

# **Note**

## **Titus – Part 1 of 1**

### **Summary**

This is an Epistle which Apostle Paul writes to Titus to help with the issues being faced by the church on the island of Crete. The apostle had left Titus to bring the church into order by addressing the issues of false teachings and hypocrisy and to appoint appropriate church leaders. Paul emphasizes that the church has to exemplify their right beliefs with their actions. He also advises the church to have nothing to do with people who were engaging in useless controversy, obsessing over genealogies and if the non-Jewish men have to keep the Old Testament laws, arousing discord in the church. Through this Epistle, Paul reminds the church that the motivation to 'Good Works' derives from a true comprehension of God's love and grace and what He had done for us through Christ and His Holy Spirit.

### **Transcript**

# Transcript

## Titus – Part 1 of 1

Titus was one of Paul's co-workers, and one of his disciples whom he mentored. He and Timothy were contemporaries. He seems to be one of Paul's favorites for fixing tough problems. Titus was a Greek Gentile, uncircumcised, from a pagan background.

In this letter, he was in Crete. Crete is an island, somewhere in the Mediterranean, very strategic, with a lot of natural harbors. A lot of ships would harbor there, on the way to some other place. Paul went to strategic places to start works.

Paul had started something, and he had to move on. He left Titus to fix some problems in the churches in Crete, and to appoint elders there.

The people of Crete, the Cretans, were well known for terrible behavior. They were liars; they took pride in bad, violent behavior. Many of them were mercenary soldiers, for whichever general would pay them some money. They had this kind of behavior, largely, because of their gods. Their gods were the Greek gods. Many of their gods were “notorious” liars, slanderers, seducers. They imitated their gods. It's quite common that our behavior models what we think is the right behavior of our “god”.

Now, Titus was left there, to fix some problem elders, but mostly, problem members. The members of the church in Crete were behaving like their old selves (their old nature). Sanctification is a process, it takes time. So, they were still behaving very much in their old nature, though they had a new nature (some of them, those who were born-again) and they were working it out. And so, Titus was left there to help fix this problem.

### Chapter 1:2

in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.

Why does he have to say in “God who never lies”?

Because their gods were liars. “God who never lies” is the beginning. To us, we never even think that God is a liar. But to them, “It's amazing, this God doesn't lie.”

verse 4,

[4a] To Titus, my true child in a common faith:

Paul also calls Titus, his child or his son - spiritual child. But somehow, if you look at the way he writes to Titus, it's not as endearing as the way he writes to Timothy. Somehow, he felt a stronger bond with Timothy. Maybe Titus was strong, didn't need him as much, but definitely, this is someone he led to the Lord, mentored, and brought him up to be the man, the pastor, or the apostle that he is now.

In verse 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—

So, he had to put things in order. And number two, appoint elders. And then, after this, we see the qualification for elders, and it's very similar to the one that Paul had given to Timothy. Of course, conditions for elders remain the same, basically, a good character.

Nowadays, often you appoint an elder because he has a high-status in society, he's a rich guy or he's very smart, he can argue, or he knows the Bible very well. But we find here that character is far more important than social status or intellectual ability. Just good behavior. Because, as I always say, “The best teacher, the best lesson we can see, is a life. Not a lesson.”

In verse 10, another interesting verse.

For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party.

So, here we see, the Jewish believers were still very much a problem to the Christians in Crete. They were telling people, “You will need to be circumcised before you can become truly saved.” “You need to follow the food laws before you can be truly saved.” Now, I think, Paul keeps repeating this, in his epistles, because legalism is still very much a part of many churches.

In many churches, you have to do this, do that...There's a whole book of behavior that you are expected to have, before you can come to Christ, which is totally different from our faith, but that's quite normal, because schools have this rule book; companies have a company book; every organization you join has a rule book, "How to be a Member".

For Christianity, it's the exact opposite. You come to Christ, just as you are. The only condition for salvation is repentance (turning from your sins, believing you're a sinner due for hell). Trust in Christ. And then, prove your faith by being baptized. And then, after that, you will grow in grace, step by step. You don't fulfill conditions before you become a Christian; you become a Christian, then you start to fulfill the perfect standard of Christ. You try, step by step, to be like Christ.

But everywhere, legalism is still very much a part of churches. "You can't do this. You can't do that." Little kids in Sunday School are told all the things they can't do. And they grow up, thinking Christianity is, basically, about obeying a bunch of rules.

And then, the Cross is just there to help you in the last mile, in the sense that, you can't reach the last mile, the Cross gives you that little help to cross over into Heaven, but most of it is your own effort.

Legalism is still part of our religion, after 2,000 years. So, don't think that these problems in the churches in Crete were new. These churches in Crete were not new. Paul was old at this time. They may be second-generation Christians, still struggling with this issue of legalism.

In verse 11

They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.

Why were these Judaizers, these circumcision proponents, doing this? They were doing this for money.

For us, so often, we think of a pastor as someone sacrificial. But, never forget, religion has always been a stepping stone to power and prosperity. If you want power, you can go the religious route. You can become powerful by being a religious man; people look up to you. And you can make money.

verse 12

One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”

One of their own people described them. This is obviously a well-known saying, it's almost, like, an idiom that “Cretans are liars, evil people, and lazy gluttons”. What we have here is, this was their natural behavior.

To get the whole fact of this, let me read from verse 13,

[13] This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,

[14] not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth.

They were very much enchanted by the myths, the stories, that these Judaizers, who knew a lot of the Old Testament, were telling them, and a lot of the commands —remember, the Old Testament has 613 commandments— and the Pharisees had added many, many more commandments, until it became thousands of commandments.

So, it says, “don't be devoted to myths and commandments of men”. You'll find that this is something very interesting. Just coming to the end of the Bible, these were probably second-generation Christians. And we're also second-generation Christians. A lot of us would become devoted to all kinds of myths, stories, and commands of men. You say, “Maybe it's a good thing?” No, no.

A lot of times, later, we will see, in this book, the reason why they were always talking about these things. It's much easier to talk about things, and to follow some commandments that make you look very pious e.g. don't eat this, how you dress, how you speak, so that people would look up to you.

At the same time, you don't have to dirty your hands, by going outside of the church, to serve the poor in the community, to reach out to the lost. You just stay inside the four walls (second-generation of Christians, stay in the four walls) of your church, and look very religious, discussing stories, and how we should obey this and that command. We can keep going into these things, and look pious, get respect, and yet, avoid the dirty work of reaching the lost and helping the poor. So, we find a lot of religions are like that.

They just spend their time looking religious and observing nitty-gritty little laws that make them look super-religious.

## Verse 16

They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

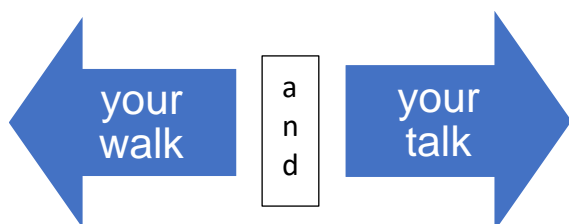
What is Paul most concerned about? What is he telling Titus? Don't worry about all these little nitty-gritty commandments, but become fit for good work.

[16a] “They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works.”

Do you know how you deny God by your works?

Your life doesn't look like the life of the God you preach about. The God you preach about is a God who is sacrificial -He sent His Son down. And His Son, Who is the express image of God, Who is God, was practical. He didn't spend His time discussing commands here and there. He taught, but most of the time, He taught as He worked, doing good works.

You say, “This God is so good, He sent His Son. His Son is so good, He went out every day, and helped the poor, and healed, and taught, and reached out. And then, you stay in your cloistered place, in your beautiful dress, untainted by sin, and talk, and talk, and talk.” That's how you deny your God.



You preach about this God, but you don't reveal this God in your life. You're totally opposite, you're a “sanitized” teacher. He was a practical worker.

You'll find the words “good works” keep appearing over and over again in Titus. So, Paul is telling Titus, “These guys, they just talk about myths and commandments. But their life outside is terrible, they never help anybody and they're rotten in their behavior.”

chapter 2:2-7

[2] Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

[3] Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,

[4] and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,

[5] to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be reviled.

[6] Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

[7] Show yourself in all respects to be a model for good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity,

Sounds very practical. Basically, tell the older men, "Don't get drunk. Be well-behaved." Tell the older ladies, "Have good lives, so you can model to the younger ladies how to be good mothers, full of good works'."

We see, it's a very practical part, but if you look at chapter 2:1  
"But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine."

When we hear the words "teach with sound doctrine", we're thinking about a very impressive classroom lesson. "Point 1,2,3,4..."

And then, you see, in Titus 2:2, "older men are to be sober-minded..." Women are to be good at home, taking care of their kids, family life must be good.

There's doctrine, and then, there is practice.

So, for us, when we say "we must teach with sound doctrine", we mean "we must be very deep, we must have a lot of verses to learn". But Titus is told by Paul, "teach with sound doctrine".

Do you know what's the sound doctrine?

Tell the older men to behave properly, tell the women to be good in their homes; their family life must be very good.

That's not our idea of sound doctrine. This sounds like totally practical work. There's no classroom teaching here. "You mean, nothing? No Old Testament verses to memorize? The Old Testament is quite big, there's a lot of verses to memorize. That's sound doctrine, right?" No, no, no.

Paul is telling him, “Doctrine is, basically, to be practical. Doctrine is not sound, unless it becomes practical. Otherwise, it is not sound.” Any doctrine that doesn't become practical, that doesn't move you to Christlikeness, first to the Cross, and then, to Christlike living, is not sound doctrine, it's empty clanging.

So, we see, here, Paul is, basically, telling them that they must have good behavior in their family life.

What is the purpose of all this good behavior? Look at verse 5, “to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be reviled.”

The Word of God was being mocked, reviled, by other people, because, they were saying, “These people are so religious in the Cretan church. Outside, they're just like us. What a joke!” This “Word of God” is just hypocrisy. And today, the commonest label for most Christians is that they are hypocrites.

Every time, they say to their colleagues, “Sorry, I have to rush off to Bible study. Sorry, I cannot join you on Sunday, I have to be in church. Sorry, I've got this choir practice. I'm so busy in church.” And then, the people in the office just turn and look at each other and say, “So much Word of God, but in the office... Look at their lives. Look at their families. The Word of God is a joke. Don't bother, it does nothing. It just produces more and more hypocrites.” That's the truth, I hear that, all the time. “Pastor, I know Christianity is good, but there are so many hypocrites around, it's very hard to even believe the Word of God is good. Do I want to believe it?”

Now, chapter 2:8 says very similar things, “and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.”

So, Christians must have sound speech; speak in a way that is good, kind, encouraging; so that the Word of God may not be condemned, “nothing evil to say about us”. There's a lot of evil said about Christians today. Why? Because our speech sounds just like the world. But in church, it sounds so religious. Then outside, it sounds like the world. People would say, “Oh, two-faced.” A hypocrite is just a two-faced guy.



Our practical behavior outside is, actually, the best testimony of the truth of what is taught inside the church.

So, we have Titus 2:8. Titus 2:10 again, sounds like a repeat of the same thing.

Titus 2:5 says, “that the word of God may not be reviled”

Titus 2:8, so people will have “nothing evil to say about us”

Titus 2:10 says, “not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Our behavior adorns, makes the doctrine that we preach look beautiful. It's not how beautiful the preaching on the pulpit is. It's not how beautifully we can repeat verses, and memorize verses, and quote verses. It's how beautiful our life is that will make the verses look “beautiful”, not how we sound.

So, I hope you see—I'm kind of nagging here—because Paul is nagging, he's repeating the same thing to Titus. “Titus, don't focus too much on all this. Work on the behavior, work on the behavior outside in the world, not the behavior inside the church.”

And then, verse 14,

“Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.”

Why did Christ save us?

So that we will be full of zeal for good works. Not for Bible studies, memory verses, seminars. Zeal for good works, not good lessons. “Pastor, I heard this preacher here... Every Sunday, I listen to sermons. Everyday, in my car, I listen to five sermons.” No, no!

How are you doing in your office?

Are you helping the newcomer?

Are you kind to the coffee lady?

Are you helping somebody who has a problem?

Are you zealous for good works or zealous for good Bible studies?

Here, we have a church that was full of talking about myths, and commands, and all kind of things and they could debate on those things, but their life was rotten.

So, here we are, in chapter 3:1

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work.

“Oh, here we go again. Paul, aren’t you kind of naggy?  
And Paul Choo, aren’t you kind of naggy?”

Chapter 3:8

The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works...

“Oh my goodness, Paul, do you have to go on another time?” It’s a very short epistle, but he keeps repeating.

Titus 3:9-11

[9] But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

[10] As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him,

[11] knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

What is he saying, in chapter 3 verses 9 to 11?

He says, “avoid all these arguments” about: “Is it this? Is it that? Does this angel have three wings or four wings? Is Jesus coming on Tuesday or Wednesday?” Stop all that.

There's some parts of Scripture, especially about Things to Come... We just agree to disagree, if these issues have been unresolved.

Some parts of the Bible, God purposely leaves us to be unclear about. It’s not that God cannot write clearly, He purposely leaves it unclear, to teach us to be humble, that we cannot understand everything. We're not omniscient in understanding everything.

And so, there's no need to divide on these things. If, for generations, Christians have divided on this issue and that issue, let’s just agree to disagree.

There are some things, that are fundamental, that you can't disagree:  
"Jesus is the Son of God." That is plain and simple.  
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, the Word was God." That is clear.  
"Christ rose on the third day."  
"He will come back again." All of these are just clear, there's nothing to argue about.

But what day He will come back? Whether His left foot will be on the Mount of Olives or His right foot will land first, I don't know. So, avoid these things; they cause divisions. We spend energy on these things that can be spent on good works.

And we see, in Titus 3:14...  
And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works....

Have you noticed, this is exactly a repeat of chapter 3 verse 8?  
Titus 3:8 says, "devote themselves to good works."  
Titus 3:14 says, that they should "learn to devote themselves to good works."

What is God teaching us through this Epistle to Titus?  
We are saved not for anything else, but good works.

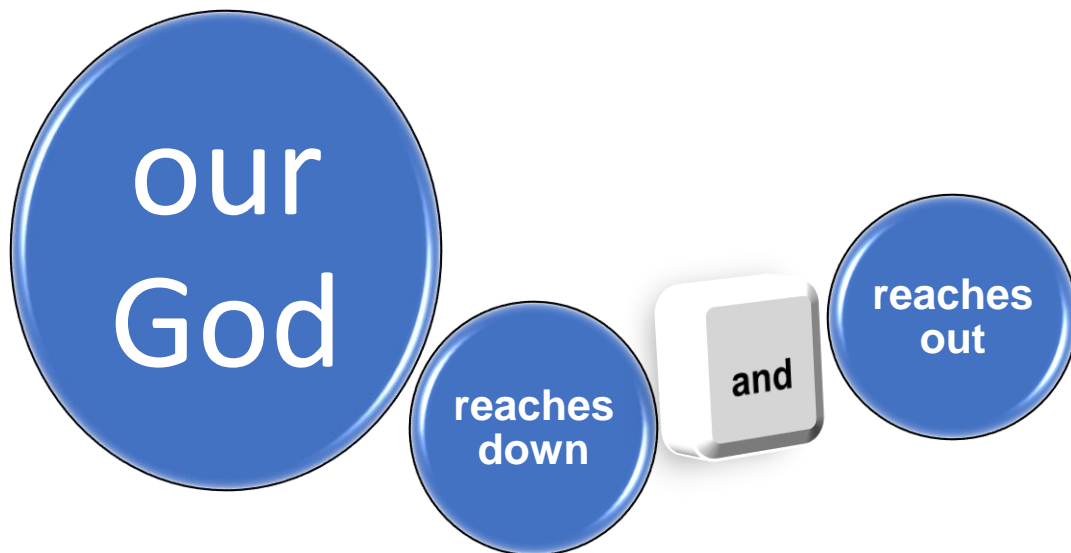
Why?  
Because God, Who is Love has a reaching out love, reaching down love, serving love, sacrificial love. That's God. That's why He sent His son.

That's why Jesus, when He came to this life, was doing a life of good works. Never a classroom teacher. Never had a classroom or a lecture, though He could lecture all day. But in the midst of His teaching, which He did, preaching on the mountains, sitting on a boat, teaching... He did all that, and at the same time, as He taught, He demonstrated His teaching by good works: healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the comfortless, reaching down to those ignored and despised. He just did good works.

When we say "God is love", it means nothing to the unbeliever.  
To them, God is up there, [in Heaven].

“And you guys are also up there, hiding in your church. What's the difference between your God and my god, when all our gods are somewhere there.”

The difference between their god and our God is:



Maybe this is a second-generation church, I don't know. Paul's old, he planted this church long ago. The church, now, ends up becoming a classroom church. And we, 2,000 years later, have “mastered” the classroom church.

What did we learn,

1 Timothy - God is practical. Paul writes to Timothy, “I want the Ephesians church to be practical.”

2 Timothy - Practical and sacrificial

Titus - spend our time doing practical works, sacrificial works, good works.

And then, we understand what is Christianity, and the world will understand Who is our God. He reached down to us, and did the greatest work of all, He saved us with His perfect work on the Cross of Calvary.

May God help us to live the real Christian life, sanctified to be like Christ.

If Christ came to our church today, and became a member of our church, He probably would not make it to the elder board. Because He would not have the status. “A carpenter, in your elder board? He doesn't even have a home to live in... In your elder board?” He spends all His time outside,

reaching out, not in the religious buildings. He won't make it, He would definitely be a reject to the religious establishment, but may He be our model.

God bless you.