



**THRU** the **BIBLE**

with *J. Vernon McFee*

# TITUS

BIBLE COMPANION



# READ THIS FIRST

This Bible Companion is a summary of Dr. J. Vernon McGee's teaching of the book of Titus heard on THRU the BIBLE. These summarized lessons get to the heart of Bible passages and are intended to stir your own thinking, prayer, and study.



**Begin with prayer.** Dr. McGee said, "We are living in the day of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the day of grace, when the Spirit of God takes the things of Christ and reveals them to us." Before you start each lesson, ask the Lord to use it to grow you up in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as He is revealed in that section. Dr. McGee said, "This is the secret of life and of Christian living."



**As you study, read the Bible passage first.** Invite God to open your eyes and deepen your understanding of His Word. That's a request God loves to answer!



**If you want to listen to Dr. McGee's complete teaching on any specific passage, go to [TTB.org/Titus](http://TTB.org/Titus)** (or any book of the Bible).

The corresponding audio messages are listed at the top of the summaries. You can also use this Bible Companion to follow along and take notes while you listen to Dr. McGee teach a book of the Bible on the radio or online.



**After every lesson, several questions are listed for your personal consideration or, if you're reading this as a group, for your discussion.** Ask the Spirit to help you take to heart what He wants to show you.

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LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU  
RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM AND TEACHING....

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COLOSSIANS 3:16<sup>A</sup>

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## LESSON 1

# WHAT A GODLY CHURCH LOOKS LIKE



Begin with prayer



Read Titus 1



Listen at [TTB.org/Titus](https://www.TTB.org/Titus) to *Titus Introduction*, *Titus 1:1-7*, and *Titus 1:8–2:1*

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Near the end of the apostle Paul's life and ministry, two things were on his mind. First—the coming of Jesus Christ, a bright and beautiful hope for everyone who loves Him. Paul prompted us all to live a God-honoring life as we look “for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us” (2:13-14).

Also on Paul's mind was preparing Timothy and Titus, two young pastors, to do the work of ministry. He calls them his sons, his genuine sons—because he led them both to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Paul's letters to these young pastors are called *pastoral epistles* because he teaches them how to lead a local church. Today we could fill a whole library with books on this topic, but the Bible has only these three short letters that give us the essentials for serving the church. If a church faces a lack or a need, Paul said it's not usually with its organization but instead reflects an underlying spiritual need.

We actually know very little about Timothy and Titus other than Timothy was a Jew and Titus was Gentile. Paul took Titus with him to the council of the church in Jerusalem, and since he was a Gentile, Paul wouldn't permit him to

be circumcised. The gospel was at stake, and he didn't want one bit of legalism to slip into the early church. But when he took Timothy with him, Paul said he should be circumcised because they were going into the synagogues.

Paul wanted "to be all things to all men" that he might win some to Christ—to the Jew he wanted to be a Jew, and to the Gentile he wanted to be as a Gentile (see 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). Jews were used to following rules, but it's dangerous to make rules only for the sake of ritual when you attempt to live the Christian life. Unless you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the rules and rituals don't matter.

Paul and Titus were not new to serving the Lord together. Apparently they had ministered on Crete, an island off the coast of Greece. After Paul left to do other ministry, Titus remained there as pastor. Paul later followed up with him with this letter, instructing Titus on specific ministry issues he faced with a somewhat unruly congregation.

In this epistle to Titus we have a fine picture of what a "New Testament church" community should look like. The ideal church should be orderly (chapter 1), should accurately teach and preach the Word of God (chapter 2), and should perform good works (chapter 3). The church is saved by grace, is to live by grace, and is to demonstrate her faith to the world with good works.

It's difficult to find a church balanced in these three areas. Usually they will emphasize one while neglecting another.

Let's look closer at these three priorities. First, the church is to be orderly (see also 1 Corinthians 14:40). Sometimes order is lacking because just a few officers try to run the whole thing. Such a church is in real trouble and is a heartbreak to its pastor.

Secondly, the church should focus on teaching and giving out the Word of God, not on building a church or empire of any kind. Rather than building an organization, build into the lives of men and women.

Finally, a church should be ready for every good work. Some churches put such a great emphasis on doctrine that we *under*-emphasize good works. A lot of folk need help—not just spiritual help, but also physical help. We need to do things for people, to help them with their physical needs.

The church  
is **saved** by grace,  
is to **live** by grace,

and is to **demonstrate**  
her faith to the world  
with **good works**.



THRU the BIBLE

## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

Paul teaches us about ministry even in his introduction to the book.

Paul introduced himself as a servant of God, a “bondservant”—a freed slave who chooses out of love and devotion to remain his master’s servant for the rest of his life. He also defends his role as an “apostle of Jesus Christ” because he will give instructions to the organized church. It is like he is the Lord Jesus’ appointed writer, now communicating with His church.

What you believe about the Lord Jesus reveals something about you. First, what you believe about Jesus’ death and resurrection determines whether or not you are a child of God. “The faith of God’s elect” (v. 1) describes what real Christians believe. And what real Christians believe is knowledge that leads to a godly life. If what you believe doesn’t lead to godliness, you need to reexamine your faith.

Why is this such a big deal in the epistle to Titus? Because the people in the church at Crete whom Titus was serving were abusing God’s grace. They rationalized, *“If I’ve been saved by grace, then I’m free to live however I want.”* The truth is, if they are saved by grace, then that grace makes us want to be godly—not want to sin more. Grace saves us, and it also calls us to live differently—because now our motivation is to please Jesus. You can’t use God’s grace to excuse sin. If you think you can be saved by grace and live in sin, then likely you’re not saved at all. Salvation by grace leads to a godly life.

Our salvation in Jesus Christ not only gives us our “hope of eternal life” (v. 2), but it’s hope that we can rest in.

This hope was promised by a God who cannot lie—who promised us eternal life back before the world began and continues to deliver it in His own season. When God moves, He does it intentionally and orderly. In His good time, He proclaims His Word. And in His good grace, He extends mercy to us today.

Aren’t you grateful He extends you mercy? That He doesn’t deal with you according to your sinful self? Grace, mercy, and peace—all “from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior” (v. 4).

## HOW TO ORGANIZE A CHURCH

When Paul left Crete, he helped Titus organize the local churches with elders as spiritual leaders. Elders are a gift to the church. Just putting your hand on some men's heads will not make them elders. A man who holds an office of elder should have the gift of an elder (and good men who have the gift but not the office should be considered). Many problems in the church are when the leadership is given to the wrong people.

An elder is to be mature, both physically and spiritually. Never should a church have only one man be a leader, but always several. God describes a man's personal requirements to hold such a position in a church and what the elders should be like and not be like.

They should be: "Blameless, as a steward of God" (v. 7)—that does not mean he must be perfect, but it does mean if he is accused of anything it must not be found to be true. His life must be above criticism. When someone can accurately accuse an officer of the church of dishonesty, then the cause of Christ is hurt. He might be very naturally gifted, but if his words and actions don't reflect a dedication to Jesus Christ, then the cause of Christ is hurt, and he should not be in leadership. He's responsible to take care of God's work, and so should be trustworthy.

They should be "the husband of one wife, having faithful children" (v. 6). This is a sobering requirement. A man may be godly, leading a wonderful Christian home, and he may not be guilty of anything that caused his son or daughter to turn from Christ. But if they are not obedient, believing children, he should not be an officer in the church. As an officer in the church, he might be called upon to make a judgment about someone else. That person in turn could say, "What about you? What about your son, your daughter? What right have you to talk to me?" For the cause of Christ and for the sake of the office, an officer in the church must have believing, obedient children.

An elder *should not* be: Self-willed (but willing to do what God wants), not quick-tempered (touchy), not given to wine, not a bully, not greedy for money.

He *should* be: Welcoming to people, a lover of what is good, mature, helpful, wise, fair, self-controlled, set apart from anything ungodly. He should understand and teach God's Word so well that he can help people apply it or constructively show others how to change or refute heresy. A church officer should be able to stand on the Word of God and to give it out.

It was particularly important for Paul to lay out the qualification of the elders for the churches in Crete because the culture had a particularly bad reputation for being liars and lazy and critical of the house of God. However, God had done a great work in the people's lives in Crete, but the enemy was right there to sow his own seed among the wheat.

God's grace can do a marvelous thing in our lives—and that is true in Crete, too. Many turned to Christ, and their lives were changed.

Paul wanted the people of Crete (and us today) to be sound in faith. They grew up around the Mosaic Law and a great deal of extra writing added to it (like the Talmud and much more). Jesus called the religious rulers out for adding these traditions to God's Law. The extra teaching said #1 that you are *saved* by the Law, and #2 that you are to *live* by the Law. Both are dangerous. When God says, "Thou shalt not kill," that is for everyone, Christian and non-Christian—for the whole world. However, those who are saved by the grace of God are given instructions for living on an even higher plane than that.

And it does make a difference how we live—unlike what some say, that if we are saved by grace we can live in any way we like. Many believers today can deny (and do deny) God and His Word by the way they live.

When our hearts are changed, our lives reveal the change. Saving faith produces a godly life.

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**NEXT: Now that we know what a godly church looks like,  
what does a godly person look like?**

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7. How is it possible to claim to believe in the grace of God but to deny Him with our lives?

## LESSON 2

# WHAT A GODLY PERSON LOOKS LIKE



Begin with prayer



Read Titus 2



Listen at [TTB.org/Titus](https://www.ttb.org/Titus) to **Titus 2**

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No matter how high the steeple rises in the sky or how beautiful the worship inside, the message delivered from the pulpit will tell you whether a church is really a church. A church must teach sound doctrine or it's not a church.

In Titus 1, the church is led by elders who are able to teach and encourage people from the Word of God. They can also apply God's Word in discerning error in false teaching and explain why it is wrong.

In this second chapter of Titus, we discover more of what this "sound doctrine" is (2:2). The apostles' doctrine included Jewish Scriptures as well as the teachings of Jesus Christ on earth and, in part, what we read in these epistles. The apostles are the first to correlate this truth.

This letter to a young pastor first describes what type of men are qualified to lead the church, and then examines the character traits of individual Christians in the churches. Paul divides up the congregation into specific demographics and paints a picture of what all saints should look like.

Let's begin with the senior citizens. He said older men should be worthy of respect and self-controlled. They practice a practical faith in God and

embrace their role as an example in the church body. They show concern for others and a patient endurance, with full confidence in God. These are all marks of maturity.

Older women should do all that, too, with a feminine flair. Their behavior should reflect their love for the Lord. Their words are edifying and kind, rather than malicious gossip, and the time they have on their hands should be spent doing good works as well as teaching younger women what is good.

It's a serious responsibility to be a wife and to care for children in the home. The biggest and most important business in the world is the making of a home. A wife's primary responsibility is her home, and a wise husband allows his wife to manage the household as her primary ministry. An older woman can help a young wife navigate the complexities of that job and respond to the love and leadership of her husband.

The next group Paul addresses are the young men, and for that he turns to Titus, his young protégé and pastor, and says, *"You be a pattern, an example, for the other young men."*

A young man should maintain purity as he models his complete confidence in God's Word. He knows and appreciates how his behavior impacts the effectiveness of the gospel. He also realizes his life is being watched by the world, so he should live so he can't be accused of anything ungodly. Even his conversations should reveal that he is a child of God.

The next group Paul addresses are servants. In the early church, many followers of Jesus were slaves. In fact, 90 percent of the names engraved on the walls of the catacombs are of slaves. The gospel met a tremendous need for this group of people.

Paul challenges servants with sound counsel in two areas that easily cross over to our relationship with our employers. The first counsel stresses the importance of a godly attitude—to do our jobs humbly and wholeheartedly. And secondly, to be trustworthy in our speech, in our moral integrity (don't steal), and faithfulness.

What do these actions accomplish? When you act this way, you adorn the message of the gospel, Paul said. The original word for "adorn" is the same root for "cosmetic." Our faithful service to our employers makes a beautiful backdrop for people to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

## THE CHURCH PREACHES GOD'S GRACE

In case these folks think Paul is just getting into their business, the apostle answers the bigger question of why they should stand out in their culture. It's because of God's grace, he said. The most wonderful thing in the world is that God's grace is available to us in three time zones:

***For the grace of God that brings salvation [past] ... teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age [present], looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ [future].***

-Titus 2:11-13

The grace of God is the way God saves us. It is God's power at work in us. God doesn't save us by His love; He doesn't save us by His mercy. Ephesians 2:8 tells us: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

God only asks people to believe Him, to trust Him, and to accept the gift offered by Jesus Christ. God's way is the best way, and it is the *only* way.

God is not trying to make this world a better place; He is redeeming the people who believe in the name of Jesus Christ. The gospel doesn't want people to act nicer. God isn't interested in reforming you; He wants to redeem you. God wants you to live for Him and wants you to do good works, but He has to redeem you first.

How will He do that?

Through Jesus Christ "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (2:14). He paid a price for us so He could redeem us from a dark, rebellious life. He wants a pure people for Himself.

Paul then encourages Titus, like he would all young pastors—"You are a young man. Live an honorable life and don't let anyone look down on you because of the life you live. Teach these things with authority."

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**NEXT: What does a godly church look like?**

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7. Imagine life as a first century slave. How would the message of God's grace and redemption change your perspective?

## LESSON 3

# LIVING OUT THE LOVE



Begin with prayer



Read Titus 3



Listen at [TTB.org/Titus](https://www.TTB.org/Titus) to **Titus 3**

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When is a local church all that God intends us to be?

We've learned so far that a church should be organized according to God's priorities, and it should teach doctrine that's trustworthy. Now we'll see that, to be all God wants for the church, we will represent His goodness to the world. We will genuinely act like His children.

That begins in the largest sense by obeying the laws of the land where we live. Only when those laws conflict or contradict our duty and relationship to God are we not to be submissive to the authority over us. This obedience is not to the *individual in office* but to the *office* they represent. Godly people within the church can enter government and take social action, but the church itself shouldn't go into politics.

Our churches should teach and model how to "be ready for every good work" (v. 1), eager, willing, to do good works to a watching, needy world.

In addition to doing good, we are also to refrain from negative behavior. "*Don't speak evil about anyone. Don't quarrel. Instead be gentle and courteous toward everyone.*" That means we are not to repeat what we hear or even believe everything we hear.

However, if the church has solid evidence that a member is doing something evil, that member should be called out. Paul did this with certain evil men. As a rule, we should remember how we acted before we came to the Lord—sometimes foolish, stubborn, disobedient, deceived, slaves to sin. We lived only for ourselves and hated and got hated back. This is a picture of the unsaved today, and a picture of us before we knew Christ. Sadly, sometimes this behavior leaks into the church, too. We may boast about how sound we are in the faith but are riddled with envy, gossip, and hateful attitudes. That is a disgrace to the cause of Christ and should never be a picture of His redeemed people who have been shown such grace.

When God saved us, we didn't just "turn over a new leaf." If it was so, we would just write the same things on the new leaf that we wrote on the old leaf. Making New Year's resolutions and promising to do better doesn't make you a Christian. Nor are you saved on the basis of the good works you have done.

"... But according to His mercy He saved us" (v. 5). Because Jesus died for us and paid the penalty for our sins, God now is ready to extend mercy to us. He is *rich* in mercy, which means He has plenty of it. Whoever you are, He can save you today because Jesus Christ died for you. He paid the penalty and makes you over in His righteousness!

When God, our kind and loving Savior, stepped in, He gave us a good bath, and we came out of it new people, washed inside and out by the Holy Spirit. This "washing" means *laver*—it is the laver of regeneration. In the Old Testament, the laver, which stood in the court of the tabernacle and later the temple, represents this new life. It's also what the Lord was teaching about when He said we must be born of water and of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). The water represents the Word of God—the Bible will *wash* you with sanctifying, cleansing power. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to bring us to God; that's how we are born again.

The Lord Jesus poured out our new life generously. Have you noticed that in everything God does there is a surplus? He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think (see Ephesians 3:20). And there's more life to come—an eternity of life!

This hope of eternal life points to our great expectation—the assurance that one day, Jesus will come for His church.

— WHEN GOD, —

our kind and loving Savior, stepped in,  
*He gave us a good bath,*  
and we came out of it new people,

washed inside and out by the  
**HOLY SPIRIT.**



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But for now, we are to reflect this hope by living lives for others, doing good works that help them. This isn't to earn our salvation, but rather it's a result of our salvation.

Until we are saved, God isn't interested in our "good works," because what we call a good work, God calls dirty laundry. The righteousness of man is filthy rags in His sight (see Isaiah 64:6). He doesn't want any of that. He wants to *save* you. He isn't asking you to do something for Him—what could you do for God? He has done something *for you*.

After you are His child, *then* He wants to talk to you about doing good works. He wants you to get involved in getting out the Word of God to others. He wants you to think and consider; ponder, and then go after producing works for God that are good for everyone.

It's easy to get sidetracked by people who want to argue or debate with you about your faith. Stay away from that mindless quarreling. Yes, we are to defend the faith, Paul says, but arguments and debates do no good; they never lead anyone to the Lord. You may whip someone down intellectually by your arguments, but that doesn't touch their heart and win them for Christ. Instead, tell them about the precious Son of God, ready and willing to save them.

Be careful about joining certain projects where heretics run the show. God tells us to be separate from those who oppose the Word of God. Just let them alone; reject them.

One more challenge about good works: We must "learn" to maintain good works. It's something we learn by doing. We have to work at it. Many think it's easy, but it's not. First understand what God considers good works, then *learn* how to do them so that they bring the kind of fruit that pleases God.

Paul concludes this practical letter to Titus with a special hello to all his friends in the faith and wishes they experience the grace of God in their lives. What a great blessing we share!

This short letter to Titus connects what we believe about God with how we live before others. We follow it because we love God and because we want others to know how wonderful He is.



4. If we are God's child, he has washed us with regeneration. We may not always feel clean, but the Holy Spirit has accomplished this. Do you struggle to believe this? How should this truth change the way we view ourselves?

5. If you were truly convinced that God's resources are unlimited, is there a step of faith you would take?

6. Why must we learn to do good works? Do they not come naturally?

7. Imagine seeing Titus read this letter from his father in the faith. What would his reaction tell you about how important those who minister to us are and how important our ministry to others is?

A photograph of two men, one Black and one white, smiling and talking to each other outdoors. They are both gesturing with their hands as if in conversation. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a park-like setting.

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with *J. Vernon McGee*

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