

# TITUS

*How to Use This Discussion Guide with Your Group*

Start with a prayer, and then read the introduction from the sheet. Read the portion of the text from your Bible or an app (use whatever translation you're comfortable with, but we suggest the New Living Translation (NLT) or the English Standard Version (ESV)). Then read the summary paragraph(s) and talk through the questions for that section. You can work through this guide in one session or spread it out over several – whatever works for your group. As you read and discuss, consider how what you're reading applies to your life today. Don't forget to close with prayer!

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

Paul writes this letter to Titus—the young man he has left in charge of the church on the Mediterranean island of Crete. Paul is now in the closing years of his ministry. He tells Titus the kind of people he should appoint as church leaders for the future. They must have mature faith and good character. He also advises Titus how to teach the various groups of people in the church—the old and the young, both men and women, and those who are slaves.

Finally, Paul reminds Titus of the difference it makes to be a Christian. Christians should be good members of society—self-controlled, forgiving and reluctant to quarrel. These are rather different qualities from those usually found among the inhabitants of Crete!<sup>1</sup>

## DEALING WITH HERESY

*Read Titus 1:10–16 from your Bible.*

An important part of the overseer's task is to challenge lies and heresies (false teaching) in the church. There are people who are actively undermining the truth of the gospel—for example, a strong group of traditional Jews is insisting that Gentile Christians must be circumcised. Such teachers not only do great damage to families and fellowship groups, but make money from their lies.

Cretans have a reputation for being coarse dishonest and lazy. When such people get hold of wrong religion, they produce a false, bullying and manipulative sect. Titus must deal very firmly with the leaders to rebuke them and bring them to a true faith.

Paul gives some idea of the beliefs of the false teachers. He mentions 'Jewish myths'—the far-fetched stories of Jewish heroes which give a wrong impression of the nature of faith and the power of God. He also speaks of 'the commands of those who reject the truth'—the people who impose strict rules against the everyday pleasures of food and marriage. Like Jesus, Paul teaches

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide* (1st Augsburg books ed.; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 656.

that it's the heart that counts in matters of purity—not blaming sin on food, sex or other people's customs.<sup>2</sup>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR 1:1-16

1. Why is Paul's list of leadership qualifications focused mostly on "being" and not on "doing" (vv.6-9)?
2. How do you interpret the "husband of but one wife" (v. 6)? Does this exclude bachelors or remarried men?
3. What was going on in Crete that made the appointment of such elders important (vv.10-16)? Does any of this go on in the church today? In what way?
4. When did you come to a knowledge of the truth of Christ that Paul speaks of in verses 1 and 2?
5. Who in your Christian community have you especially respected for their godly leadership? Which qualities from this passage did you appreciate in them?
6. Which of these qualities do you feel you need to develop in your own life? How can your church help you?

## TEACHING VARIOUS GROUPS

*Read Titus 2:1–10 from your Bible.*

Paul outlines the teaching Titus should give to the different groups in the churches. Older men should be self-controlled and dignified, with a well-established faith and persevering love.

Older women are to be as reverent as priests in their daily life. They must control any desire to gossip or drink too much, and teach their children well. They must show younger wives and mothers how to build a secure and loving marriage and family, with purity, hard work, kindness and self-giving.

Paul does not allow women to reject their responsibilities on the grounds that Jesus has made them 'free'. It is always important to Paul what outsiders think of the church. He outlines attitudes and ways of behaving which will show the sense and attractiveness of the gospel.

Titus must challenge the young men to take responsibility for their actions. Titus is one of them, and must set a good example. They should live with such integrity that their critics are left speechless.

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew Knowles, [The Bible Guide](#) (1st Augsburg books ed.; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 657.

Christian slaves are to be respectful of their owners and honest with their property. They, too, can play their full part in making the gospel attractive.

Slavery is part of the way of life in the ancient world. One day Christianity will be the driving force in getting slavery abolished—but not yet.<sup>3</sup>

## THE REASON FOR GODLINESS

*Read Titus 2:11–15 from your Bible.*

Jesus Christ brings a revolution into every life. He shows what God is like, offers salvation and gives power to those who want to change. He has given his life to conquer evil and rescue sinful people into God's family.

The challenge for the Christian is how to lead a pure life in a wicked world. Our hope is not that we will overthrow the evil structures of the world, but that Christ will return in glory and complete his new creation.<sup>4</sup>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR 2:1-15

1. As a teenager or college student, how did you decorate your room or living space so that it was really “you”?
2. Who is your favorite elderly person?
3. What is Paul implying about the importance of mentors (trusted guides or models)?
4. What difference does our salvation make in our behavior in the “present age” (v. 12)? What conflicts does this verse imply Christians will face?
5. Why does Paul emphasize “self-control” (1:8-10; 2:2, 5-6, 12; 3:3) and doing “what is good” (2:3, 7, 14; 3:1, 8)?
6. How does our new lifestyle relate to Jesus' death (v. 14)? To His glorious appearing (v. 13)?
7. What one quality in each of the groups mentioned do you feel is most important for Christians in our society (look at older men, older women, young women, young men and employees)?
8. Which group do you fall into? What quality Paul lists for your group catches your attention? Why?
9. How much have you focused on self-control and doing what is good in your own life? How can you improve?

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Knowles, [The Bible Guide](#) (1st Augsburg books ed.; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 657.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Knowles, [The Bible Guide](#) (1st Augsburg books ed.; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 659.

## CHOOSING THE GOOD

*Read Titus 3:1–11 in your Bible.*

Titus is to remind Christians to be good citizens. In what they say and do they are to put others first.

In the past, we were ruled by our strongest feelings and found ourselves hating each other. This was particularly true of the Cretans. Now everything is different in the light of Christ.

Paul says we can be different, because we have experienced the mercy and goodness of God. He has saved us from sin, washed us of guilt and given us his Spirit within. We have a new start and a new hope.

The vain discussions and endless bickering of false teachers are shown up for what they are—a throwback to the darkness and discord of the past.<sup>5</sup>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR 3:1-15

1. In what situation do you least exhibit your faith: in a check-out line? In a fender bender? After a tough exam? At the company picnic? In athletics? Other?
2. Why do you think Paul again stresses “doing good” (vv. 1, 8, 14)? What about human nature makes such reminders necessary (v. 3)?
3. What do verses 4-7 say about God’s character? His work in us?
4. How does a true understanding of these verses promote humility? Gratitude? A life of service? Have you seen this happen in your life?
5. What is going on with the people in verses 9-11 (see 2 Timothy 2:25-26; 3:1-5)? How do Paul’s instructions reflect both “tough love” and uncompromising righteousness? What similar situations are occurring in today’s church?
6. Does verse 3 paint an accurate picture of you in the past? To what degree? Were these characteristics an obvious part of your life, or more of an underlying reality?
7. In doing good, what motivates you: (a) Call of duty? (b) Fear of judgment? (c) Hope of Christ’s return? (d) Gratitude for what Christ has done? (e) Desire to make peace in your relationships? (f) Needs of others?
8. What “good” do you do at home? At church? In your city, state or nation? (or are you “up to no good”?)
9. Over the past year, where have you sensed growth in leading a “productive” life for God (see v. 14)?

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew Knowles, [The Bible Guide](#) (1st Augsburg books ed.; Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 659.