

The Epistle of Paul to Titus

Chapter 1



For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

- Titus 1:5

Titus Chapter 1



Setting in Order the Things That Are Wanting

Sound leadership, sound doctrine, and the correction of false teaching in the church.

Theme Verse

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

- Titus 1:5

Teaching Emphasis

Titus chapter 1 teaches that the church must be ordered by truth, not personality, convenience, or culture. Paul charges Titus to complete what was lacking in Crete by appointing qualified elders, guarding sound doctrine, and correcting false teachers whose words were damaging households and turning men away from the truth.

The chapter holds together two matters that must never be separated: character and doctrine. Leaders must be blameless in life, faithful in the home, disciplined in conduct, and anchored in the faithful word. The church is protected when truth is taught clearly and lived visibly.

Introduction to the Study



The Epistle to Titus is one of Paul's pastoral letters. It is written to a trusted fellow laborer who had been left in Crete to strengthen the churches and complete the work that remained unfinished. Titus was not merely given an administrative task. He was entrusted with the order, doctrine, leadership, and moral health of the assemblies.

Chapter 1 opens with a rich salutation that grounds Paul's ministry in the faith of God's elect, the acknowledging of the truth, the hope of eternal life, and the preaching of God's word. From there, Paul moves immediately to church order. Titus must set in order what is wanting and appoint elders in every city.

The need for qualified leadership becomes urgent because false teachers were already active. Their mouths had to be stopped because their teaching was subverting whole households. Paul does not treat false doctrine as a small matter. When doctrine is corrupted, homes are harmed, consciences are defiled, and works deny the very God that men profess to know.

Study Focus

- Paul's identity as a servant of God and apostle of Jesus Christ.
- The hope of eternal life promised by God, who cannot lie.
- The manifestation of God's word through preaching.
- Titus' task to set in order what was lacking in Crete.
- The character and household qualifications of elders.
- The responsibility of an overseer to hold fast the faithful word.
- The danger of vain talkers, deceivers, and corrupt teaching.
- The difference between professing God with words and denying Him by works.

Titus Chapter 1

Simplified Corresponding Structures

Insert-ready structure notes for the study document

Titus 1:1-4 — Epistolary Salutation and Benediction

Movement	Text	Corresponding Movement	Text
A	1a — Paul	A'	4a — Titus
B	1b — A servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ	B'	4b — Mine own son
C	1c — According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth	C'	4c — According to the common faith
D	1d — According to godliness	D'	3d — According to the commandment of God our Saviour
E	2a — In hope of eternal life	E'	3c — Committed unto me
F	2b — Promised by God, Who cannot lie	F'	3b — His word through preaching
G	2c — Before the world began	G'	3a — Manifested in due times

Teaching Emphasis: Paul's ministry and Titus's charge are grounded in God's electing faith, truth, godliness, eternal hope, and the preached Word.

Titus 1:10-16 — Contentious Cretans Censured

Movement	Text	Corresponding Movement	Text
A	10 — Impostors identified: unruly, vain talkers, and deceivers	A'	15-16 — Impostors exposed: defiled, unbelieving, disobedient, and reprobate
B	11 — Rebuke required: their mouths must be stopped	B'	13b-14 — Rebuke applied: that they may be sound in the faith and turn from fables and commandments of men
C	12 — Witness against them by a prophet of their own	C'	13a — Witness confirmed by Paul: This witness is true

Teaching Emphasis: False profession is answered by sound doctrine, pastoral correction, and visible obedience to God.

Salutation: Truth, Hope, and Grace

1 Paul,

- † a servant of God,
- † and an apostle of Jesus Christ,
- † according to the faith of God's elect,
- † and the acknowledging of the truth
- † which is after godliness;

2 In hope of eternal life,

- † which God, that cannot lie,
- † promised before the world began;

3 But hath in due times

- † manifested his word through preaching,
- † which is committed unto me
- † according to the commandment
- † of God our Saviour;

4 To Titus,

- † mine own son after the common faith:
- † Grace, mercy, and peace,
- † from God the Father
- † and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Church Order and Qualified Elders

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete,

- † that thou shouldest set in order
- † the things that are wanting,
- † and ordain elders in every city,
- † as I had appointed thee:

6 If any be blameless,

- † the husband of one wife,
- † having faithful children
- † not accused of riot
- † or unruly.

7 For a bishop must be blameless,

- † as the steward of God;
- † not selfwilled,
- † not soon angry,
- † not given to wine,
- † no striker,
- † not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality,

- † a lover of good men,
- † sober,
- † just,
- † holy,
- † temperate;

Holding Fast the Faithful Word

9 Holding fast the faithful word

† as he hath been taught,

† that he may be able

† by sound doctrine

† both to exhort

† and to convince the gainsayers.

False Teachers Confronted

10 For there are many unruly

† and vain talkers

† and deceivers,

† specially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped,

† who subvert whole houses,

† teaching things which they ought not,

† for filthy lucre's sake.

12 One of themselves,

† even a prophet of their own, said,

† The Cretians are alway liars,

† evil beasts,

† slow bellies.

13 This witness is true.

† Wherefore rebuke them sharply,

† that they may be sound in the faith;

Defiled Profession and Works

14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables,

† and commandments of men,

† that turn from the truth.

15 Unto the pure all things are pure:

† but unto them that are defiled

† and unbelieving is nothing pure;

† but even their mind

† and conscience is defiled.

16 They profess

† that they know God;

† but in works they deny him,

† being abominable,

† and disobedient,

† and unto every good work reprobate.

Companion Bible Footnote Helps

The following notes are summarized as study helps from the Companion Bible footnotes and structure. They help the class track key words without losing the flow of Paul's argument.

Verse	Word / Phrase	Study Note
1:1	servant of God	Paul's opening designation stresses service under God's authority. The work is not self-appointed or self-owned.
1:1	apostle of Jesus Christ	Paul's service is joined to apostolic commission. His message carries delegated authority from Christ.
1:1	acknowledging of the truth	The idea points to full recognition of the truth. Biblical truth is not bare information; it is truth that accords with godliness.
1:2	God, that cannot lie	The hope of eternal life rests on the character of God. The promise is secure because God is unlying and faithful.
1:2-3	promised / manifested	What God promised before the ages He has manifested in due times. The promise comes into public view through the preached word.
1:3	committed unto me	Paul sees preaching as a stewardship entrusted by commandment, not as a personal platform.
1:4	mine own son	Titus is addressed as a true spiritual son after the common faith. The language reflects discipleship, trust, and shared faith.
1:5	set in order	The word carries the idea of correcting, straightening, or completing what is lacking. Titus must bring church life into proper order.
1:5	ordain elders	Titus is to appoint elders in every city. Local assemblies need recognized, qualified leadership.
1:6	blameless	This does not require sinless perfection. It describes a life not open to a legitimate charge that would discredit the ministry.
1:7	bishop / overseer	The word speaks of oversight. The overseer is also called a steward of God, meaning he manages what belongs to Another.
1:8	lover of hospitality	The phrase carries the sense of loving strangers. A qualified leader is not closed, selfish, or inhospitable.
1:9	faithful word	The elder must hold fast the reliable word as taught. Sound doctrine is both believed and guarded.
1:9	exhort / convince	Sound doctrine has a twofold use: it builds up those who receive the truth and answers those who oppose it.
1:10	vain talkers and deceivers	False teachers are not merely confused. Their words are empty and misleading, especially where religious tradition is used against truth.
1:11	mouths must be stopped	The command is protective. False teaching must not be allowed to continue damaging households.
1:13	sound in the faith	Sharp rebuke has a restorative aim. The goal is soundness, not personal victory in argument.
1:14	fables and commandments of men	The church must reject teachings that draw attention away from the truth and bind consciences to human commands.
1:15	mind and conscience defiled	Defilement is inward before it becomes outward. A corrupted conscience distorts the way a person evaluates everything.
1:16	profess / deny	Words alone do not prove true knowledge of God. Works can deny what the mouth claims to confess.

Biblical Observations

The observations below follow the movement of Titus chapter 1.

The commentary notes use normal bullet points, and each observation includes personal application for men's Bible study discussion.



Observation 1

1 Paul,

- † a servant of God,
- † and an apostle of Jesus Christ,
- † according to the faith of God's elect,
- † and the acknowledging of the truth
- † which is after godliness;

2 In hope of eternal life,

- † which God, that cannot lie,
- † promised before the world began;

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching,

- † which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

- Paul begins by identifying himself as both servant and apostle. He belongs to God and is sent by Jesus Christ. True ministry begins with submission before it speaks with authority.
- The truth Paul serves is after godliness. Truth is not treated as theory. God's truth produces a life ordered toward reverence, obedience, and holiness.
- The hope of eternal life rests on the God who cannot lie. This gives the believer stability. Our hope is not built on human promises, religious emotion, or changing circumstances, but on the character of God.
- The word is manifested through preaching. God makes His promise known through the proclaimed word, and faithful preaching must draw its content from what God has revealed.

Personal Application...

Measure your confidence by the character of God, not by the pressure of the moment. Hold to the truth in a way that produces godliness, and treat the preaching and reading of God's word as the appointed means by which He strengthens His people.

Observation 2

4 To Titus,

† mine own son after the common faith:
† Grace, mercy, and peace,
† from God the Father
† and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

- Titus is called Paul's own son after the common faith. The relationship is spiritual, but it is not shallow. Paul has invested in Titus, trusts him, and sends him into difficult work.
- The faith is common, not because it is ordinary, but because it is shared by all who belong to Christ. The church stands on one gospel, one Lord, and one saving faith.
- Grace, mercy, and peace are not casual greetings. Titus will need all three as he deals with unfinished church order, appoints leaders, and confronts false teachers.

Personal Application...

Do not separate discipleship from responsibility. Mature believers must help form other men who can be trusted with truth, order, and correction. Ask who has invested in you, and who you are helping to strengthen in the common faith.

Observation 3

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete,

† that thou shouldest set in order

† the things that are wanting,

† and ordain elders in every city,

† as I had appointed thee:

- Titus is left in Crete because something is unfinished. The gospel had gone forth, but the assemblies still needed order, leadership, and doctrinal stability.
- Set in order means Titus must correct what is lacking. Christian love does not ignore disorder. Grace brings life into alignment with the truth.
- Elders were to be appointed in every city. The local church needs more than enthusiasm. It needs qualified men who can shepherd, teach, guard, and model the faith.

Personal Application...

Look honestly at what is wanting in your own life, home, and ministry. Do not be content with a beginning if God is calling you to maturity, order, and faithful completion.

Observation 4

6 If any be blameless,

- † the husband of one wife,
- † having faithful children
- † not accused of riot
- † or unruly.

- Blameless does not mean sinless perfection. It means a man's life is not marked by a standing accusation that undermines his credibility.
- Paul begins elder qualification with the home. Public ministry cannot be separated from private faithfulness. A man's household reveals patterns of character, discipline, love, and responsibility.
- Faithful children not accused of riot or unruly points to a household not characterized by rebellion and disorder. This does not mean every family circumstance is simple, but it does show that leadership begins with visible faithfulness close to home.

Personal Application...

Do not divide your spiritual life into public and private compartments. Ask whether the people closest to you see the same faithfulness that others see in public.

Observation 5

7 For a bishop must be blameless,

- † as the steward of God;
- † not selfwilled,
- † not soon angry,
- † not given to wine,
- † no striker,
- † not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality,

- † a lover of good men,
- † sober,
- † just,
- † holy,
- † temperate;

- The bishop, or overseer, is called the steward of God. He does not own the flock, the office, or the word. He manages what belongs to God.
- Paul first lists what must not characterize him: self-will, quick anger, wine-dominated living, violence, and greed. These traits make a man dangerous in spiritual leadership.
- The positive qualities show the opposite pattern: hospitality, love for what is good, sober judgment, justice, holiness, and self-control. Leadership is not charisma first; it is disciplined character under God.

Personal Application...

Examine your character before you examine your influence. Whether or not you hold an office in the church, the Lord calls men to reject self-will, anger, greed, and lack of control, and to cultivate visible godliness.

Observation 6

9 Holding fast the faithful word

- † as he hath been taught,
- † that he may be able
- † by sound doctrine
- † both to exhort
- † and to convince the gainsayers.

- The elder must hold fast the faithful word. He is not free to invent doctrine, soften doctrine, or replace doctrine with personality. He clings to what has been taught.
- Sound doctrine is healthy teaching. It strengthens the body because it comes from the faithful word rather than from speculation, human commands, or cultural pressure.
- The overseer must be able both to exhort and to convince. The word encourages believers and answers opponents. A church that cannot teach truth clearly will struggle to resist error.

Personal Application...

Build your life on the faithful word until you can both receive correction and help others stand. Do not settle for opinions about the Bible when God has given His people doctrine that is sound.

Observation 7

10 For there are many unruly

† and vain talkers

† and deceivers,

† specially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped,

† who subvert whole houses,

† teaching things which they ought not,

† for filthy lucre's sake.

12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said,

† The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

13 This witness is true.

† Wherefore rebuke them sharply,

† that they may be sound in the faith;

- The problem in Crete was not minor. There were many unruly men, empty talkers, and deceivers. False teaching often hides behind religious language, but its fruit is disorder and deception.
- Their mouths must be stopped because they subvert whole houses. False doctrine does not remain in the classroom. It enters homes, shapes consciences, and disrupts families.
- Paul's sharp rebuke is not cruelty. The stated purpose is that they may be sound in the faith. Biblical correction aims at rescue, health, and restoration to truth.

Personal Application...

Do not treat false teaching as harmless talk. Guard your home by testing what you hear against Scripture. When correction is needed, let truth be clear, serious, and aimed at restoration.

Observation 8

14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables,

† and commandments of men,

† that turn from the truth.

15 Unto the pure all things are pure:

† but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure;

† but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

16 They profess that they know God;

† but in works they deny him,

† being abominable,

† and disobedient,

† and unto every good work reprobate.

- The church must not give heed to fables and commandments of men. Religious-sounding additions can turn people away from the truth when they replace the word of God with human control.
- Defilement reaches the mind and conscience. When the inward life is corrupted, a person's judgment becomes distorted and even religious claims become unreliable.
- They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him. This is one of the most searching statements in the chapter. A verbal profession is contradicted when the life refuses obedience.

Personal Application...

Ask whether your works agree with your confession. Do not be satisfied with saying you know God while resisting His correction. Let the Lord purify your mind, conscience, and daily obedience.

Chapter 1 Review

Summary



Titus chapter 1 opens with Paul grounding his ministry in God's truth, God's promise, and God's commandment. Eternal life is promised by the God who cannot lie, and that promise is made known through the preaching of His word.

Paul then explains why Titus was left in Crete: to set in order what was lacking and appoint elders in every city. The church needed qualified leadership marked by blameless character, faithful household order, self-control, hospitality, justice, holiness, and firm attachment to the faithful word.

The chapter closes by exposing false teachers whose empty words were damaging households. Paul commands correction because the goal is soundness in the faith. The final warning is direct: some profess to know God, but their works deny Him. Titus 1 calls the church to order, truth, character, and obedience.

Chapter 1 Review

Key Movements in the Text

1. **Paul's Ministry Grounded in God's Truth** - Paul serves as a servant and apostle according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of truth after godliness.
2. **Hope Established by God's Character** - The hope of eternal life rests on the God who cannot lie and who promised before the world began.
3. **The Word Manifested Through Preaching** - God's promise is publicly made known through the preached word entrusted by His commandment.
4. **Titus Left to Set Things in Order** - The churches in Crete need order, completion, and recognized elders in every city.
5. **Elders Qualified by Character and Doctrine** - Church leaders must be blameless, disciplined, hospitable, holy, and anchored in the faithful word.
6. **False Teachers Exposed and Corrected** - Unruly deceivers must be stopped because they subvert households and turn people from truth.
7. **Profession Tested by Works** - True knowledge of God cannot be separated from obedience. Works reveal whether the confession is genuine.

Chapter 1 Review

Questions for Reflection



- Where in your life do you need the Lord to set in order the things that are wanting?
- How does the phrase God, that cannot lie strengthen your confidence in eternal life?
- What does Titus 1 teach us about the relationship between doctrine and godliness?
- Why does Paul begin elder qualifications with blameless character and household faithfulness?
- Which negative leadership trait in verse 7 do men need to guard against most carefully today?
- How can a man hold fast the faithful word without becoming harsh or prideful?
- What makes false teaching especially dangerous to households?
- How can rebuke be sharp and still aim at restoration?
- What are examples of commandments of men that can turn people from the truth?
- Do your works strengthen or weaken your profession that you know God?

One Memory Verse



Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught,
that he may be able by sound doctrine
both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

- Titus 1:9



Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the faithful word and for the hope of eternal life promised by You, the God who cannot lie. Set in order what is wanting in our lives, our homes, and our fellowship. Raise up men of character who love truth, hold fast sound doctrine, and walk in visible obedience. Guard us from empty talk, deception, and the commandments of men that turn hearts from Your truth. Purify our minds and consciences so that our works agree with our confession.

Make us sound in the faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.