

A dynamic splash of blue water, ranging from light to deep blue, with various droplets and streaks, creating a sense of movement and freshness. The splash is centered horizontally and occupies the upper half of the page.

TITUS & PHILEMON

FOURTH
STREAM
FINDING HOPE

Welcome to the Book of Titus!

To begin your study of Titus, meditate upon the content of the book reflected in the overview chart below. As you consider each section and title we have chosen, decide how each one relates to the theme of sound doctrine. This book supplements two of the other “pastoral” epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, in that it gives us further insight into Paul’s view of the inner workings of the church. Do you and your church hold to “sound doctrine” the way it is described here?

TITUS		Sound Doctrine	
EXEMPLARY CHARACTER	SENSIBLE LIVING	GOOD DEEDS	
1:1,5,6,16	2:1,2,5,12	3:1,8,14	
1	2	3	

"Holding fast the faithful Word." - 1:9

Also note the Scripture references listed within the overview chart. Take this opportunity to investigate each one, looking for the relationship between the section titles and key verses. Use these passages as “guideposts” to unlock the message of the book. What have you learned so far about the book of Titus?

Titus, like Timothy, must have had a special place in Paul’s heart and ministry. He also is considered a “true child” in the faith. Quickly read through the book and circle the phrase “good deeds.” Note the emphasis on works of sound doctrine. Paul knew if faith was to grow there would be sound deeds flowing out of belief.

Open your heart as you read!

Do you have character that is exemplary to the slothful (1:12) as well as those who desire to live godly (2:8)? Do you live sensibly or extravagantly? What are the “good deeds” you see manifested through your life?

AUTHOR OF TITUS

The salutation as well as the close relationship between the writer and Titus (1:4) clearly point to Paul as the author. Titus seemed to function as a troubleshooter for Paul in the New Testament as is seen in 2 Corinthians 7:5-16; 8:16-23; Titus 1:5.

DATE

Written about the same time as 1 Timothy (61-63 A.D.).

OTHER BACKGROUND

Paul seems to have a four-fold purpose in writing this letter:

1. Encourage Titus to set things in order and appoint elders (1:5).
2. Admonish Cretans to godly living (1:12-14).
3. Warn about false doctrine and teach sound doctrine (2:1).
4. Ask Titus to come to Nicopolis (3:12).

The theme of this letter centers around the subject of "sound doctrine" (2:1). It is similar to 1 and 2 Timothy, emphasizing the connection between sound doctrine - entrusted this teaching to faithful individuals - resulting in godly and productive lives.

While many view "Bible doctrine" as dry, impractical beliefs typed up in a church constitution which nobody reads, Paul clearly has a different idea. Such an erroneous conception of truth is taken apart in the book of Titus. (For a fascinating word study, why not meditate on teach mention of the word "doctrine" in the New Testament.)

Why study the book of Titus?

1. Because our beliefs affect our behavior, it is vital that we hold to sound doctrine so we will not live an unsound life (1:11).
2. To learn the basic things which must be set in order when establishing ministry (1:5).
3. So we might discover a balanced spiritual life through the admonitions between older and younger men and women (2:2-8).



Titus Chapter Chart

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Exemplary Character

Read Chapter 1

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
1		

Reading One:

“The Character Qualities of Those Who Follow Sound Doctrine”

Read 1:1-16

1. Where was the island of Crete located?
2. What kind of a reputation did the Cretan population have with those around them?
3. As you read through the qualifications of an elder, take the time to define each one and translate them into practical examples. How can such a recognition of leadership be objectively accomplished?
4. What does it mean to hold fast the faithful Word?
5. What is the outcome for one who has learned strength of character?
6. What is the outcome for the one whose character is immature or deformed?

What about today?

Whether you aspire to the office of an overseer or not, it is useful to set these standards for character as goals for ourselves in business and family life. How do you measure up to each of these qualities? It may be useful to ask someone who knows you well (friend, spouse, fellow workers, etc.). Read 1 Timothy 3 for further insight into these character qualities.

2		
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Reading Two:**“The Sensibilities of Those Who Follow Sound Doctrine”**

Read 2:1-5

1. What do you think the things fitting for sound doctrine included?
2. The character qualities of mature “older men and women” are listed here. Isolate each quality and expose the meaning of each, giving tangible examples that would reflect in the life of someone who was this kind of person (older men, older women, young men, bondslaves).
3. What is the goal of the principles of chapter 2? How does this compare with the goal of chapter 1?
4. Why was Paul concerned that someone might disregard Titus?

What about today?

Older men and women who for many years have practiced good deeds in relationship to sound doctrine are a useful commodity in Christ’s church! Do you know of any experienced Christians that can help you walk in sound doctrine? When you are older, will you be able to provide this benefit to others? Read 1 Peter 5 for further insight into the relationship of older and younger.

3		
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Reading Three:

“The Good Deeds of Those Who Follow Sound Teaching”

Read 3:1-15

1. Who is the “them” to whom Paul is referring?
2. What does it mean to be “ready for every good deed”?
3. Why is 3:5 necessary in Paul’s argument for this book?
4. What does it mean to be careful to engage in good deeds”
5. What evidently detracts from good deeds?
6. What are pressing needs?

What about today?

It is readily apparent that good deeds are an important emphasis of a true faith. (note: 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:5, 8, 14). Sound doctrine is inseparably linked with a desire to engage in good deeds. Read James 1:14-26 in this regard. What “good deeds” do you evidence in your life? What part do good deeds play in our acceptance before God? Read Ephesians 2:8-10 for a balanced view of good deeds.

CONCLUSION

Titus provides very practical instruction on what it means to follow through on the implications of sound doctrine. A balance of growth in personal character strength, sensible living, and good deeds are all evidence of the power of sound teaching. May we live this kind of example to those whom God has placed in our lives!

Welcome to the Book of Philemon!

To begin your study of Philemon, meditate upon the content of the book reflected in the overview chart below. As you consider each section and title we have chosen, decide how each one relates to the theme of forgive and beget. Paul's request is that Philemon forgive Onesimus who has become a believer during Paul's imprisonment in Rome (1:10). Paul hopes that in whatever way Onesimus has offended or wronged Philemon that it be placed "on his account" (verse 18). Paul evidently believed that his credit with Philemon was good!

PHILEMON			Forgive & Beget		
The Prisoner and his JOY	The Prisoner and his APPEAL	The Prisoner and his CONFIDENCE			
7	9	21			
1-7	8-20	21-25			

"I appeal for my child." - 1:10

Also note the Scriptures listed within the overview chart. Take this opportunity to investigate each one, looking for the relationship between the section titles and key verses. Use these passages as "guideposts" to unlock the message of the book. What have you gleaned thus far from the book of Philemon?

This book is the final pastoral letter. Philemon is an example of someone who in all probability was submitted to God's authority delegated through the Apostle Paul. What a contrast to the insubordinate Corinthians! Paul makes a simple request and evidently believes it will be honored - even though difficult to fulfill on an interpersonal level.

Open your heart as you read!

Do you "refresh the saints" and are you concerned about their welfare? Would Paul have confidence in your obedience?

AUTHOR OF PHILEMON

Written by Paul the Apostle (1:1) from prison.

DATE

Around 61-63 A.D. at about the same time as Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians were written.

OTHER BACKGROUND

Paul wrote this letter to a pastor of a church that met in the house of Philemon. He wrote on behalf of Philemon's slave, Onesimus, who was formerly also a slave of sin but had become a slave of righteousness. This slave had escaped from his master and had been converted under Paul's ministry.

Evidently the whole issue of the master-slave relationship had been a hot one in the early church (c.f. Colossians 3:22, 4:1; Ephesians 6:5-9; 1 Peter 2:18). By returning the slave, Onesimus, the apostle not only instructs us concerning the principles governing the relations of Christian brothers but reminds us that these principles are not to be forced on believers by an authoritarian spiritual leader but by our own free will (verse 14). In other words, in Christ there is to be a radical change and transformation in all earthly relationships. The church is a family affair not a business enterprise. As such, we need to be reminded that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free, male nor female; for you are all in one Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Why study the book of Philemon?

1. Paul serves as an illustration in this book of the most effective way true Christian leadership can function. There is no room for heavy-handed power tactics in the ministry of Jesus Christ. This is the way the world operates and we are to break that mold.
2. There is a real spiritual lesson to be learned from this book that we often overlook in the sharing of the Gospel. The people we are closest to (family, neighbors, friends at school, fellow employees) are not always reached by us but rather by someone more distant in relationships or geography. This was evidently the situation between Onesimus and Philemon but not the case between Onesimus and Paul. "Some plant, some water, but God causes the growth".
3. This book also shows us some basic principles pertaining to being a slave of Jesus Christ. For a fascinating study, see how many principles of slavehood to Jesus Christ you can observe in these short 25 verses of Philemon. Assuming slavehood is even a word.



Philemon Chapter Chart

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The Beauty of the Gospel in Relationships

Read Chapter 1

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
1		

Relationships in Philemon's Life

1. What do verses 1-3 teach us about Paul's relationship with the group of people that surrounded Philemon?
2. What was Paul's attitude toward Philemon?
3. What position do you think he fulfilled in this particular local church?
4. Why does Paul refer to himself as Paul the aged?
5. What had Onesimus done wrong? What was his relationship to Philemon? How did Paul know Onesimus?
6. If you were Philemon, how would you feel toward Onesimus? Toward Paul?
7. Do you think this request of Paul's was a big thing to ask?
8. Did Paul have any reason to question Philemon's receptiveness to fulfilling his request?
9. On what did Paul base his appeal?

What about today?

What insight into the spirituality of business relationships can be gleaned from this book? What insights on spiritual maturity? How would you have felt if you were Onesimus and were told to hand-deliver this letter?

CONCLUSION

It is sometimes easy to qualify forgiveness into only certain relationships. Those who realize he has been forgiven much finds it possible to forgive others. Read Matthew 18:21-35.