

Daily Bible Study

“Christian Leadership Profile”

Titus 1:5-16

November 17 – November 23, 2013

MONDAY –This week as we continue our look at Titus; namely **Titus 1:5-16**, we look at what we are calling a **“Christian Leadership Profile”**. When looking for a job people go read the help wanted section of the paper and there or elsewhere they get a pretty clear description of the kind of person who is needed for the particular job or position. Under the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul here in **Titus 1**, gives us something similar. The bottom line is that men are needed for leadership in the church and what follows is the profile of what God says they are to be. As the text moves along Paul will list both what these men in leadership must and also what they must not be. He gives this criteria before going on to make a comparison in the following verses (**Titus 1:10-16**) by describing what false teachers (specifically the ones there in Crete) are like. It is clear from these verses that the appointment of Elders (leaders) was particularly necessary. False teachers were active in Crete and were posing a serious threat to the believers by the things they were teaching. One of the responsibilities for the elders would be to encourage the believers with sound teaching and refute those who opposed it. The truths discussed here are relevant today as well as those days long ago in Crete. Read **Titus 1:5-16**: 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—*⁶*if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.* ⁷*For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,* ⁸*but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,* ⁹*holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.* ¹⁰*For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,* ¹¹*whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of 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. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,* ¹⁴*not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.* ¹⁵*To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.* ¹⁶*They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”*

Suggestion for Prayer: God, teach me from Sacred Scripture these important, timeless truths.

TUESDAY – Titus 1:5-6: 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—*⁶*if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.”* Paul gets down to business now that he has finished his greeting to Titus. He tells him that he has been left in Crete because certain things need to be put in order, the first being to *appoint elders*... It seems that each center of population had its local church and these churches needed leaders. Three titles are used for the male leaders of the church here in our text and they are; elder, overseer, and steward. The *elder* (*presbyteros*) was a very familiar term among the Jews as there were elders in the synagogue, Sanhedrin, and in each town or village. Their role was to preside, to direct, and to govern, and they were appointed on the basis of their wisdom and maturity. Scripture says that churches are to have elders as well. The second word *bishop* is used in **verse 7**. The *bishop* (literally-*overseer*) and *elder* are not two different offices and individuals but are one and the same. The titles are used interchangeably in the New Testament. An elder is an overseer and as the title suggests, the overseer has the oversight of a congregation. His duty is to watch over it and take care of it, protect it, and promote its spiritual health. The third title, *steward*, is again in **verse 7**. The steward was the man whom a wealthy master would put in charge of his household or business. It was a position of considerable trust which required someone wise, faithful and trustworthy. The *elder* is also a *steward*. He is to manage the affairs of God’s house, ensuring the master’s work is done and all His servants cared for. These titles mark out this position as one of considerable responsibility. With that in mind we move on to the **Profile of a Christian Leader**. The profile starts with what is often a crippling and paralyzing phrase... *if a man is blameless*. We need to be careful with this summary word. The word literally means “above reproach” and as John Stott comments, “This does not of course mean that candidates must be flawless or faultless, or we would all be disqualified.” The idea is rather that the elder is to be of exemplary reputation and not have a serious character flaw and pattern of inappropriate behavior. As Paul gets to specific criteria he begins at home: *the husband of one wife* (literally in the Greek; *aner* – man, *heis* – one, *gyne* – woman). This meaning and implications of this phrase have been debated concerning divorce, adultery and so forth but without argument we see the basic idea is that of faithfulness. No one is to be made an elder unless he has been faithful to his wife. Immorality was rampant in Paul’s day and it was common for husbands to sleep with other women but this is not to be the case in the church of Jesus Christ. This should be the call for all Christian husbands; and we also see that Scripture instructs us all both men and women to live without “...even a hint of sexual immorality” (**Ephesians 5:3**). Continuing with the home life Paul says an Elder must be a father who has *faithful* children. The NIV says the Elder is to be “*a man whose children believe*”. The NKJV says *faithful*—faithful in the sense of submissive and obedient to their father’s will. This is most likely the preferable understanding. He is not saying that an elder’s children have to be Christians but he is insisting that they be under their father’s control not open to the charge of *dissipation or insubordination* (being wild and disobedient). In **1 Timothy 3:4** he makes the same point; “...*must rule his own house well having his*

children in submission with all reverence”. Timothy is then given the reason; “...for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God? Bottom line is that failure in the one area will lead to failure in the other.

Suggestion for Prayer: God, help me understand the importance of managing my life and family according to your Word. Help me to strive to live according to these standards.

WEDNESDAY – Titus 1:7b-9: “⁷For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, ⁸but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.” Turning to personal qualities we find out what an elder to be like and not like with five negatives and six positives. He is not to be a *self-willed*. He must not be an arrogant, stubborn dictator. What is needed are men like Jesus; humble, gracious, kind. Men ready to serve, prepared to spend and be spent for the sake of God’s people. He isn’t to be *quick-tempered*. He needs to be able to handle difficult, irritating people and situations without exploding. He is to not be a *drunk*; again balance and control are in view (**1 Timothy 5:23**). Not total abstinence; but strict self-control. *Not violent* describes a man not ready to throw punches when he encounters difficulties and conflicts. An Elder must be able to handle tensions without becoming violent. He should strive to be a peaceable and gentle man. He is *not greedy for money*. This is a mark of false teachers throughout the New Testament and today. An elder must be a man of integrity as far as money is concerned. Looking to the positive qualities; an elder must be *hospitable* which means ‘love of strangers’. It is primarily about caring for and welcoming into our homes those who need hospitality or would greatly benefit from it. **Romans 12** makes it clear that hospitality is a duty that devolves upon us all. Paul makes that clear in. He must be a *lover of what is good*. Many people love what is bad and an elder, by contrast, must love things that are good (**Philippians 4:8**). He also needs to be *sober-minded* or a man “sensible and moderate in behavior”. He needs to be *just*; being in accordance with what God requires, living carefully by the standards of God’s word in every area of life. “*Holy*” speaks for itself as it shows a righteous man who seeks day by day to walk closely with God and to please him in everything. Next, he must be *self-controlled*. This word is used in **Galatians 5** in the list of the “fruit of The Spirit” which is for us all as believers. In regard to sleeping, eating, the use of time and money, the elder must have mastery of himself rather than be a slave to his appetites, drives, and desires. This list is more about who we are than what we are. Finally, **verse 9** brings the list of qualifications to a close by insisting that an elder must be sound in the faith. Elders should be examined as to their beliefs. Do they have a good grasp of Christian doctrine and the fundamentals of the faith while being committed to them? This is very important in an age when all types of doctrines of Scripture are under attack within Christian evangelicalism. Elders should encourage believers with sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Wrapping this all up we see how concerned the *Lord* is for His church.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father God, be with all the genuine Elders of Your church and give them strength and fortitude to live in accordance with Your call. Help me also do the same.

THURSDAY – Titus 1:10-11: “¹⁰For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, ¹¹whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.” Many parts of New Testament were written to counteract the activity of false teachers and the remainder of our text is one of them. The problem of false teaching is a problem in Christianity in general today. There are many cults and pseudo-Christian groups that pretend to be teaching the true religion of Jesus but whose teaching is not Biblical and false. All of us need to be on our guard against false teaching and take seriously to heart the apostle’s instructions in this passage as to how such people are to be dealt with. These verses are a detailed description of the Cretan false teachers but we will see their relevance today as well. False teachers are *insubordinate* or rebellious; teachers not prepared to submit to Divine authority either in belief or in practice. Their lifestyle and teaching were in open opposition to God’s revealed will. They were *idle talkers* whose teaching was empty and without value and worth. They also were *deceivers* who led their hearers astray as they taught people to embrace teaching contrary to God and His Word. This is **Genesis 3**; “*Hath God said...*? As to their character; they were and are greedy, teaching false things for *the sake of dishonest gain*. It wasn’t just their doctrine that was bad but their motive was bad as well. They were simply doing it for the money.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, give me discernment to see teaching that is so prevalent today and that is contrary to Sacred Scripture and what You have revealed through it.

FRIDAY – Titus 1:12-16: “¹²One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” ¹³This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, ¹⁴not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. ¹⁵To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. ¹⁶They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.” In **verse 12**, Paul quotes from the Cretan Epimenedes who lived several centuries earlier and he says the false prophets were like most of the islanders, *always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*. In addition to all these other things, the false teachers were *defiled and unbelieving*. Whatever their profession, they were not true believers and therefore had never been cleansed by God from the defilement of sin. Finally, from **verse 16**, we learn that their claim to know God was false. Their lives simply did not match up to such a claim. This is not a pretty picture but a scary and horrific one. This is a serious widespread problem as the word *many* from **verse 10** points out. Titus had his work cut out for him and so do we.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father God, protect Your church and the men that lead it. Help me to support and pray for my leaders and to live like this also. I ask this for Jesus sake, Amen.