

Growth Group Lesson

January 21 & 22

Titus 1:1-4

Spend some time praying with your group.

- Praise God for answering your prayer requests.
- Pray for encouragement for the group to continue looking for ways to grow in their relationships with Christ as they study Titus.

Get to know one another:

- Explain one practice you participate in to help you grow spiritually.

Titus Intro: The gospel was introduced to the Cretans when they heard Peter's sermon at the Pentecost (Acts 2:11). Paul and Titus probably continued the evangelism on the island before Paul commissioned Titus to a leadership position there.

Titus was Greek and had been a traveling companion of Paul. Paul sent Titus to the island of Crete, off the coast of Greece, to restore order to house churches planted there, but the churches were engaging in bad practices. Cretans were known as liars who engaged in betrayal, violence, and sexual immorality. Why did Paul think Crete was important? The island had many harbors, with sizeable cities surrounding them, and Paul believed that Crete was the place to start church plants. But over time, lousy practice led to bad theology, as the leaders of Crete who proclaimed to be Christians were corrupt and ungodly. Because Paul was all about holy living, he sent Titus to correct the errors of Christian practices in Crete, to turn bad practice into good practice so that their theology would be pure and righteous. *Source: Bible Project "Titus: A Counter-Culture Gospel for Cretans" written by Whitney Woolard*

Read Titus 1:1-4, given below. Highlight the key concepts you observe, and write any questions you have in the margins.

1 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— 2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, 3 and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior, 4 To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

The Audience: Titus

Paul began his letter to Titus as he did in all his epistles. He identified himself, validated his apostolic authority, greeted his recipient, and then gave a blessing. More is written in Paul's salutation to Titus because each phrase is an introduction to the theme of the letter.

1. Who is Titus? **Gal 2:3; 2 Cor. 8:16-24; Titus 1:5**

The Author: Paul

Paul's letter commissioning Titus for the service on Crete opens with a clear statement of Paul's identity and responsibilities.

2. Paul identifies himself as both a slave/servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ in **verse 1**. Some translations will use the word servant (ESV) or bondservant (NASB). Other NT writers used slave for their salutations. (See **James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1**)
 - a. What is a slave of God? **Mark 9:35, 10:42-45; Phil. 2:6-8; Gal 1:10**
 - b. Paul also said he was an apostle of Jesus Christ. What is an apostle? **Gal 2:1-10**
3. Reflect on your life. What would you say your identity is? **Gal 2:19-20**
 - a. What do you often seek identity in when not in Jesus?
 - b. How do you pursue finding your identity in Christ?
4. Paul describes God's three characteristics of Paul's life and ministry. List the three characteristics. **Verses 1-3**
 - a. Compare Paul's three characteristics to Jesus' command in **Matt. 28:18-20**. What similarities do you notice?
 - b. Paul is a slave of God and is "sold out" to furthering the Kingdom of God. How committed are you to living for Christ in your life? **Luke 9:21-26**
 - c. What changes do you need to make to grow in your commitment to furthering the Kingdom of God?
5. Paul lists one characteristic of God in **verse 2**. What is the characteristic listed? **Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 6:13-19**
 - a. As mentioned above, the Cretans were known to be liars. Why was it necessary for Paul to include this characteristic in his salutation?
 - b. What is Paul saying we can have an assurance of?
 - c. How does knowing God's assurance of eternal life affect how you live your life?
6. What is Paul entrusted with? **1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:11-12**
 - a. What does it mean to be entrusted with something?
 - b. Give an example of what has changed since you have become entrusted with the gospel and living as a believer in Jesus.

Spend some time praying.

You will discover the theme of producing right living through careful attention to theological truth as you read and study Titus.

- Ask God for the Holy Spirit's wisdom to help you grow spiritually by pulling these truths from Titus as you read and study the book.
- Ask God who He wants you to be pouring your life into so they can grow spiritually.
- Ask God for opportunities to share the Gospel with the people in your life.

Weekly challenge

Read the three chapters of Titus each week. Journal what God reveals to you as you read and reread the book.