

## Sample Study

## Titus/Philemon

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### **Read — Titus 1:1–16; other references as given**

Have you ever longed to be a truly godly person — one who loves God passionately and sincerely wants to obey Him? There is an old Negro spiritual that captures the heart's cry of many Christians. One line in the song says, "Oh Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, ... in my heart."

Does godliness seem unattainable or even frightening to you? It doesn't need to be. In fact, it's God's will for every believer, including you, to be godly (compare with [hereafter, cf.] Romans 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 10:4–5).

But what does it mean to be godly? The apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, answers this critical question in his brief letter (only forty-six verses) to Titus, a pastor serving among the churches on the Mediterranean island of Crete. Paul's letter to Titus and the Cretan believers provides practical, biblical teaching on what it means to be a godly believer.

Now, before you begin this study, humble yourself before God in prayer and ask Him to help you understand and obey the truths you'll learn. May God bless your diligent study of His precious Word.

1. Jewish men and women were required to attend three national feasts every year in Jerusalem. The book of Acts tells us Jewish pilgrims came from various parts of the Roman Empire to Jerusalem to participate in the first celebration of Pentecost following Jesus' crucifixion (cf. Acts 2:1–11; the feast of Pentecost was one of three annual national feasts). On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter preached to a large gathering of these pilgrims, and approximately three thousand people were saved, or born again, on that day (cf. Acts 2:41). Bible scholars believe some of the Cretans in Jerusalem for the feast (Acts 2:11) were born again and eventually returned to Crete, where they formed new congregations.
  - a. How did Paul describe himself in this important letter to Titus (Titus 1:1)?
  - b. For what two reasons was Paul chosen by God (Titus 1:1)?
2. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, "**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, new things have come**" (2 Cor. 5:17). The New Testament (hereafter abbreviated NT) writer James said, "... **faith without works is dead**" (James 2:20).
  - a. After Paul's conversion, he dedicated his life to serving God and others (cf. Phil. 1:20–21). What was Paul's objective for preaching and teaching the truth to the saved (God's elect) and the lost (Titus 1:1, *accords* [NKJV] could be translated "resulting")?
  - b. Both history and the Bible reveal that man is incurably religious, but he is not inherently godly. What, if any, *do you think* is the difference between being religious and being godly (cf. Mark 7:5–13; John 4:19–24)?
  - c. Would those who know you best, including God, describe you as being more religious or godly? Why?
3. God promises those who have trusted Jesus Christ alone **the hope of eternal life** (Titus 1:2, *hope* [Greek *elpidi* — "essence, assurance, guarantee"] is a present guarantee of a future event or reality).
  - a. Since God **cannot lie** (Titus 1:2, NIV — "does not lie"), how confident should a Christian be about spending eternity with Him (Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2–3; cf. Rom. 10:9–10, 13)? Why?

- b. The fact that God cannot lie has profound implications for the believer and his relationship with God. Take a few moments to meditate on this truth. What *do you think* are some things that must also be true if God cannot lie?
  
4. Besides being absolutely truthful, what else does Titus 1:1–4 teach about God’s divine nature?
  
5. Paul was the leader of a company of itinerant missionaries. Some, such as Titus and Timothy, received temporary pastoral assignments in churches. Titus ministered among the churches on the island of Crete, and Timothy pastored at Ephesus (a city on the western coast of modern-day Turkey).
  - a. Titus was led to Christ by the apostle Paul (cf. Titus 1:4, **my own son** — a common expression used metaphorically to signify conversion). What else does the Bible tell us about this dedicated Christian servant (Gal. 2:3; 2 Cor. 8:16–17)?
  
  - b. What did Paul ask Titus to do when he left him on Crete (Titus 1:5)?
  
6. Paul and Titus were believers in a **common faith** (Titus 1:4). This phrase is loaded with theological meaning and has profound spiritual implications for both the church as a whole and for individual believers. List four things the Bible teaches about our “common faith” (Eph. 4:4–6; Heb. 1:1–2; 1 Peter 1:20–21; Jude 3).
  
7. The sixteenth century Reformation was a religious movement in Europe that God used to bring the church back to His Word as its final authority. “*Ad fonts*” was a Reformation motto, which meant “back to the fountain.” The Reformation took the church back to God and back to the Bible — the fountain of God’s revelation to man.
  - a. What are some things Christians are tempted to trust in, rather than trusting in God’s Word as their ultimate authority?
  
  - b. What are some things you’re tempted to trust in more than our “common faith” as revealed in God’s Holy Word?
  
8. Paul instructed Titus to organize the Cretan believers into local churches and appoint qualified spiritual leaders to oversee these new assemblies. The list of spiritual qualifications for these Christian leaders is strikingly similar to the one Paul gave Timothy at Ephesus (Titus 1:6–9; cf. 1 Tim. 2:3–7).
  - a. What word(s) indicate that the qualifications for the men who serve as elders or overseers are prerequisites and not merely suggestions or spiritual goals (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9)?
  
  - b. It may seem strange that various lists, such as the one for pastoral qualifications, are repeated in God’s Word. What important truth(s) do you think God wants us to understand from the repetition of spiritual truths in His Word?

1.
  - a. A bondservant or servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ.
  - b. To help believers (God's elect) grow in their faith in God and to spread the knowledge of the truth.
2.
  - a. Paul's ultimate goal in spreading God's truth was to see genuine godliness established in the lives of those to whom he preached.
  - b. Answers will vary. *Godliness* is the personal appropriation of Christian truth that results in pure moral and ethical conduct in every aspect of a believer's life. Being *religious* often refers to an individual's external compliance to a religious system, which often includes man-made religious regulations. The result is often spiritual pride within those who diligently adhere to religious standards and a critical spirit toward those who do not.
  - b. Answers will vary.
3.
  - a. Absolutely confident. The promise of eternal life is based on the incontrovertible, or unalterable, fact that God cannot lie. (If a believer experiences doubts about his eternal destiny, these doubts are a result of 1) his failure to know God's character and trust His Word, 2) his unwillingness to grow spiritually according to God's plan (cf. 2 Peter 1:5–9), or 3) unconfessed sin in his life.)
  - b.
    1. God's Word must be true.
    2. God's promises must be true, including those that are yet to be fulfilled.
    3. Everything that is contrary to Scripture is a lie.
    4. This world is headed for certain destruction as the book of Revelation teaches.
    5. Those without Christ as Savior will perish, and the redeemed will be saved eternally.
    6. Other answers will apply.
4.
  1. "chosen by God" — Believers are chosen by God (v. 1).
  2. "promised" — God makes and keeps promises to man (v. 2).
  3. "promised before time began" — God was before time; He is eternal. God's promise of eternal life, including the plan of redemption, was designed before the creation of man.
  4. "His Word" — God communicates with His creation (v. 3), and His method of communication is His Word.
  5. "I was entrusted" — God's plan of salvation is a truth given to believers for which they will give account.
  6. "God our Savior" — God, and God alone, is the Savior of man.
  7. "Grace and truth from God" — God is the source of grace and truth.
5.
  - a. Titus, a Christian (Titus 1:4) of Greek descent (Gal. 2:3), was a fellow-laborer of the apostle Paul. He served as an interim pastor at Corinth (2 Cor. 8:16–19) and on the island of Crete (Titus 1:5).
  - b.
    1. Paul instructed Titus to complete the task of appointing elders or pastors to lead the various congregations in the cities on the island of Crete.
    2. Paul told Titus to finish organizing the churches (v. 5).
6.
  1. Our common faith has one body (the church); one hope (salvation through Jesus Christ); one Lord and Savior; one Spirit; one revelation to man (one faith); one means of visible, initial testimony of that faith (baptism); and one God (Eph. 4:4–6).
  2. Our common faith as revealed through His Word is God's means of communicating with this world during this time period (Heb. 1:1–2).
  3. Our common faith is available to everyone, and there is no private interpretation that God reveals to a select few (2 Peter 1:20–21).
  4. Our common faith has been completely revealed.
7.
  - a. Human reason, feelings, experiences, religious traditions, spiritual leaders, impressions, etc.
  - b. Answers will vary.
8.
  - a. "Must be."
  - b. The similarities of these two lists indicate that these qualifications are God's universal qualifications for pastoral leaders for all churches. Timothy ministered in an urban environment (Ephesus), and Titus likely ministered in both a rural and an urban environment.