

# The Epistle to Titus: A Study Guide

*by Bryan Gibson*

When studying the Bible, it's a good idea to assign a title to each chapter, something that will help us remember the contents of that chapter. Let's use Paul's Epistle to Titus as an example. Titus has three chapters, so we'll assign a title to each one, and then explain how the contents fit each title.

**Chapter One: Every church needs elders.** Note carefully Paul's instruction to Titus in v. 5: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you." What qualities would these elders need to have? Look beginning in v. 6: "If any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children..." (the list of qualifications continues through v. 9). Why do we need men like this in a local church? For one, we need them to protect the church from false teaching. Look beginning in the middle of v. 9: "that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped..." (vv. 9b-11). Every church needs elders—it is commanded, and it is for the good of God's people.

**Chapter Two: Act your age.** This is a fitting title for chapter 2, because it deals with the responsibilities of different age groups: older men (v. 2), older women (vv. 3-4a), younger women (vv. 4b-5), and younger men (vv. 6-8). This section concludes with some admonitions to servants (vv. 9-10). One of the interesting things about this chapter is that in addition to the instructions given, it also gives various incentives to obey these instructions: "that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (v. 5); "that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you" (v. 8); "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (v. 10); and finally, the greatest incentive of all—the grace of God (vv. 11-15).

**Chapter Three: Do good works.** A quick look at some verses will reveal this emphasis. "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work" (v. 1). "...those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works" (v. 8). "And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful" (v. 14). Does this emphasis on good works in any way diminish the love, kindness, mercy, and grace of God, upon which we are so dependent for our salvation? (vv. 4-7). How can that be, when the very

design of God's grace is to produce a people "zealous for good works"? (2:14). Good works—works of obedience—do not diminish the grace of God; they bring it into clearer light for all to see (Acts 11:23). Besides, do we really expect God to show mercy to those who refuse to do His will?

So here is Paul's Epistle to Titus in a nutshell. 1. Every church needs elders. 2. Act your age. 3. Do good works. That's easy to remember, and it should help us remember other details in these three chapters.