

Brent Alderman
240.818.3053

brent.alderman@capitolcom.org

TITUS WRAP-UP: SMALL BOOK, BIG LESSONS

The fifteenth-century cleric, Thomas à Kempis, who wrote The Imitation of Christ, said, “On the day of judgment, it will be demanded of us not what we have read, but what we have done.” Or to cite a twentieth-century governmental leader, Winston Churchill agreed, “It is always more easy to discover and proclaim general principles than to apply them.”

In our last study, we completed the series in the book of Titus, a short letter the apostle Paul wrote to instruct his young pastoral protégé. Since there are some important themes covered in Titus, we should take some time to look back at some of the lessons we’ve discussed to “apply the sealer” to our series.

MENTORING IS POWERFUL

*Titus 1:4a - To Titus, **my true child** in a common faith*

When Paul called Titus his true child, it reflected his affection and connection to the young pastor. Titus was Paul’s son in a spiritual sense, as Paul had discipled him and helped him grow in his faith. Life-on-life teaching is a demonstrated, preferred, biblical approach to grow Christians in truth.

Moses had Joshua. Elijah had Elisha. Jesus had his disciples, but spent extended time with just three – Peter, James, and John. Paul mentored many young believers, including Titus and Timothy. One of the best verses to instruct us about this came in a letter Paul wrote to Timothy:

*2 Timothy 2:2 - and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses **entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.***

There are four generations of mentorship in that verse: Paul, Timothy, those who Timothy teaches, and those who will be taught by Timothy’s protégés. Mentoring is a key strategy to moving the message of the gospel forward.

MUCH RIDES ON LEADERSHIP

*Titus 1:5 - This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and **appoint elders** in every town as I directed you*

These new churches being formed in first-century Crete needed strong leadership. Titus’ primary role was to get these leaders trained so that he could move on to minister in other areas.

The nineteen requirements listed in Titus 1:6-9, for those who oversee the church are a constant reminder of the highest standards of conduct that are needed to provide leadership. The list stands as a tall monument, visible to all, of the value of character, integrity, and spirituality in leaders.

It’s also true that good, solid moral character is needed outside of the church for healthy societies. Leaders in government, education, commerce, and homes need to be careful of their lives and examples as well.

COURAGEOUSLY ADDRESS THREATS

*Titus 1:10-13 - For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers... **They must be silenced**, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. Therefore **rebuke them** sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,*

Internal problems in the church are nothing new, but false teaching must be addressed. Church problems are to be expected so we shouldn’t panic. They are also not a sign of failure so we shouldn’t despair. But they are a true test for leaders so we should be ready.

In almost every New Testament book, threats against the church show up, from the Roman authorities in Acts to perverse Christians in 1 Corinthians to Gnostics in 1 John. False teaching and division must be dealt with.

OLDER GENERATIONS HAVE A VITAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Titus 2:1-5 - Teach the **older men** to be temperate and worthy of respect ... teach the **older women** to be reverent in the way they live ... then they can train the younger women ...*

This is closely related to the importance of mentoring, but is more specific. The concept of retirement from ministry doesn't seem to have occurred to anyone in the early church. If you were in a church, you were involved in ministry to other people regardless of your age.

The same should not only be true today, but is needed now more than ever. The wisdom that comes from years of living and experience can be a deep resource of benefit to younger generations and we must find ways for different age groups to interact and share.

Prayer of the Young

God, give the church weathered hands to show us how to work.

Give us people of experienced character to show us how to live.

Give us those who have made mistakes to guide us from doing the same.

Give us some people with years of Christian living to show us how to walk.

Give us some couples with golden anniversary pictures to show us how to stay married.

Give us some people with scars to tell us how to endure tough times.

Give us some people who are finishing well to show us that it can actually be done.

GOD LOVES HOLINESS IN HIS PEOPLE

*Titus 2:11-14 – (Saving grace is) training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to **live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives** in the present age,*

The pathetic condition of the Cretan character is well-known. Into this moral swamp, Titus had to emphasize the crucial concept of holiness. The biblical idea of “holy” does not mean perfect. It isn't self-righteousness. It simply means “set apart”. One who is holy (and God is the only One who perfectly embodies

this) is set apart, is different than anyone else around them. When believers are growing in holiness, it simply means the things that characterize their lives will be demonstrably unlike the world and its values.

CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE A NATION'S BEST CITIZENS

*Titus 3:1, 2 - Remind them to be **submissive to rulers and authorities**, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work,*

One outgrowth of the holy life is the attitude of the believer to authority. Specifically, governmental rulers, who are put in place by God himself, are to be obeyed. This doesn't mean we will always agree with laws or enforcement, but we should actively work for change, vote, and speak up for what is right as we submit to God-given authority.

MERCIFUL SALVATION SHOULD BE CELEBRATED

*Titus 3:3-8 - **he saved us**, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but **according to his own mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

At its core, the book of Titus is a treatise on the beauty of the gospel. The deep need that all people have for peace with God is present in every chapter, but so is the forgiveness God gives and as well as the grace of God that brings salvation. Another major theme is the importance of the hope all believers have of eternal life together with God.

The lessons we find in Titus take a lifetime to experience and apply. My prayer for you is that the wisdom we see in this book will guide you as you grow closer to the Lord.

BIBLE STUDY

Legislators and Staff (During Session)

Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.

Room 153, House Office Building