

PAUL'S^a LETTER TO TITUS

Greeting

1 From Paul, a servant^b of God and an apostle^c of Jesus Christ, in line with the faith of God's chosen ones and the knowledge of the truth that comes from^d reverence for God. ²This truth is based on the hope of eternal life that God, who's utterly truthful, promised many ages ago. ³And he has brought his message to light at the right moment^e by the proclamation that I've been entrusted with according to the command of God our Savior.

⁴To Titus, my true child in our common faith. Grace and peace to you, from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Savior.

Instructions for Leadership in Crete

⁵The reason I left you in Crete was so that you could finish setting things up—including appointing^f elders in every city, as I instructed you. ⁶They should have a spotless reputation^g and be faithful to one spouse.^h They should have believing children. They shouldn't be open to the accusation of living self-destructively, or of being rebellious.ⁱ ⁷After all, a pastor^j has to have a spotless reputation^k as a

^a Many—but not all—Bible scholars think that this letter is pseudonymous—that is, they think it shows signs of having been written by someone else using Paul's name. Pseudonymous writings were common in the ancient world.

^b Or "slave."

^c See "Bible Words."

^d Or "that belongs to"; lit. "that's according to."

^e Or "in God's own time."

^f Lit. "...setting things up, and so that you could appoint."

^g Lit. "If somebody is irreproachable."

^h Lit. "the husband of one wife."

ⁱ Lit. "the accusation of dissipation or disobedience."

^j Or "overseer"; traditionally: "bishop." See Acts 20:28 for the metaphor of the shepherd (=pastor) being applied to this role, to bring out its combined responsibilities of leadership and protection.

^k Lit. "For it is necessary for a pastor to be irreproachable."

caretaker^a of God's household. They shouldn't be self-willed^b or hot-tempered. They should not be a drinker, or violent, or greedy about money. ⁸Not at all. They should be hospitable. They should love what's good. They should be self-controlled, a person of integrity.^c They should be holy and disciplined. ⁹They should be loyal to the message of faith, in line with our teaching. That way, they will not only be able to encourage people with that healthy teaching—they'll also be able to refute people who oppose it.

¹⁰Because there are lots of rebellious,^d nonsense-talking deceivers. Most of them come out of the Jewish religion.^e ¹¹You have to make them be quiet. They upset whole families^f by teaching things they shouldn't teach for their own advantage.^g ¹²One of them—one of their own prophets—said, "Cretans^h are always liars, nasty brutes, and lazy gluttons." ¹³That testimony is true!ⁱ So confront them directly about it. That way, they'll be healthy in the faith, ¹⁴and won't be paying attention to Jewish myths and to rules from people who are turning their back on the truth.

¹⁵To the pure, everything's pure.^j

But to people who are corrupt and faithless,^k nothing's pure. Just the opposite. Their mind and their conscience are both corrupt. ¹⁶They claim^l to know God, but they deny God with their actions. They're horrible and disobedient, and they're worthless when it comes to doing anything good.

Good Teachings and Practices

2 But as for you, keep speaking out with healthy teaching. Tell them^m ²that older men should be sober,ⁿ honorable, and self-controlled. They should be strong^o in faith, love, and endurance. ³The same goes for older women. They should be reverent in their behavior. They shouldn't spread vicious rumors,^a or be

^a Or "steward." The analogy is to a person who manages a wealthy person's household.

^b In other words, fixated on having one's own way.

^c Or "just"; traditionally: "righteous."

^d Some mss have "Because there are lots of them, and they are rebellious,..."

^e Lit. "Most of them come from the circumcision." He's referring to certain Jewish Christians.

^f Or "households."

^g Or "for the sake of money." He could be talking about a religious advantage, a financial advantage, or both.

^h Prn. *kreet-ans*.

ⁱ This proverb, often attributed to the poet Epimenides of Crete (6th c. BCE), is supposed to be humorous—if Cretans are always liars, then maybe the other bad things about them in the saying are lies.

^j This is a proverb, and a sentiment that Jesus himself could have expressed. See Mt. 15:11.

^k Or "unfaithful," or "unbelieving."

^l Lit. "They publicly profess."

^m Lit. "But you, say the things that are appropriate for healthy teaching."

ⁿ Or "self-controlled."

^o Lit. "healthy" or "sound."

addicted to alcohol,^b but should be good teachers.^c ⁴That way they can teach the young women to be sober-minded and to love their husbands and children. They should teach them to be ⁵self-controlled, holy, dedicated homemakers. They should be kind, and obedient to their husbands, so that God’s message won’t get insulted. ⁶Encourage the young men to be self-controlled too. ⁷In every situation, present yourself as a model of good behavior: by your teaching, your integrity,^d your dignity, ⁸and your impeccably wholesome habits of speech. That way, anybody who’s against the faith will end up looking bad,^e because they won’t have anything bad to say against us. ⁹Slaves should be obedient to their masters about everything. Make them happy with you, rather than talking back ¹⁰and swiping things.^f Show them total good faith. That way, you’ll always bring honor to^g the teaching of God our Savior.

¹¹Because God’s grace has appeared, bringing salvation to all humanity.^h ¹²It’s taught us to renounce godlessness, and the obsessionsⁱ of this world. It’s taught us to live soberly, justly, and reverently in this age, ¹³as we wait expectantly for our wonderful^j hope: the appearance of the glory of our great God, and our Savior, Jesus Christ.^k ¹⁴Christ gave himself for us, to set us free from all our lawlessness, and to purify a special people for himself—a people totally committed to doing what’s good.^l ¹⁵Keep saying these things. And keep on encouraging and correcting people with complete authority. No one should look down on you.

The Importance of Peacefulness and Gentleness

3 Remind people^m to submit themselves to the ruling authorities and obey them.ⁿ They should be ready to do all kinds of good things.^o ²They should never insult anybody. They should be peaceful and gentle. They should show

^a Lit. “Not slanderers.”

^b Lit. “enslaved to much wine.”

^c Lit. “They should be teachers of good.”

^d Or “purity”; lit. “uncorruptedness.”

^e Lit. “will be put to shame.” This isn’t about them feeling shame, but about them being publicly exposed as being in the wrong.

^f Lit. “Slaves are to be in subjection to their own masters in all things, to be well pleasing, not talking back, not pilfering.”

^g Lit. “...good faith, so that in all things you will adorn.”

^h Lit. “all people.” Later mss have, “Because God’s saving grace has appeared to all people.” See 1 Tim. 4:10 for a similarly broad statement about God as savior of all people.

ⁱ Or “cravings,” or “lusts.” It’s not just talking about sexual desire.

^j Lit. “blessed.”

^k Or “our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

^l Traditionally: “zealous of good works.”

^m Lit. “them.”

ⁿ Some mss have “rulers and authorities.”

^o Lit. “ready for every good work.”

complete gentleness to all people. 3After all, we used to be thoughtless^a once, too—we were disobedient and deceived. We were enslaved to various obsessions^b and pleasures. We went about our lives in nastiness and hate. We were horrible, and we hated each other. 4But then God our Savior’s kindness and love for humanity was revealed to us. 5It wasn’t because of things we’d done right^c—far from it. He saved us in line with his mercy, by washing us through rebirth and renewal by^d the Holy Spirit. 6He poured out the Holy Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior. 7That way, we could be found innocent^e by his grace, and could become heirs, in line with the hope of eternal life.

8That’s a trustworthy statement. And I want you to keep insisting on these things. That way, those who believe in God will concentrate on doing good things that are honorable and useful to people. 9But avoid stupid arguments, genealogies of semi-divine beings,^f petty fighting, and conflicts over the Law. Because those things are worthless and useless. 10Refuse to talk to a divisive person, after a first and second warning. 11You *know* that they’re being perverse and sinning, and that they’re condemning themselves.

Final Instructions and Greeting

12When I send Artemas^g or Tychicus^h to you, make a big effort to come to me at Nicopolisⁱ—I’ve decided to stay there for the winter. 13Do a good job in sending Zenas^j the lawyer and Apollos^k on their way—make sure they have everything they need.^l 14And let our folks be learning to concentrate on doing good things that meet pressing needs, so they won’t be unproductive.

15Everybody here with me says hello. Say hello to our friends in the faith. Grace be with you all.

^a Lit. “mindless.”

^b Or “lusts.”

^c Lit. “It wasn’t from works we’d done in righteousness.”

^d Or “of.”

^e Traditionally, “. . .that we might be justified.”

^f See “genealogies” in “Bible Words.”

^g Prn. *ar-timm-us*.

^h Prn. *tikk-ik-us*.

ⁱ Prn. *nik-kopp-a-liss*.

^j Prn. *zeen-us*.

^k Prn. *ap-paw-las*.

^l Lit. “Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way with alacrity—that nothing is lacking for them.”