

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Titus - Order in the Church

Titus was a Greek with a Latin name and was a pastor on the Greek island of Crete. He was a friend to Paul and Paul was a mentor to him. The Island of Crete was a difficult place to be both geographically and culturally--the people had a reputation for being problematic. In this letter Paul writes to Titus to explain order in the church and to encourage him. Ministry is hard and we do need frequent encouragement. In Paul's letter to Titus he covers leadership (what it means to serve Jesus Christ), Discipleship (what it means to follow Jesus Christ), and stewardship (what it means to reflect Jesus Christ). Titus was the kind of a leader that was able to get people to follow and he led them to set things in order. Crete is proof that God can do His work anywhere--even in places with the most difficult circumstances.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What qualifications did Paul say Titus should look for in leaders for the church in Crete?
- b. Explain an elder, bishop and pastor. What were the standards that Paul outlines for these roles?
- c. What does it mean to be blameless?
- d. Why did Paul set so high of a standard?
- e. How are we to conduct ourselves and interact with each other (Christians)?
- f. Examine your heart: If Jesus comes in ten minutes, what area of your speech and conduct would you want to hide from him? Write a prayer asking God to reveal how He wants you to purify your life.
- g. What responsible duties are you performing for the good of the church (Christ's body)?
- h. What does Paul mean by "divisive man?" How are you to deal with such a man?
- i. Examine your heart: What things (words, actions) are an encouragement to you? Who provides those things for you? Who is your spiritual mentor? Challenge: if you don't have a spiritual mentor, pray today that God would bring that person to you.

Philemon

Paul writes to Philemon, a prominent and wealthy man, to request that he restore his slave Onesimus. Onesimus had run away from his owner, Philemon. (In the culture at that time, such a crime deserved death.) However, while Onesimus was a runaway slave in Rome, Paul led him to the Lord--which now made him a fellow brother to Paul and to his owner Philemon. This is a beautiful example how Paul played a role in laying his life and resources down for his brother Onesimus, and his gentle and encouraging ways with his brother Philemon.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How did Paul appeal to Philemon and for what?
- b. How did his letter show humility when he could have used force and his authority as an apostle to get Philemon to do what he requested?
- c. What arguments did he use for leverage?
- d. What did Paul want Philemon to do for Onesimus? What was Paul willing to do?
- e. How is this a picture of what Christ has done for us?
- f. Examine your heart: How is your heart broken and in need restoration? Ask God to restore.