

Journey Into the Good Life

LESSON 1 . . . Requirements for Living the Good Life (Titus 1:1-4)

NOTES

We are beginning an exciting study of the book of Titus. This book gives us vital principles for living the good life at home, at church, at work, and in all our relationships. Titus was Paul's friend and helper. He traveled with Paul on some of his missionary journeys. Though not mentioned at all in *Acts*, Titus is mentioned no less than thirteen times in Paul's epistles. He is one of Paul's most trusted and dependable associates. How does Paul describe Titus in Titus 1:4a?

This suggests Titus is one of Paul's converts. He plays a key role throughout Paul's ministry and proves himself a *true* friend by being at Paul's side during critical times in his life. While in Macedonia, Paul writes he and his associates *had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within* (2 Cor. 7:5). Then, what does Paul write (7:6)?



The book of Titus is one of three “Pastoral Epistles” written by Paul. The others are *1 & 2 Timothy*. They are called “Pastoral Epistles” because they deal with matters concerning pastors. However, they also describe the kind of Christians God wants us all to be so we can live the good life.

This letter was written about A.D. 65, just after *1 Timothy*, near the end of Paul's life. It was written to Titus, who was then ministering on the island of Crete [kreet]. Crete is an island southeast of Greece in the Mediterranean Sea (see map on bottom of page 10). It is about 160 miles long and three miles across at its widest point. Since it is very mountainous, most people lived in the many coastal towns. The Cretans had a reputation for excessive lifestyles. Paul quotes a Greek poet (Epimenides, ep-uh-men'-uh-deez, 600 B.C.), whom he calls *a prophet of their own* (1:12a). How does *their own* prophet describe Cretans in 1:12c?

We may think we live in a difficult world, but this letter reminds us the power of the Gospel can change anyone and enable them to live the good life in Christ. Now, let's look at what is required for living the good life.

Commit to God's purpose (1:1).

Paul first identifies himself as *a servant of God* (1:1a). The word translated *servant* (DOULOS, doo'-los) means "slave." It is one who is totally at the disposal of someone else. Paul's ultimate goal was to fulfill God's purpose, or will, for his life. Paul's calling himself "slave" seems to contradict what words of Jesus in John 8:36?

How can someone be a "slave" and be *free* at the same time? It is only through a right relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ that all our potential, talents, and gifts are set *free* to fulfill God's purpose for our lives. In addition, Jesus sets us *free* from guilt, the slavery of sin, selfishness, meaninglessness, and condemnation.



Paul also calls himself *an apostle of Jesus Christ* (1:1b). The word *apostle* (APOSTOLOS, ap-os'-to-los) means delegate, or one sent forth with a message. Paul writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit with apostolic authority because his message is sent through him by *Jesus Christ*.

Paul is a slave of God and *an apostle of Jesus Christ* to *God's elect* (1:1c). The word translated *elect* (EKLEKTOS, ek-lec'-tos) means "selected" or "chosen." It refers to those God has sovereignly chosen from eternity past to be saved by grace through faith in Christ. The biblical teaching of election gives us security and hope. In Matthew 24:31, what does Jesus say He will send His angels to do at the rapture?

Paul deals at length with election in Romans 8:28-39. Election, which results in predestination, is presented as grounds for the assurance and security of our salvation. Paul writes *those whom God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son* and those God *predestined* He *justified* and *glorified* (8:29-30). What does Paul write in the next verse (8:31)?

Paul was a messenger to *God's elect* to share the *knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness* (Titus 1:1d). Paul was committed to God's purpose for his life—sharing *the truth* of the Gospel so believers can live lives of *godliness*. The word *godliness* means to become godly, which

means we live holy lives. Paul's focus in life was not just to see people accept Christ but for them to grow into *godliness*, or spiritual maturity.

To live the good life, **commit to God's purpose** and . . .

Count on God's promises (1:2).

Another part of the good life is encouraging other believers. Paul writes: *in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began* (1:2). If God is not the God of truth and honesty, we have no *hope*. But the *hope of eternal life* is based on the promises of our God *who never lies*. Lying was apparently common in Cretan culture, but Paul makes it clear God *never lies*. God is the polar opposite of the Evil One. How does Jesus describe Satan in the last phrase of John 8:44?



Trusting the character of God is the foundation of our faith. Sometimes living the good life for God can be very discouraging and cause us to question our salvation. When that happens, we need to remember we can count on God's promises because He *never lies*.

To live the good life, **commit to God's purpose, count on God's promises**, and . . .

Conform to God's plan (1:3-4).

Paul continues: *and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior* (1:3). *At the proper time*, the time God chose, He revealed the Gospel and called Paul and others to proclaim it. How does Galatians 4:4a-b describe the coming of the Gospel?

The *fullness of time* means at just the right time. God's plan never moves too slow or too fast. The same is true of God revealing His will for us. God's plan is always right on schedule.

Paul concludes his introduction: *To Titus, my true child in a common faith* (1:4a). The word *common* (KOINĒ, coin-ay) means "shared by all." The New Testament was written in KOINĒ Greek, the *common*, everyday language of Paul's world. Other Greek literature was written in classical Greek, the language of philosophers and deep thinkers. However, God made the Gospel simple, and He wants us to keep it simple so anyone can

understand it. Every Christian should remember this acronym: K.I.S.S. It means “KeeP It Simple Somehow.” In a confused and complex world, when it comes to our *common faith*, we need to K.I.S.S. Why, according to Jesus in Mark 10:15b?

Salvation is received by grace through simple, childlike faith. Complete, intellectual understanding is not required. So, we must “keep it simple somehow.”

Paul continues: *Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior* (1:4b). We can only know God’s *peace* if we have experienced His saving *grace*. There are at least five kinds of grace in the New Testament: empowering *grace* (Acts 4:33), equipping, or gifting, *grace* (Rom. 12:6), sustaining *grace* (2 Cor. 12:9), saving *grace* (Eph. 2:8), and refining *grace* (Col. 4:6). Believers experience all five, and the result is *peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior*. Paul describes this *peace* in Philippians 4:7. Personalize and write this verse below:

Peace is always the result of experiencing God’s *grace* in all its forms. A vital part of living the good life is finding *peace* by experiencing His *grace*.

To live the good life, **commit to God’s purpose, count on God’s promises, and conform to God’s plan.**

