



TITUS & PHILEMON

JANUARY 2020

Read on your own or with others,
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of these books. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

INTRODUCTION

These books are similar to 1 & 2 Timothy. Unlike the rest of the letters of Paul in the New Testament, they are not written to churches as a whole, but to particular individuals.

Titus was written, unsurprisingly, to a man called Titus. He was converted through Paul's ministry (Titus 1:4) and, like Timothy, we read of him accompanying Paul on his journeys (Galatians 2:1-3). This letter was written while Titus was on the Island of Crete overseeing new churches that had been planted there.

Philemon was apparently a wealthy Christian from the city of Colosse. He had a slave, Onesimus, who stole from him (Philemon 18) and ran away. Onesimus met Paul in Rome. He heard about Jesus and was converted (Philemon 10).

TITUS

Titus is a letter filled with wise pastoral advice. There is a clue to the reason Paul is writing in his description of his work in vs 1. Paul is writing to Titus so that Titus might encourage the Christians on the island of Crete to grow in their faith and to live it out. Here is a summary of the work that Paul urges Titus to undertake:

APPOINT ELDERS (TITUS 1:5-9)

Good leadership is important for a growing church. Titus is directed to appoint elders in every town. The passage spells out the qualifications for eldership so that Titus can appoint godly leaders for the churches.

SILENCE FALSE TEACHERS (TITUS 1:10-16)

Many of the letters of the New Testament deal in some way with the reality and effects of unbiblical teaching. As a Gospel Leader, Titus is not just called to know that false teaching exists, but to deal with it when it arises in the church (Titus 1:13).

PASTOR THE WHOLE CHURCH (TITUS 2)

Titus is to teach and encourage every person in the congregation, young and old, men and women, slave and free, to know and live out the gospel.

As you read this section, it is worth spending some time thinking about the specific things that Titus is to teach to each group and asking why. Also, notice the particular role in this that Paul identifies for women who are mature in their lives and faith.

KEEP THE GOSPEL CENTRAL (TITUS 3:1-11)

As the letter draws to a close, Titus is given a clear and wonderful reminder that salvation is of grace and a gift of God's mercy. As you read these words, you can almost hear Paul saying to Titus, 'don't ever forget this'.

SERVE THE CHURCH (TITUS 3:12-15)

The book ends with some personal instructions. Titus is to come and help Paul in the cause of the Gospel as soon as he can and, in the meantime, offer all the help he can to Zenas and Apollos. Why? So that through his example he might encourage the church to love and help one another.

PHILEMON

The book of Colossians, a letter from Paul in Rome to the church in Colosse, was delivered by two men, Tychicus and Onesimus (Colossians 4:7-9). At the same time, they brought a letter from Paul to Philemon.

The reason for this is quite simply that Onesimus' life was in the balance. A slave who stole from their master could be executed according to Roman law. Paul pleads with Philemon to show Onesimus grace as a brother in Christ (Philemon 16).

This book gives us a beautiful example of how the gospel should change the way we respond to others when we have been wronged. It also challenges us to do likewise.

ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK

What do these books teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What do these books teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of these books make in your life? (Matthew 7:24-27)