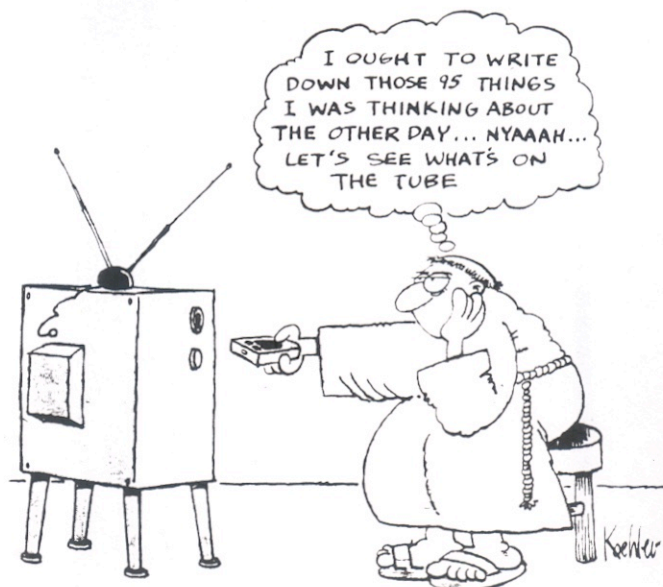
A rich looking man in the crowd noticed especially a young slave girl. He moved out of the crowd and returned about half an hour later, as she was being auctioned. He put in a bid for her that was at least twice as much as any slave had been sold for that day so far. There was an immediate hush in the crowd.

He went forward and took her rope. She spat in his face and swore at him. Wiping the spit away he pulled her through the crowd towards the transaction desk, paid the price and received the documents of ownership.

He pulled her away from the throng, cut her rope and handed her the papers. "I give you your freedom," he said.

She stared at him open-mouthed. Falling to her knees she burst into tears. "You bought me to give me my freedom?" she cried, "...then I will serve you forever!"

That is the picture we need to have of what Christ has done for us (paying far more than we are worth). He has given us our freedom. In response our service to Him should never be for anything other than gratitude and love....if it becomes legalistic or 'religious' then we have sold ourselves back into slavery.



If there had been television in 1517.

....THERE'S MORE TO COME!