

TOUGH GRACE IN DIFFICULT PLACES A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF TITUS

STUDY TWO

Two Men on a Mission, with Us

Titus 1:1–4

Truth that is embraced and understood, if it is not just someone's opinion but God's truth, will lead you to godliness.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IN the military, rank determines influence. The higher the rank, the greater the influence.

For example, if a new-recruit private ordered a platoon of soldiers to prepare for inspection, none of the soldiers would obey. The words would float in the air, disregarded like specks of dust. But if the same private read the same order from a memo signed by the base commander, the words would splash like boulders in a lake, and the soldiers would jump into action.

The higher the speaker's authority, the weightier the words . . . and the greater the people's response.

Paul's words in his letter to Titus carried much weight. We can imagine Titus reading Paul's letter to the church in Crete as the believers listened carefully, discussed thoughtfully, and willingly complied. Paul's authority, however, was not in himself but in his *relationship* to Jesus Christ, the highest authority, who called on Paul to represent Him as an apostle.

All believers can trace a line of authority to Christ because we are all spiritually linked to Him. When we utter His name and declare His words, we speak for the King of Kings. In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, we'll examine Paul's ministry credentials and authority in Titus 1:1–4—which offers a few surprises to us today.



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Titus 1:1–4



PREPARE YOUR HEART

The world can be a hostile place for those who speak for Christ. As you open God’s Word, invite His Spirit to help you understand the passage and give you courage to live in light of its truth.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Paul left Titus on the island of Crete to “complete” the work that he and Paul had begun (Titus 1:5), which was no small task. Titus would have to correct heresies, expose false teachers, train leaders, and restructure the churches. It was a tough assignment on this island known for its unruly inhabitants. Titus’ people skills, tenacity, and faith would be put to the test, and Paul’s letter must have felt like a fresh wind of encouragement and support.

Put yourself in Titus’ place. Imagine receiving the scroll, carefully opening the seal, and slowly unrolling it. See through Titus’ eyes the familiar handwriting of his beloved mentor and friend. What feelings do you think rushed over him?

As you read the opening lines of Titus, sense the heartbeat of Paul, Titus, and the believers in Crete sharing their lives together in a trying culture. Each word was written with care and was meant to be treasured.



Observation: The Writer and the Recipient

Observation is the first step in *Searching the Scriptures*.¹ When observing a passage, simply look at what the passage says. Do you notice repetition, contrast, key words, or significant connections? You may think you’ve observed everything in a single read-through, but it often takes several passes to see every detail.

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Paul, the Writer—Titus 1:1–3

In his opening salutation, Paul lists what he considers the most important facts about his identity, his purpose, and his mission.

How did Paul identify himself in the first line of *Titus 1:1*? What was significant about the word order? Why do you think Paul listed his credentials this way?

Paul stated his purpose in *1:1–2*. An “apostle” is one who is sent. What did God send Paul to do? Look for three key components of Paul’s purpose and list them. The first two are in 1:1, and the third is in 1:2.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Finally, Paul recorded his mission in *1:3*. What was Paul’s life calling?

Titus, the Recipient—Titus 1:4

How did Paul describe his relationship with Titus in *Titus 1:4*? What is the basis of their close connection? What was Paul’s prayer for Titus and his ministry?

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Can you imagine the assurance this letter gave Titus who was alone on the island of Crete with the responsibility of setting in order churches that had gone wrong? It gave Titus apostolic authority to say what he needed to say, to correct what needed correcting, to confront what he needed to confront.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Faith, Knowledge, and Hope

Interpretation asks the question, “What does the passage mean?” The biblical context is our best interpretive tool in seeking deeper understanding. When Paul wrote his letter to Titus, he was in his sixties, only a few years from the end of his life. He had already founded many churches. He had penned the theological treatise of Romans and his other doctrinal epistles which the church viewed as “Scripture” (2 Peter 3:15–16). Soon, Paul would be arrested once again, and this time, there would be no release except the release of death.

Paul faithfully lived out his calling to the end. Let’s take a closer look at each phrase in Titus 1:1–2, which forms Paul’s credo. Look up three additional *translations* of the following phrases, aside from the ones you used in observation, and after each phrase, write down the meaning. To aid you in the process, use your Bible-study tools, like Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s commentary, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, or *Constable’s Notes* at netbible.org.²

“I have been sent to proclaim faith to those God has chosen” (Titus 1:1). What does “faith” refer to? Who are God’s “chosen?”

“I have been sent to . . . teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives” (1:1). What “truth” does Paul mean? What is the purpose of teaching?

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“This truth gives them confidence that they have eternal life, which God—who does not lie—promised them before the world began” (Titus 1:2). How does truth give “confidence”? On what is our assurance based?

Paul’s credo focuses on the central Christian values of faith, knowledge, and hope. Write his credo in your own words below. How does this statement refine your calling as a follower of Christ?

Paul fulfilled his calling through “proclamation” (1:3). That is, declaring the gospel of Christ and, by extension, expository preaching. Why are these two acts of proclamation essential components of the church?

It is not the preacher’s job to be clever and cute, to be so creative that the message gets clouded. We are to be accurate, clear, and practical in the teaching of the Word of God. The systematic, thorough, consistent explanation of the meaning and the application of Holy Scripture is the most effective method of proclaiming God’s truth. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Paul’s Calling

When did Paul receive his call? Read Paul’s own testimony in [Galatians 1:11–20](#). What key points did Paul make to communicate the authenticity of his apostleship?

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Paul says, “My calling goes all the way back to before I was born. When I was in my mother’s womb, God’s hand was on me.” God knows what He’s about. His hand was not only on Paul, it’s on you. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: You, the Reader

Paul fulfilled his calling, and then, he handed off the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel to Titus, who was fulfilling his own calling. The baton has passed through time, and now it rests in our hands. Paul modeled key principles for Titus and for us to apply.

Paul said that he was “a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ” (Titus 1:1). How would you describe your core identity?

Paul’s calling was to: 1) bring people to “faith” in Christ, 2) give them knowledge of the truth “that shows them how to live godly lives,” and 3) to give them hope that they have “eternal life” (1:1–2). Simply put, God called Paul to spread *faith*, *knowledge*, and *hope*. How do these values inspire your personal calling?

At the center of Paul’s life was “proclaiming” God’s Word accurately, clearly, and practically. What light does Paul’s mission shed on your central mission?

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Finally, Paul’s role as mentor and spiritual father for Titus is a model of ministry through relationships. What relationships can you cultivate in your ministry?

God’s work in you started before you were born, in your mother’s womb, and it fits perfectly into His plan which God formed in ages past. It’s mind-boggling to think about! He is still at work in invisible ways, and His plan will run its course according to His will.

Christians have a common faith that binds us together in worship and purpose. Be a “Paul” and find a “Titus” with whom you can inspire faith, knowledge, and hope. Likewise, find a “Paul” who can encourage and mentor you. Link arms in the journey of following Christ, and experience His grace and peace together.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, may Your grace and peace flow like refreshing streams of life-giving water through my life to others who need faith, knowledge, and hope. I am Your servant, just as Paul was Your servant. Send me wherever You may wish to fulfill my calling as a follower of Christ. In His name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, “[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)”
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014).

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages. Copyright © 2006, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

