

The Overseer
A Study Of Titus
by Sandy Simpson

Theme

Paul writes to instruct Titus concerning the care of the church on the island of Crete.

Overview

This short letter written to Titus, a close friend and protégé of the apostle Paul, shows that developing a good church has always been a challenge—even in New Testament days. The [*NIV Quest Study Bible*](#) says Paul told Titus, a young leader of an argumentative church, to refute false teachers, calm church disunity, and find quality leaders. Even with God’s Spirit at work, church life requires sweat and tears. This letter puts church difficulties into perspective: those who persevere, as Titus did, will discover the power and satisfaction that God gives.

Author

The apostle Paul.

Timeline

About AD 63–65.

Original Language

Greek

Titus 1:1-5 1 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, ^[a]for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ²in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised ^[b]long ages ago, ³but at the proper time revealed His word in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our

Savior; ⁴ To Titus, my true ^[e]son ^[d]in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Paul calls himself a servant of God. He does this both as an example of how anyone who follows Jesus should be and also to show that though he was the last of the foundational apostles, he is not using that as a way to gain fame.

*1 Corinthians 15:8 and **last of all**, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.*

Last is the word Eschatos in Greek meaning last, referring to time or space, the uttermost part, the end, of the earth, or of rank, grade of worth, **last** i.e. lowest. He states that he is the last of the foundational apostles. Any other apostles would be sent out missionaries, evangelists. Those chosen of God are promised eternal life. Paul was entrusted with the Gospel message, particularly to the Gentiles. God chose him because he was the very person who had tried to put believers in Jesus Christ in prison and to death. Now he was preaching grace and peace. Titus was one of those who believed the Gospel message that Paul brought.

There once was a shepherd who loved his flock of sheep. He fed them and watered them. He bathed them and tended to their hurts. The only trouble is he did not build a protected fence around their home. He had a habit of going to sleep at night leaving no one to guard them. They had always been safe in the past, but one night wolves came. In the morning when he woke up many of the sheep were missing or dead. That day he built a fence and made sure there was always someone there to guard the sheep at night. That is the job of an overseer, elder or under shepherd.

Titus 1:6-7 An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

In Titus 1:6-11 Paul tells Titus to appoint "overseers" in the churches. The word "overseer" is *episkopos* in Greek and means bishop, curator, superintendent, guardian, watchman. Overseers are to be shepherds to the sheep, watchmen, guardians.

*Ez. 33:6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but **I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.**’ It is not enough to feed the sheep on the simple truths of the Gospel.*

The overseer is to bring the milk to the spiritual babies, but then move on to solid food for those who are becoming mature in the Faith.

*Hebrews 5:13-6:3 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But **solid food is for the mature**, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.*

At some point the overseer must teach the sheep how to discern.

*Prov. 1:5 **let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—***

*Phil. 1:9-10 **And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,***

*Eph. 4:11-14 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature**, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.*

Overseers need to set up boundaries to protect the sheep from wolves. This is where many overseers fail today. They feed the sheep, tend to their hurts and troubles, but when it comes to defending them against wolves they do very little. They are asleep when the wolves come with their false teachings.

*Acts 20:29-30 **I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them and some even welcome them***

because the wolves have made themselves to look like sheep.

Matt. 7:15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

There are qualifications for an overseer. To be a good overseer he must be a man of integrity and faithfulness. If he has integrity in his life he will also have integrity in the church as a good under shepherd. Following are the biblical qualifications to be an overseer.

"Blameless" (Anegkletos, cannot be called into to account, unproveable, unaccused, blameless)

He is to be a man who has no accusations against him of sins such as infidelity, stealing, lying, etc. This doesn't mean he has to be perfect, but it does mean that he has a clean record in the community and is someone people trust. He must not just preach good sermons, he must be a living example of salt and light

Matt.5:13, 16 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. ... In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

"Husband of but one wife"

The overseer is to be a man, not a woman. Women have every gift men have in the church, but they are to be subject to their husbands and the male leadership of the Church just as the men are subject to Christ

*Eph. 5:23-24 **For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.***

You wonder why the Catholic religion is so messed up with sexual perversion. It is because men who are put in leader positions in the churches are not allowed to marry.

The word for "husband" in Greek is **aner** which also means man, male, sir, fellow. Women can exercise all types of gifts in the Church but should not hold leadership positions over men. The overseer should be married to one wife only. He should be faithful to his wife and not have any other sexual relationships with other women. Overseers often marry couples in the church. How much more, then, should overseers take their own wedding vows seriously? It is a serious business to make a vow with God and men.

Ecclesiastes 5:5 It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.

"Children believe"

The fact that an overseer is married and has children suggests that an overseer must have attained a certain level of maturity. It is a mistake to appoint overseers who are too young and have not had the experience of a wife and family. Having a family teaches a person many lessons in life, lessons that are helpful in overseeing the Church. The overseer's children, if there are any, must be born again. This fact shows that the overseer is a witness for Christ and has done so in his own family. Remember that Lot was a righteous man in himself, but his downfall was that his family were clearly not

believers. Because of this, Lot's daughters later got their father drunk and had sex with him. Their children became the Moabites and Ammonites, the mortal enemies of Israel.

Gen. 19:36-38 So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today.

"Children" ... "not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient"

The overseer's children must also not be wild and disobedient. A man who can manage his own children teaches them to respect authority. On the occasions when they are wild or disobedient he will discipline them. This does not mean the overseer's children are perfect little angels, and it doesn't mean that when they become adults they may choose to abandon their faith as did the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). Overseers have children in the home who are being taught biblical principles and being disciplined. I still remember the time I started fooling around in church when I was about 6 years old and my mother stood me up from the front row where we were sitting and walked me down the aisle of the church in front of everyone, took me outside the front door of the church, and spanked me. She then brought me back inside and down the aisle of the church in front of everyone. This taught me a lesson that I did not forget. An overseer must be actively teaching his children how to be respectful and productive Christians.

"Entrusted with God's work"

Overseers must never forget that they are entrusted with God's work. It is **His work**, not their work. His Holy Spirit is the One who is doing the work of convicting, teaching, sanctifying, and disciplining His flock. The overseer is there to be a witness, a servant, an advisor, a man of prayer. The overseer does not rule the church and "lord it over" people. He is not a dictator, but a servant himself by example.

*Titus 1:1 **Paul, a servant of God** and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—*

*James 1:1 **James, a servant of God** and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.*

*2 Peter 1:1 **Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ**, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:*

*Jude 1:1 **Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ** and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:*

"Blameless" ... again

Notice that Paul repeats the word "blameless" again. Anytime you see words repeated in Scripture they are for special emphasis. The overseer is to stand as a man who is unaccused, a man of integrity in the community, an example of godly behavior.

*Titus 2:7-8 **In everything set them an example by doing what is good.** In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and*

soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

"Not overbearing" (*Authades*, self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant)

The overseer should be a humble man rather than full of pride and arrogance.

*James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? **Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.***

When you see men who are put in the position of overseers who are self-pleasing rather than humble men, you are seeing wolves.

"Not quick-tempered" (*Orgilos*, prone to anger, irascible)

The Bible tells us to turn the other cheek ...

*Matt. 5:39 But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, **turn to him the other also to love our enemies ...***

*Matt. 5:43-44 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, to not be quickly angered.***

Ecc. 7:9 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.

This is an even more important quality for Christian leaders. They should not be either quick to get angry or prone to get angry. That means they should have a forgiving heart, not hold grudges against others.

*Lev. 19:18 “**Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.**”*

"Not given to drunkenness"

On the surface, the Bible seems to give a mixed message on alcohol, but really it is very consistent. It states that a little wine can be helpful and healthy ...

*1 Tim. 5:23 Stop drinking only water, and **use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses***

In parts of the world which would have included the Middle East, clean drinking water was rare. But getting drunk is a sin.

*Gal. 5:19-21 **The acts of the sinful nature are** obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; **drunkenness**, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

So there is a balance here. The problem is that many people cannot take a little wine for health reasons without wanting to get drunk. So it is best to stay away from alcohol if you have a problem with addictive behavior. This is true of anything. Stay away from things

that cause you to sin, and as a Christian leader especially stay away from those things that might cause others to sin.

*1 Cor. 8:13 Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, **so that I will not cause him to fall.***

Remember that you are an example for people and the overseer should avoid every kind, form and appearance of evil.

*1 Thes. 5:22 (NIV) Avoid **every kind of evil.***

*1 Thes. 5:22 (ASV) abstain from **every form of evil.***

*1 Thes. 5:22 (KJV) Abstain from **all appearance of evil.***

"Not violent"

"Not violent" means not a striker, a bruiser, ready to come to blows, contentious, quarrelsome. The overseer should be a person who is not looking to start fights, except when it comes to fighting for the truth.

*Jude 1:3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.***

He should be a man who exhibits the fruit of the Spirit of peace, gentleness and self-control.

*Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **gentleness** and **self-control.** Against such things there is no law.*

He should be someone who does not start quarrels and foolish arguments ...

*Titus 3:9 **But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels** about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.*

but he should rather demolish arguments against the truth in love.

*2 Cor. 10:5 **We demolish arguments** and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

*Eph. 4:15 Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

"Not pursuing dishonest gain"

Probably one of the biggest problems we have today are Christian leaders who are in the ministry for dishonest gain. The Bible tells us that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

*1 Tim. 6:10 For **the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil**. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

How much more should an overseer be an example of honesty in finances and laying up treasure in heaven rather than on earth? To avoid any appearance of evil the overseer should not be in charge of the finances in his church.

*1 Tim. 6:19 In this way they will **lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age**, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*

Remember, where your treasure is your heart will be ...

*Mat. 6:21 **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.***

and if your heart is set on treasure on earth, your master is not Jesus Christ but money.

*Matt. 6:24 **"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.***

*Titus 1:8 **Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.***

"Hospitable" (Philo Xenos, hospitable, generous to guests)

This is a person who is given to hospitality, a lover of hospitality who is generous to guests. The island cultures are good on this issue and hopefully this will continue. Overseers are to be generous to guests and helpful to all. One exception to this rule is to be careful that you are not hospitable to wolves, for the Bible says we are not to even give them greetings or invite them into our homes.

*2 John 1:10 **If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him.***

The churches in the first century were all house churches, so this means we are not to invite false teachers to teach in our churches, and we must make sure their materials are not being used by the sheep.

"Loves what is good"

A person who loves what is good will think on what is good ...

*Phil. 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy— **think about such things.***

and will do good.

*Heb. 13:16 And **do not forget to do good and to share with others**, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

Not only does an overseer do what is good, they show by their actions that they prefer good over evil, thus showing their maturity in Christ.

*Heb. 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, **who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.***

*Eph. 4:11-13 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and***

***become mature**, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

In fact, in Ephesians 4 the very definition of a Christian leader is that they are able to bring people to maturity in Christ so that they will be able to discern truth from error.

"Self-controlled" (*Egkrates*, strong, robust, having power over, possessed of (a thing) mastering, controlling, curbing, restraining controlling one's self, temperate, continent)

Self-control is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). When we submit to God He helps us to live a godly life and sanctifies us through the Spirit of truth.

*John 17:17, 19 **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**
... For them I sanctify myself, **that they too may be truly sanctified.***

But we must also exercise self-control. It is a two-way street. We have free will and can either choose to follow our Spirit created new conscience ...

*Eph. 4:24 and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

or to grieve the Holy Spirit ...

*Eph. 4:30 And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

by rejecting a good conscience.

1 Tim. 1:19 holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.

Overseers should live a life of moderation in all things

Phil. 4:5 (KJV) Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

"Upright" (Dikaïos, righteous, observing divine laws)

This means righteous, right living. It means the overseer must be an example to others by being just and fair to people. He must be a good, righteous judge ...

John 7:24 Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."

not a hypocritical one.

Matt. 7:1-5 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Are there ways in which overseers are to judge? God says Christians are to judge those inside the church as God judges those outside.

*1 Cor. 5:12-13 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? **Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside.** "Expel the wicked man from among you."*

Christians are to learn biblical judgment because someday we will judge the nations and the angels with Jesus Christ in the millennial kingdom

*1 Cor. 6:2-3 Do you not know that **the saints will judge the world?** And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that **we will judge angels?** How much more the things of this life!*

To be a good judge an overseer must not be judging others for sins he himself is committing. He must be a man of integrity (Titus 2:7-8).

"Holy"

The overseer should be undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious. This does not mean overseers are perfect people. But they must be quick to repent of sin, publicly if necessary, as an example to others. The word "holy" also means "set apart". Overseers are set apart to serve God alone and thereby serve His sheep they are shepherding. Because of this they also avoid the leaven of false teaching.

*1 Cor. 5:7 **Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast**— as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

*Gal. 5:9 **"A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."***

"Disciplined"

Finally, the character of an overseer is one of discipline. This also means they are temperate, living in moderation. They have learned to master, control, curb and restrain their natural emotional and physical appetites. They are self-controlled so that they may be of use to the Lord. They read their Bibles daily and pray for the sheep. They are careful to be an example of discipline to the sheep in how they conduct their affairs and family. This is perhaps one of the hardest areas to live as an example. I lost 60 lb. of weight some years ago not only because my health was threatened but because I knew that my being overweight was not a good witness. I am currently taking medication to help my lose weight again and to help with my diabetes..For the sake of your health and witness I urge you to give the hardest area of your life, namely your flesh, over to the full control of the Spirit. He will help you in your weakness if you allow Him to do so. If you have to go to the hospital as a result of diabetes or other weight related illnesses, then take that as a hard lesson from God and make the changes you know you need to make.

Titus 1:9-11 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach— and that for the sake of dishonest gain.

"Hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught" by the Apostles

This is one of the most important criteria for being an overseer. This is repeated in 2 Pet. 3:2, Eph. 2:20, 2 Thes. 2:15, 1 Cor. 11:2, Prov. 7:2, Titus 2:1. Unfortunately many overseers do not seem to understand this point. Perhaps it is because they were appointed without having the grace gift of servant leadership as mentioned in Eph. 4. If they did, they would be holding on to sound doctrine and teaching the flock to do so. But many churches no longer equip the sheep to stand in biblical truth. Most Christians today can no longer argue from the Bible, in fact many don't know their Bibles at all. But true overseers will teach through the Bible, verse by verse, so that God's truth can be hidden in their hearts so they will not sin against Him.

Ps. 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

When you hold firmly to the core doctrines of the Faith as passed down from Jesus Christ, the foundational Apostles and prophets, you will also be standing against false doctrine

1 Tim. 6:3-5 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

This is what must happen to keep the wolves away from eating the sheep.

"Encourage others by sound doctrine"

When sound doctrine is preached, Christians are encouraged. When false doctrine, pop psychology, talkstory and other things are taught from the pulpits they don't benefit anyone.

*Jer. 23:32 Indeed, **I am against those who prophesy false dreams,**" declares the LORD. "They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet **I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least," declares the LORD.***

*Eph. 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, **but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.***

This is why it is so important for the growth and maturity of the sheep to continue to teach sound doctrine.

"Refute those who oppose it"

When you take up a definite position on biblical truth, you will have opposition. The overseer must be able to refute those who oppose the truth, and teach the sheep to stand on their own. Today we don't like the idea of argument, and in island societies argument is usually a prelude to a fight. But there is such a thing as good argument. It is the kind that demolishes strongholds and false arguments.

*2 Cor. 10:4-5 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to **demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments** and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

The fact that we have so many false teachers on television these days is because overseers did not stand up for the truth and refute those who were and are opposing it. We have lost our saltiness (Matt. 5:13). The world looks at Christian TV and does not want anything to do with the corruption, lies, and lack of integrity there. To fight this trend the true overseer must equip himself and those he is serving to be able to fight for the truth of the written Word of God.

"Many" wolves have gone out

There were MANY wolves in the days of Paul, and there are many more today. The modern world is seeing the most false teachers, false prophets, false apostles, and false Christs it ever in the history of the human race. Many of these heretics are traveling all over the world, even to Micronesia. Perhaps your church has already had some visit, and it will surely continue and increase. The false revival movement of the Toronto Blessing and Brownsville came to Guam, Saipan, Yap, Palau and the Marshalls. Benny Hinn has been to the Marshalls and many have traveled to Honolulu from Micronesia to see him there. Kenneth Copeland has been to the Marshalls and Kosrae and wanted to come to Pohnpei. Chuck Kraft has been to Chuuk a number of times and he is one of the architects of the false New Apostles movement. Brownsville was instrumental in splitting the Yap Evangelical Church and only by the grace of God have most of those hurts healed. It is now part of the problem in Palau in the Assemblies of God there. Many speakers have traveled through the islands and I am always glad when overseers contact me to ask

about them before they are invited to speak in the churches. A number have turned out to be heretics. Sun Myung Moon tried to get into Ebeye in the Marshalls with money to fund youth centers, but the queen of Kwajalen contacted us first to have us investigate and I found out the organization was funded by the Moonies. We have to protect our churches from traveling heretics, from books, from music, from organizations that are compromised like YWAM, and from our people going to false churches and events. We need to tell them to turn off Christian TV, open up their Bibles, and grow to maturity in Christ.

Wolves are "rebellious people"

The character of wolves is obvious. They are rebellious, or lawless. They claim they have freedom in Christ to do and say anything they please, when God tells us to be careful of what we do and say.

*Titus 3:8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may **be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.***

*1 Cor. 8:9 **Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.***

*Rom. 12:17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. **Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.***

On the other hand we must also not do self-righteous acts in front of people for a show because we will lose our reward in heaven.

Matt. 6:1 "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

But wolves are wild. There is a new book going all through the churches called "Wild At Heart" that teaches that God is a wild God, therefore we too are created in His image to be wild. It is basically saying what the pop song says "Born to be wild". The fact is that we ARE born to be wild. Wild means chaotic, lawless, rebellious. Eve was the first wild woman, and her son Cain turned that wildness into murder. "Wild At Heart" was written by a wild false teacher.

Wolves are "mere talkers" Wolves are a never-ending source of talk about themselves and their "ministry". They are very good at public speaking, but very short on truth. They are excellent at boasting about themselves Jude 1:16 These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; **they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.**

We see this continually on the TV on TBN and 700 Club. Self anointed, self-proclaimed prophets and apostles make all kinds of boasts. They say, "We have the anointing and can give it to you". "We are greater than the original apostles." "We could have died for your sins, as we are anointed." They constantly talk about themselves, tell stories about themselves, say they are hearing directly from God in visions and dreams, make healing claims they cannot back up with the facts. Whenever you see people who boast and do religious things in public so that people will think they are holy, you know that you are seeing false Pharisaical religion.

*Mark 12:38-40 As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like **to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at***

banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Anyone who has seen TBN or the TV shows from the Vatican can see the flowing robes, the important seats, and the lavish decorations. The marketplace of today is the TV. In order to adorn themselves this way, they devour widow's houses just like they did in Jesus' day. So many people who watch TBN have sent all their money to these swindlers and end up with nothing in return except the hope that they will be able to pay their bills. I have many emails from people who ended up completely broke supporting people like Benny Hinn and thousands of other false teachers. False teachers make a big show of their long prayers. They even pretend that they know what is wrong with people watching the TV then make a big show out of praying for some ailment they divined by "word of knowledge" such as "a headache". They know that out of the millions of people watching there are many with headaches and they will get better. Then they turn around and read an unsubstantiated testimony on their program from a letter of someone who's headache went away and use that to raise more money. They also flatter others for their own advantage (Jude 1:16).

¹⁶ These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; ^[a]they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

One of the biggest tricks of false teachers is to flatter people. Today it is especially done through so-called "prophecy". They lay hands on people and prophesy something over them that makes them sound important, like God is calling them to be a prophet themselves, or an apostle, or something really important. I had a man prophesy over me that I would raise the dead in Micronesia. Now God can raise the dead, but what purpose would it serve to tell

me in advance that it would happen? None, except to make me puffed up with pride. This is typical false prophecy. Beware of it and rebuke those who practice it. Another way they flatter is to get together in unity with anyone, regardless of what they believe. Today the Catholics, Oneness Pentecostals who don't believe in the Trinity, Latter Rain Third Wavers and others are all getting together to flatter one another.

Tomorrow it will be the Muslims, Mormons and other cults getting together with Christians. There is already a move in the Third Wave to try to build bridges with the Muslims on the basis that we supposedly all worship one God. But Allah is not YHWH. Allah has no Son, and Jesus did not die for the sins of the world according to the Quran.

Wolves are "deceivers"

Wolves lay error secretly alongside truth so that they may deceive people into believing the lies they themselves believe.

*Jude 1:4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago **have secretly slipped in among you.** They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.*

*2 Pet. 2:1-2 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. **They will secretly introduce destructive heresies,** even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them— bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.*

They are deceived themselves and making deceivers of others.

*2 Tim. 3:13 while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, **deceiving and being deceived.***

Many deceivers have gone out.

*2 John 1:7 **Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world.** Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.*

You can tell a deceiver by the lies they tell, the false doctrines they preach, the false prophecies they make, and if they are not repentant for them.

Wolves teach legalism as did the "circumcision group"

Wolves always teach other ways to be saved. They add requirements to salvation. Some add that you have to be baptized in water to be saved. Others add you must have a second experience of the Holy Spirit or be slain in the spirit. Some add sacraments like the Catholic church. Some add things like requirements to dress in certain ways or abstain from certain foods. Various works are added to the simple message of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Anytime you see other requirements being added you are seeing the work of wolves.

Wolves "must be silenced"

Wolves are not to be allowed to continue to speak. They are to be told to keep silent, and if they will not we are to reject them (Titus

3:10). This is especially true of those who make false prophecies. One false prophecy that is not repented of is criteria for the church to separate from that person and for them to no longer be in ministry. Wolves are not to be tolerated and allowed to continue because we know God will judge them. We are commanded by God to separate ourselves from them. If they are unrepentant, then we are to mark and avoid them.

*Rom. 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.***

The word "divisive" here is from the word "*hairetikos*" which means "heretic" or "a divisive follower of false doctrines". If they do not repent, we are to reject them as heretics after they have been admonished a couple of times.

*Titus 3:10 **A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; (KJV)***

We should have no fellowship with their works but expose them.

*Eph. 5:11 **Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.***

Paul warned the churches about certain heretics, as well as the prophets. We need to name names so that we can warn others about heretics specifically, just as they did. The reason is that general principles are not enough. We have to be specific about who is teaching false doctrines and making false prophecies. We must separate ourselves from them.

*2 Cor. 6:17 "Therefore **come out from them and be separate, says the Lord.** Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.*

God calls us to be a holy people, separated from the world,
separated from the wolves and the goats.

We are to be unleavened bread.

"Neither when we have chosen our way can we keep company with those who go the other way. There must come with the decision for truth a corresponding protest against error." - Charles Haddon Spurgeon

We must keep away from them.

*2 Thes. 3:6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to **keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.***

*2 Thes. 3:14-15 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, **take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.** Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.*

If they do not heed the warnings as a brother, then we are to turn away from them.

*2 Tim. 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: **from such turn away.***

Wolves are "ruining whole households"

Today wolves ruin households in two ways -- (1) they ruin churches and (2) they ruin families. Their influence is felt in the churches through traveling teachers, books, tapes, and music. Their influence is felt in families especially through TV. They come into houses (churches and homes) and gain control of weak-willed Christians who don't know how to discern truth from error

*2 Tim. 3:6-7 They are the kind who **worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women**, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.*

They gain control by false promises of financial gain and false signs and wonders. Why do they do this? For their own financial gain! Don't let them fool you with saying the money they are collecting is for God's work. It is for their own enrichment and the continued support of those who teach false doctrines.

Wolves teach false doctrine, "teaching things they ought not to teach"

The main mark of wolves is that they teach false doctrine, and so the main test for wolves is whether or not what they teach is in line with the core doctrines of the Faith as set out in the sixty-six books of the Bible. This should be the first test of false teachers. The other two are testing prophecies and testing for fruit of the Spirit. Most of the ways in which many Christians decide who they will listen to and follow today are not biblical. They rely on experiences, manifestations, feelings, emotions, numbers of followers, numbers of people who claim to be saved, the size of a church or movement, signs and wonders, purported miracles (whether real or false), subjective testimonies, hearsay and rumors, how successful and rich a teacher is, if a person speaks with authority, the atmosphere

of a meeting, etc. But true believers will test teaching first and foremost against the written Word of God.

Wolves motivation is money, "for the sake of dishonest gain"

Lastly, wolves underlying motivation is money. Their "god" is their appetites ...

*Rom. 16:18 **For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.***

and money.

*Luke 16:13 **"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."***

All you have to do is watch Christian TV to see this. But this problem is in the islands as well. What are you in the ministry for? For God or for money? Who is your Master?

*1 Peter 5:2 **Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;***

*Hebrews 13:5 **Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."***

Titus 1:8-9

⁸ but hospitable, loving what is good, self-controlled, righteous, holy, disciplined, ⁹ holding firmly the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to ^[g]exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.

“Hospitable” (again)

He repeats this requirement so we know it is important. Overseers need to be welcoming to new believers while also showing love and caring for the flock.

“Loving what is good”

Leaders in the church need to show that they love what is good, especially in the lives and deeds of those they are ministering to as and encouragement.

“Self-controlled”

Self-control is one of the gifts of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). If an overseer demonstrates self-control they inspire others to do the same, proving that walking with the Lord enables a person to overcome selfish desires.

“Righteous, holy, disciplined”

Titus 1:10-16

¹⁰ For there are many rebellious people, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, ¹¹ who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of ^[h]dishonest gain. ¹² One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy

gluttons.”¹³ This testimony is true. For this reason reprimand them severely so that they may be sound in the faith,¹⁴ not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.¹⁵ To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.¹⁶ They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

False teachers try to act like they are born again. But by their words and actions we can deduce that they are not pure like they claim to be. We have to understand that though they claim good deeds and true teachings they are actually in denial of Jesus Christ and are bringing the precious Gospel into disrepute. We have seen this now for decades on what is loosely called “Christian TV”. Behind these worthless networks and programs, lurks the bottom line. That is “dishonest gain”. For years funds have been raised by false teachers claiming healing and even dead raising without real proof in order to get people to send them money. So weak-willed women and men fall for these tactics in the fruitless hope they will be healed instead of relying on God to heal them.

*2 Timothy 3:6 For among them are those who slip into households and captivate with **weak women weighed down sins**, led on by various impulses,*

With regards to Cretans, they were well known everywhere as big liars. Barnes says this:

*Verse 12. One of themselves. That is, one of the Cretans. The quotation here shows, that Paul had his eye not only on the Jewish teachers there, but on the native Cretans. The meaning is, that, alike in reference to Jewish teachers and native-born Cretans, **there was need of the utmost vigilance in the selection of persons for the ministry.** They all had well-known traits of character, which made it proper that no one should be introduced into the ministry without extreme caution. It would seem, also, from the reasoning of Paul here, that **the trait of character here referred to pertained not only to the native Cretans, but also to the character of the Jews residing there;** for he evidently means that the caution should extend to all who dwelt on the island.*

It is important to remember in applying discernment to false teachers: ***To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.***

We have often allowed worldly standards into the churches when we assume that a person can lie about doctrine and still be trusted to not lie on other matters.

Titus 2:1-10

2 But as for you, proclaim the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. ² Older men are to be ^[a]temperate, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, in ^[b]perseverance.

³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, ⁴ so that they may ^[c]encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

⁶ Likewise urge the young men to be ^[d]sensible; ⁷ in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with ^[e]purity in doctrine, dignified, ⁸ sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

⁹ Urge ^[f]slaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be pleasing, not ^[g]argumentative, ¹⁰ not stealing, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

Older men

The overseer older men must be *temperate, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, in ^[b]perseverance.*

Temperate (*Nephaleos*, sober, temperate, abstaining from wine, either entirely or at least from its immoderate use of things free from all wine, as vessels, offerings)

In the village in Palau where my family were missionaries, there was a Catholic church also with a priest. He could be seen traveling weekly in his speedboat to the government island to pick up a number of cases of communion wine. He only had a handful of people that attended his church yet he continued to make his weekly pickups. It wasn't hard to figure out that he was a drunk. Partly due to his influence, his grounds keeper would get drunk and every month or so would come to our door carrying an adze threatening to kill our family. Needless to say the male leadership of any church must be an example of dignity and self-control.

Dignified (*Semnos*, august, venerable, reverend, to be venerated for character, honorable)

"August" is a word that is used rarely today. It means *marked by majestic dignity or grandeur*. The perception of those we are sent to minister to should be that we are viewed as standing for the truth, not as someone to be idolized or worshipped, but as someone who had principles based on the Bible.

Self-controlled (*Sophron*, of a sound mind, sane, in one's senses, curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate)

A true man of God will curb his desires and impulses. With all the hanky panky going on in many churches these days, I don't see this attribute at work. Our culture fans the flame of impulse, especially in the area of sexuality and money.

Sound in faith, in love, in perseverance (*Hugiaino*, to be sound, to be well, to be in good health, of Christians whose opinions are free from any mixture of error)

Wouldn't it be great to have more pastors whose *opinions are free from any mixture of error*. However, today most of Christendom is full of a mixture of culture and misinterpretation of Scripture.

Older women (*Hieroprepes*, befitting men, places, actions or sacred things to God, reverent)

Older women are to be “befitting men” that is they are to be working to uphold and strengthen the ministry of the overseers of the church. They should not be gossiping and slandering the leadership but be about the business of teaching the younger women how to be useful and productive in the church.

- 1. Young men** (*Sophroneo*, sensible, to be of sound mind, to be in one's right mind, to exercise self control, to put a moderate estimate upon one's self, think of one's self soberly, to curb one's passions)

Young men are to have “*purity in doctrine, be dignified, and sound in speech*”. I'm afraid often what I see of the next generation of pastors does not meet this criteria. Often they don't care about doctrine, even put it down. They are boastful and loud mouthed and they often use coarse speech if not obscene speech.

Slaves (*Hupotasso*, to arrange under, to subordinate, to subject, put in subjection, to subject one's self, obey, to submit to one's control, to yield to one's admonition or advice, to obey, be subject).

One of the biggest downfalls of family and the educational system is to fail to teach children to respect authority. This is why it is so hard for many to remain in a job for very long. We can directly apply the

message to slaves in the first century, since Western society no longer approves of them, to the relationship of employees to employers. Employees are to arrange things so that the company they work for operates the way the employer desires. Employees are to yield to the advice of their employers and obey, otherwise they will be fired.

Titus 3:1-2

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, ²to slander no one, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing every consideration for all people.

Christians are to live under the laws of the land and be subject to the authorities. Of course, we are to be subject to God first in all things. That means if the government is mandating us to do something unlawful or in opposition to the Bible, we must then stand for truth. Otherwise, we need to conduct ourselves as model citizens, even though our citizenship is actually in heaven. We need to be obedient and always ready with good deeds. I know a pastor who told me he never wears a seatbelt in town. But the law states we need to wear a seatbelt in cars at all times. Many accidents occur within a short distance from where we live.

The next part is more difficult. We are to avoid slander, avoid contention and show gentleness to all. Gentle behavior has gone out of style in our time. *Epieikes* means gentle, patient, exercising moderation, equitable, fair, mild. We are to deal with people with gentle consideration.

Titus 3:3

***3For we too were once
foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts
and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy,
hateful, hating one another.***

As unbelievers we were formerly given over to our carnal, sinful nature, which manifests itself in foolish disobedience. We were deceived.

2 Timothy 3:13 But evil people and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

We were enslaved to all kinds of lusts and pleasures, in otherwards self-absorbed and self-indulgent.

1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,

Malice and envy, stemming from the inability to forgive, was in control of our lives.

1 Peter 2:1-3 2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all ^[a]malice and all deceit and ^[b]hypocrisy and ^[c]envy and all ^[d]slander, ² and like newborn babies, long for the ^[e]pure ^[f]milk of the word, so that by it you may grow ^[g]in respect to salvation, ³ if you have tasted ^[h]the kindness of the Lord.

How can someone know we are a Christian if we continue to live in the sins of the past.

Titus 3:4-7

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration

and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs ^[a]according to the hope of eternal life.

This is the essence of the true Gospel. This makes any work-based gospel a false gospel such as the message taught by the Roman Catholics. We do not earn our way to heaven. Our salvation is solely based on the mercy of God. If we are truly saved, of course we will do works in accordance with our faith. But we cannot be saved by them. A person, to be truly born again, has to commit to the Lord Jesus Christ, believing He is the God-man, and when God saves us based on the belief He knew we would commit to from eternity according to His foreknowledge, He then creates in us a new spirit and puts His Spirit in our spirit, and predestines us to life eternal.

Colossians 3:10

and have put on the new self, which is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created it—

The salvation bought for us by Jesus Christ is to that we can become joint heirs with him for eternity.

Titus 3:8-11

⁸This statement is trustworthy; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and beneficial for people. ⁹But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are useless and worthless. ¹⁰Reject a ^[a]divisive person after a first and

second warning, ¹¹ knowing that such a person has deviated from what is right and is sinning, being self-condemned.

As believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit we are tasked with doing things that are good and beneficial for people. That doesn't mean we tolerate sin but we admonish and reprove those caught in the grip of their sinful nature to believe in Jesus Christ and be transformed. If we think the definition of love is to tolerate people in their sins, we are sorely mistaken. This is the error of many churches that have kowtowed to culture, bending over backwards to accept LGBTQ and other sins.

The advice of verses 9-11 is key for Christians. First we must avoid useless arguments that divide over non-essential issues. But we are to argue for the truth.

2 Cor. 10:4-5

2 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but ^[a]divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

Our job as light and salt is to destroy false arguments which are against the Word of God, and take our thoughts captive in obedience to Christ.

[Colossians 3:2](#)

*Set your minds on the **things** that are **above**, not on the **things** that are on earth.*

We should be seeking to have the mind of Christ when it comes to defending the Faith.

1 Corinthians 2:16

*For who has known the **mind of** the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the **mind of Christ**.*

¹² When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³ Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them. ¹⁴ Our people must also learn to engage in good ^[e]deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unproductive. ¹⁵ All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

As believers we are also to assist those who are hard at work spreading the Gospel such as pastors, teachers, missionaries, evangelists. We are to support them in prayer and meet their needs are the Lord directs us to. Many fulltime Christian workers can become hard pressed by financial issues as they do not work for wages. They need the help of the churches and individuals to do the work God has called them to.