

# Titus 1:5 - 1:16 Godly Men to Protect the Church

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## Introduction

Wolves used to be the thing to worry about. Remember the little boy who cried wolf? He got into trouble because wolves were a very real danger in his time and he did not take that danger seriously...until it was too late. These days, in our setting we don't worry too much about wolves. In fact, most of us have never even seen a wolf outside of television or the Zoo. We've heard the stories and seen the video but having no real experience with them, we don't really know why they were such feared adversaries in the past. Wolves are particularly dangerous due to the way they hunted, in packs. They would hunt down the young, injured, or just the outcast of a group and fall on him together in their attack. There was no hope for the loner against the wolf pack. They would chase down the those who were not organized into groups and kill them. What the prey really needed was a shepherd. Someone to protect them from the wolves. Someone to lead the group and not allow the loners, the sick, the injured to be left to die.

The Church needs men like this as well. The church needs men to protect them from the wolves outside, and inside. Paul is going to give Titus the task of appointing these protectors of the Church. Then he's going to give him a specific example of why he needs to appoint protectors.

Let's pray and we'll get into God's word.

Please open your copy of God's word to the book of Titus where we left off the last time, in verse five. God's word says this in verse five,

## Titus' Task

### Put into Order w/ Godly Men

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, as I said, Paul is going to give Titus a task and then he'll come back afterward and give him the reasoning behind the task. It's pretty clear from the text in front of us where Titus is to go and what he will do. And remember, Paul is acting with Apostolic authority, so even though he's going to give him a more thorough answer for why he's there, at present it's just, "...as I directed you".

While we're here though let's just get a few things straight in our heads. Paul says he's left Titus in Crete. From what we can gather in the Scriptures it looks like Paul and Titus were in Crete sometime after his second imprisonment in Rome. If you want to map this over the Bible text, we would be after Acts 28 and before 2 Timothy. Paul, for reasons unknown to us, has left Titus to do two things, "...put what remained into order" and "appoint elders in every town". As you will see when we get into Titus two, putting what remained in order comes down to teaching them sound doctrine and the starting point for this ordering is the appointment of Godly men to protect

this fledgling church, elders.

The surprising thing about this is that he is appointing elders in every town and none of these churches are very old – they seem to be a few years at most. Therefore, not many of these men are long in the faith. He even leaves out one qualification we see in 1 Timothy where Paul says and Overseer, or elder, “must not be a recent convert”. Is that because of the shortage of long time saints? I believe so, which must bring us to the conclusion that these qualifications we are about to look at for an elder in the church are not for the super Christian. They are not for the long time saint. They are for the ordinary believer, saved by grace, transforming into the likeness of Christ and desiring to do so while protecting the flock of God amongst which they live. Is the appointment a high one? I believe so. Is it a fools errand that Paul has sent Titus on? No, absolutely not. These relatively new believers were capable, by God’s grace and plan, to live in a way that qualified them for the task at hand. To protect the church.

Now what kind of qualifications are we talking about. Look down at your Bibles in verses six and seven. This is what God’s word says,

### **You’ll know them by their families**

6 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. 7 For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach.

These men are not to be perfect, they are to be above reproach. Meaning, others would stand back, look at the things we are about to discuss and say, yes, as a theme, if you will, these things are true of him. These men are not, nor will they ever be (here on earth), perfect, but they are to be above bringing shame on the name of Christ in these areas.

Paul begins with the Marriage relationship. He says, to Titus, he must be a one-woman kind of man. I have heard many times what a one woman kind of man is not. No, a one-woman man is not sitting around watching pornography. A one-woman man is not hanging out with the temple prostitutes, or for that matter, wasting his nights away at the local bar. These are easy, and as Titus spent time with the families of these new churches he would have without much consideration, disqualified men like this from the running.

So what is Titus looking for. Let me tell you, what qualifies a man in his marriage relationship is not as easy to see as what disqualifies, but it is not hidden either. Have you ever heard a man so in love with Jesus that when he talks about his wife you think, “this man has studied her for all of their years together – she is truly known by him in much more than just a physical manner”. Have you ever seen a man so devoted to Christ that he honors his wife in a way that causes his prayer life to flourish? Have you ever seen a man so saturated with The Word of God that his wife freely comes to him for wisdom and knowledge, knowing that he will not twist his words to get his way or attempt to manipulate her into what he wants her to be. If you have seen these things in a man then you have seen evidence that that man does not live by bread alone, that man does not drink from the fountain of this world, but has been drinking of

a water such that he will never be thirsty again. That man is a man who has been born again, once dead to the things of God, now made alive in Christ. That man, is a one-woman kind of man, he is the kind of man they....we...need to lead and protect the Church of God!

Paul goes on to talk about the man's children. What kind of children are they? How will Titus know a godly man when he looks at his children. This portion of the text has been difficult to understand over the course of Church history because people have landed in a few different places. At first glance the plain reading of the text would seem to indicate that a man is qualified only if all of his children are born again. This would disqualify many of our elders here at the Chapel. It would disqualify all men with very young children. Would it permanently disqualify those whose children have died outside the faith? Does God save infants and if so, would those count as believers even though we may have never met them? How could Titus tell if this man's wife had miscarried an unbelieving or believing baby? You see how convoluted these questions become. Is this the kind of God we serve? One who calls us to appoint leaders that may, or may not, be qualified based on criteria we may or may not be able to discern? Do we see this qualification repeated anywhere else in our Bible? No, no we don't. Furthermore, it would seem odd to say "children are (born again Christians) and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination". Would it not? If an Elder's children are believers, they would not be debauched or insubordinate. They would be grace enabled saints!

Therefore it seems these "believers" would be better categorized as "loyal" or "faithful". Which then begs the question, faithful to what. Well, as evidenced by the following descriptions of not being open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination, I would say, since we are looking at the role of the father, that it is their father's teaching/example to which they are loyal/faithful. Remember, Titus is looking for the kind of character in a man that will turn out children who are not "open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination". That kind of man has been gently training his children in nurture and admonition of the Lord. He is not a Tyrant and he is not aloof. He has been changed by the Spirit of God to lovingly lead by example in his home and his children and have faithfully followed that example.

In all these things, this man is merely a steward of those he has been given care over, his dear wife, and his blessed children. He will be "above reproach" if he lives out the example of Christ in his home and Titus will know by these fruits that he is the kind of man he's looking to appoint.

Family, however, is not the only qualification for an elder in Crete. Look down to the last part of verse seven through verse nine. God's word says this,

**by their character**

He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, & but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

Again before you go off thinking this is a list of attributes for super Christian men I would like you to remember that these churches have not even been put into order yet. That's why Titus is there. These attributes are the basics, not dreamer level stuff. If you have read ahead and know

what's coming in our text you will know that Paul will recall a Cretan prophet as saying all "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." We aren't aiming for the stars here, but the very basics if you desire to be a leader in the Church. Let's look at the things that disqualify a man from Eldership.

What these men are not:

- ⑩ quick-tempered; the man of God is not to have a short fuse, but to be long suffering, with complete patience.
- ⑩ Drunkard; in our day this could mean so many things. As our governing officials continue to fall away down slop from requiring sobriety of our people we need to stand all the more firm in our conviction that we are filled with the Spirit as opposed to alcohol and drugs.
- ⑩ Violent: We are not here to win over converts with the sword. We are not here to fight our way into the hearts of people. We are here as
- ⑩ greedy for gain: We'll see later on that the opponents are teaching error for their own gain. This can never be. Church is never the place to stake out your own kingdom or manipulate and bully to have your own way and such men should be kept far, far away from leadership of any sort.

Paul goes on to supply us with a list of character traits that must be there for a man to be considered for leadership in God's church.

What these men are:

- ⑩ Hospitable; How can a man protect the sheep he is not willing to live with. How can the people he has been given care over trust him if they are never able see him in his home environment. I think many in the church today miss out when all of the events of church life are held far away from one another's homes. The home is where you get to know someone. Where the curtains of privacy are removed and they are revealed to be who they really are.
- ⑩ Lover of good; He is to be all about what is good. He is to exemplify the fruits of the spirit.
- ⑩ Self-controlled; He is going to have to deal with his own sin and the sins of others in very practical and specific ways. If he is not practicing self-control in his life he will lash out when attacked. He will be a city without walls as the proverbs tell us. Open to attacks of men and the devil a like.
- ⑩ Upright; he is a man who not only says he loves the word of God, but is obedient to it. In those times when his obedience is not what it should be, he still goes back to the word of God and finds repentance the answer to his need.
- ⑩ Holy; God has told us elsewhere "You shall be holy, for I am holy". They are to become more and more like him. Set apart for the work of ministry.
- ⑩ Disciplined; A man who has trained himself to act in a certain way. These are men who are not tossed around by every wave of the sea, but have practiced Godliness and the result of that practice is discipline.

That's quite a list. What kind of man can put off the first part of our list and put on the last? I'll tell

you who. One who has died and been born again. One who has the same power that raised Jesus from the dead living inside of him. In short, the believing man can put-off and put-on these things. Paul moves on to tell us what this believing man must hold to, in essence, what he must believe in verse nine. God's word says this,

**...and by their doctrine**

9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught,

There is one last thing Paul requires from these protectors of the church. He requires they "hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught". A lot could be said here about the church today and our emphasis on education and our over emphasis of it. How many churches have you passed where the sign reads, "Our Pastor: Dr. So and so". Why is that on the sign out front? Isn't it enough that you call him pastor? What does his degree have to do with whether or not he is qualified to be a Pastor? Nothing! It has nothing to do with his qualifications. We have Elders who were educated as doctors, artists, teachers, businessmen, and IT guys. You know how many times they were asked about their education before they were brought on as elders, never! I can't remember once. Now, does that mean that education is worthless, no! We value each man and his unique ways of understanding the word. We have nine different points of view and they are all influenced by the kind, and amount, of education they've had. We praise God for it, but it's not a qualifier for ministry.

But there are things you must know. There are things you must hold fast to. You can't be ignorant of the truth. The men Titus is looking for may not be the most highly educated of their day, but they know the trustworthy word as taught. They have the Old Testament in hand with all of it's types and shadows and the New Testament canon that is being brought together right before their very eyes. This is what they need to know. This Word of God is what needs to saturate every aspect of their lives. God tells us that, "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple". The men Titus is looking for do not need the world's knowledge, the need "testimony of the LORD" to make them wise!

Why must they know these things? Because, the end of verse nine. God's word says this,

so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

These men hold to trustworthy word as taught, so that they may instruct and rebuke. It is not enough to know. You must be able to instruct and rebuke. Titus would surely have been able to see this at work in the churches of Crete. Building this lighthouse in a place as dark as Crete would surely have granted plenty of opportunity for men to instruct those that had come to Christ by God's grace and the witness of his people. And opposition to those works of grace would surely have come as well. Wolves are always around and the new born believers in the churches on Crete will need men to rebuke error that they may stand firm in their faith all the way to glory.

Well, that is Titus' task. To appoint elders in every town. Paul has given him direction and some qualifications for the appointments. Now we move on to the reason we need these men at all. God's word says this in verse

## **Paul's Reason**

### **Many are upsetting...**

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

Wolves! And the nursery rhyme isn't true. The wolves aren't on the outside, they are very much on the inside. And the house needs to be built on the sure foundation of God's word in order to not be blown over.

Notice what Paul has done. In the previous verse he gave Titus a list of characteristics to avoid in elders and some that would qualify them. Here he does the same thing – only there are no good characteristics in this list. These men are

- ⑩ insubordinate; they do not submit to the authority over them.
- ⑩ empty talkers; ever met someone like this. They have lots to say, but rarely does it have a point that anyone can grasp. They want you to believe they have it all figured out, but the more you listen the more you realize they don't really have a grasp of the subject they are pontificating on.
- ⑩ Deceivers; These men will lead you astray. They will talk their emptiness and some will believe. They would have you turn from God to themselves for their own gain. Sickening.

Some even have a bit more of these characteristics than others. Those of the circumcision party. Once again we see that the "circumcision party" continues to be pester the church and not without result as we will see in verse eleven where God's word says this,

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

These people must be silenced. Why? Because they not only have sinful traits which will condemn them, but Paul continues to contrast these people with the elders that are to protect them. Hence we see their effect on families. Remember, a man qualified to lead as an elder of the church would be recognized as such because of his family and the same is so for these disrupters of the church. Look at the effect of their lives on the church, "whole families" are being upset by their teaching. And why are they teaching such things and upsetting these families? To gain something – what, we are not told – but something for themselves. How disgusting! Shame on any one of us that would teach something here at Clearcreek Chapel to gain something for ourselves. Would you attempt to rob heaven of souls for your own gain!? God had some advice for anyone thinking of doing such things, "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these

little ones to sin”.<sup>1</sup> Brothers and sisters, may it never be us.

Paul is not done with the “circumcision party”. He goes on to say that silencing them is only the first step. God’s word says this in verses twelve and thirteen,

### **Rebuke is necessary**

12 One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” 13 This testimony is true.

Ouch! Paul has reached out to one of their own to condemn them. Why should Titus be about silencing this bunch? Not only because of their effect on families but because they are of questionable character. So much so, even they know what they are like. And again, Paul has held up the contrast between the qualified man and one who is not. He has continue to look at their character. They are “always liars”, the truth is never in them. They are “evil beasts” or could we just as easily label them wolves! And they are “lazy gluttons”, unwilling to even work hard for more than what they need. And just in case those listening might be confused, he tacks on “this testimony is true”. They say it of themselves...and they are correct.

But look at the end of verse thirteen through fourteen. God’s word says this,

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.

Silence them for who they are and rebuke them for what they may become. Rebuke them sharply he says, so that may be sound in the faith! Oh the joy of the truth on the unbelieving soul. Hard as these words will be to hear they are the seed and water of faith to the predestined soul. Titus must be gentle and loving, but never swerving from the truth. They are to be rebuked, that they may sound in the faith, leaving the “circumcision party”, the “Jewish myths” and “the commands of people who turn away from the truth. Rebuke is not to embarrass. It is not for revenge. It is but a tool of grace in the heart of a soon becoming child of God. Some will not respond in anger, but in repentance. They will turn away. What more encouraging words have there ever been for those of us who will go out and bring rebuke to the unbelievers, the wolves, amongst us! May God pour out his grace on all of us who willing walk into the fray of spiritual battles with rebuke on our lips. Let us not be afraid, for no better outcome could be known, but that of new birth, and repentance.

And lastly I want you to see that these wolves have doctrine as well. It is horrible and will surely condemn them and others to hell if it is not repented of, but it is surely there. God’s word says this in verse fifteen and sixteen,

### **Unbelief is all consuming**

15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 17:2). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.



their minds and their consciences are defiled. 16 They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.

Here we see the ultimate effect of unbelief. It is all consuming, leaving no remnant of good to be collected at a later date. Those of the circumcision party were likely thinking that their obedience to these man made commands, “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” would purify them and Paul says they are utterly condemned for they have denied the purity of Christ and his saving work on the cross for rules about the body and regulations about food. This denial has effected everything about them, from the way they think to the way they respond to sin in their lives. As we see clearly in our own time, these people confess to know God, but they deny him by what they do...by their works. No isn't that interesting. In their work to show themselves faithful, they have shown themselves to be the enemy of the very God they seek to win over.

Being so, Paul will close out this warning with one last devastating sentence. God's words says this,

They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

Their self-righteous works have found them to be a stench in God's nostrils and they are “unfit for any good work”. In contrast to the men Titus is to appoint for the good work of protecting the flock of God on Crete, these men are, and how terrible would it be to be named as such by God, they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. All of their religious work is for not. They will be counted among the goats, just after having showered and put on their Sunday best wool. Looking like a beautiful sheep...God is not fooled.

## Closing

For those of you who count yourselves members of Clearcreek Chapel I would ask you to pray for these things.

- ⑩ Pray for your brothers who have been appointed to protect the flock of God we live in.
- ⑩ Pray that we'll guard our hearts carefully, that we might serve faithfully among you.
- ⑩ Pray for our wives and children.
- ⑩ Pray that God will reveal the wolves should they be among us now, or in the future.
- ⑩ Pray for young men who will lead this church into the future.

For those of you who don't know Christ I would ask you this. What kind of God sends his son to die on a cross that he might save his flock? What kind of God gives men to protect his flock while they travel through this world? What kind of God will come back to gather up his people and take them home to Glory where the wolves will be no more and the great shepherd of the sheep will reign gloriously over them for all eternity?

I'll tell you what kind of God would do this. The God of the Holy Scriptures would and has done this! The God of the Bible, unmatched and alone as God over the Universe has done this! The



one and only Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the kind of God who would do this! What else could you ever want? Things that will pass away? Things that will wither and die? Things you can't take with you? No, No, come to Christ. Believe in the God on the cross who has paid for your sin, and conquered death and hell to be risen from the grave to return to his Father's side in Heaven. He's coming back one day, if you repent of you sin and believe the Gospel...he'll be coming back for you as well.