

# THE CHRISTIAN LEADER'S PROFILE

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*By the Book™* A Chapter by  
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## Let's Begin

*Like Timothy, Titus had a hard assignment. He was responsible to "set in order the things that are wanting" (v. 5). Crete was the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean, and a key location for wealth and commerce in the ancient world. After Paul's Rome imprisonment, he visited there. Undoubtedly, this was when Paul appointed Titus bishop at the Cretan church.*

*Not one to mince words, Paul opens his letter to Titus not only reminding him of his Gospel obligation, but also giving him instructions on how to choose worthy leaders in the church. Thus, Paul starts with the Christian leader's profile. As we begin our study of this short letter, let's follow the outline below:*

- I. The Christian Leader's Matrimonial Life (vv. 1-6)**
- II. The Christian Leader's Motivational Life (vv. 7-8)**
- III. The Christian Leader's Ministerial Life (vv. 9-16)**

## I. The Christian Leader's Matrimonial Life (vv. 1-6)

Paul opens his correspondence to Titus with the greeting, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour" (vv. 1-4).

Paul identifies his apostolic role as a "servant of God" who preaches the "hope of eternal life" given by the God Who "cannot lie." The Gospel which was promised from eternity—"before the world began"—was committed into the trust of the Apostle Paul. In addition, Paul identifies Titus as his "son after the common faith." Just as God entrusted him with the Gospel of grace, so Paul entrusted the Gospel to Titus' care on the isle of Crete.

Immediately following his introduction, the Apostle begins his summary profile for Christian leaders. In Scripture, three words are interchangeably used for the church leader: pastor (Eph. 4:11), elder (Acts 20:17-18), and bishop (1 Tim. 3:1ff). Furthermore, each word focuses on a different aspect of the same office: instruction (pastor), consultation (elder), supervision (bishop). With this in mind, Paul speaks about the obligation of Titus and the blamelessness of a bishop. He writes, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless..." (vv. 5-6a). God expects the utmost from those who represent His Gospel. Hence, he specifically lays out in detail the profile God expects His leaders to fulfill.

The first section in the profile concerns the pastor's *matrimonial* life. The Apostle writes, "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly" (v. 6). Qualifications for Christian leaders begin in the home. Jesus said as much when he insisted a new follower wanting to serve Him "go home...and tell..." (Mark 5:19). If one cannot be a spiritual leader in his home, he surely cannot be a spiritual leader in God's church.

### Reflection Connection

*When the Apostle speaks of the Christian leader's home life—including wife and children—do you think he is requiring a Christian leader to be married and have children? Why or why not?*



Several aspects of the Christian leader's home life are addressed. For example, Paul speaks about being a *companion*—"husband of one wife." The English phrase "husband of one wife" literally translates "man of one woman" or "one woman man." To what does Paul refer? He particularly refers to a man who possesses eyes for no other woman but his one woman; that is, his wife. God's original marital pattern is definitively in the background.

The Creation narrative reveals, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). If the relationship between a husband and his wife is not healthy and strong, he has no business being a church leader. Peter is clear, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7).

In addition, Paul addresses a potential church leader's *children*—"having faithful children." A Christian leader's primary evangelistic responsibility is to make sure his children understand the Gospel and come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. While there are certainly tragic exceptions to the rule, if Christian leaders will faithfully teach the Gospel to their children and live the Gospel before their children, God's promise is sweet: *they will come to know Christ and love Him as their personal Savior and Lord.*

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Christian men can implement a number of disciplines to keep the home fires burning. Not only must they live godly, disciplined lives before their children, as we mentioned earlier, they must portray kind and loving behavior toward their children's mother. A greater example of responsible fatherhood is hard to imagine than being a faithful husband. Also, family worship times can be initiated by Christian men. While moms are surely capable of nurturing children's spiritual lives, demonstrated nicely but necessarily by many faithful single moms, as God-ordained leaders in the home, Christian men shirk their responsibility if they do not initiate family worship. In addition, family prayer and faithful financial stewardship tremendously boost the spiritual atmosphere in the home.

## II. The Christian Leader's Motivational Life (vv. 7-8)

The second sector in Paul's profile for Christian leaders concerns the *motivational* life of the pastor. He writes, "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to



### Reflection Connection

*Do you think your church has a well-balanced process in place to “screen” potential leaders for various ministries in your church? Explain. Be particularly cautious not to allow the discussion to deteriorate into a “gripe session” or a time which focuses on other people’s flaws.*

filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate” (vv. 7-8). Personality is highly significant to the church leader. How ones relates to others as he attempts to lead others cannot be underestimated.

The Apostle first reveals five negative traits to avoid (v. 7). All five are listed below:

- ✦ *“Not self-willed”*: A self-willed person is an overbearing person. Arrogance rules the person’s heart, and arrogance has no place in Christians at all, much less in Christian leaders! The self-willed person sees his way as the only way. Consequently, no one else can valuably contribute to ministry leadership. Paul instructs Titus to avoid potential leaders with this personality trait.
- ✦ *“Not soon angry”*: Paul refers to being quick-tempered or possessing a “short fuse.” Anger is not sin in itself, since Jesus was angry on more than one occasion (cp. Mark 3:5). But as James tells us, we must be “slow to wrath” (1:19).
- ✦ *“Not given to wine”*: Literally this means to not “sit long at the wine.” Not only is a Christian not to drink wine, but not to even drink it casually, over long periods of time which would possibly reduce the intoxicating effect. For example, sitting around chatting over a glass of wine, or what is today referenced as “social drinking” is Paul’s intention. Total abstinence from intoxicating substances for pleasurable purposes is the Biblical mandate for today.
- ✦ *“No striker”*: The term means “ready to wound.” A Christian leader is not to be a man who is a quarrelsome, divisive person. And, do not be fooled: verbal fights can be as harmful to Christ’s name as physical fights.
- ✦ *“Not given to filthy lucre”*: No leader can honor God who is greedy for money. While this is a subtle temptation for every Christian, leaders are particularly vulnerable. Hence, they should always remain on guard (cp. Luke 16:9).

Paul moves on to set forth positive traits for which to look in potential church leaders (v. 8). He lists six:

- ✦ *“Lover of hospitality”*: A great church leader is generous to guests (cp. 1 Pet. 4:9). Some are especially gifted in this area. Others must be more deliberate about practicing it. However, all leaders must exemplify the gift of hospitality.
- ✦ *“Lover of good men”*: A good leader support good ideas, good projects, good motives, and good ministry. He loves good books, good music, and good causes. His heart looks for good in what other people do.
- ✦ *“Sober”*: Christian leaders have a sober spirit; that is, they are self-controlled. They know how to curb their appetites and not allow them to be men ruled by their passions.
- ✦ *“Just”*: Leaders in God’s church seek to be right with men. Most Christian men respect justice and honor, and the Christian leader exemplifies both.



- ♦ *"Holy"*: While being right with men is necessary, it remains insufficient to being a leader in God's church. Being holy—that is, being right with God—must be foremost in the heart and mind of the Christian leader. He must keep short "sin accounts" between himself and His Lord. All known sin is addressed, and he seeks for the Holy Spirit to reveal to him unknown sin in his life.
- ♦ *"Temperate"*: Christian leaders are inwardly strong. Their inner strength is unsurpassed in the local congregation. His inner resolve makes him the leader he is over God's people. They look to him for guidance and counsel for the difficulties they face because his inner power is visibly perceived in the ministry he performs.

While Paul's requirements for Christian leaders appear quite demanding, being a shepherd over God's flock is the most rewarding service possible. Furthermore, since the church is God's flock, only the most dedicated servant of the Almighty need apply.

### III. The Christian Leader's Ministerial Life (vv. 9-16)

The third section of the leader profile concerns the leader's *ministerial* life. Paul opens this section when he writes, "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (v. 9). Paul is particularly mindful that Titus would never cease in "holding fast the faithful word." No requirement for a Christian leader surpasses his non-negotiable commitment to the Word of God. Against the fierce winds of false doctrine Titus must stand strong. During the vicious assaults from heresy teachers, Titus must not cower. God is faithful in His Word and faithful to those who preach His Word.

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Like Timothy before him and us after him, Titus had a two-fold obligation in his "call to ministry." *First, the Christian leader is called to encourage the good.* "Sound doctrine" becomes the buzzword for faithful Christian leadership. Biblical doctrine is the battle cry of all God's men who honorably serve Him. Paul's undeniable exhortation to encouraging sound doctrine is splattered all over his correspondence to Timothy and Titus (1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:13; 2:1-2). The term translated "sound" is a medical term used of people with good health. For Paul, nothing surpassed a Christian leader's possession of healthy, sound doctrine.



In addition, when a Christian leader possesses healthy doctrine, it follows that his teaching will “infect” the entire congregation. Some teaching produces fear, initiates division, questions faith, and/or destroys confidence among other negative effects. On the other hand, healthy doctrine taught by Christian leaders sold out to Jesus Christ never reaps a negative harvest. Sound doctrine always pays heaven’s dividends.

*Second, the Christian leader is called to expose the bad.* Preaching sound doctrine by default exposes false teaching. Counterfeit money is best recognized not by studying counterfeit money. Instead, experts tell us only by meticulously studying the genuine can the counterfeit be easily recognized. Similarly, when we are routinely issued regular doses of Biblical doctrine, we have in place the best immune system available to detect false doctrine!

In addition, Paul dubs those who would do the church of God harm, “gainsayers.” And, he does not hesitate to expose them for their crafty, subtle role in undermining Christian leadership. These enemies of the Gospel contradict the Word of God. They work hard at spreading diseased doctrine among God’s people. Paul counsels Titus to drown such error in the waters of Christian truth.

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Paul continues, “For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” (vv. 10-11). Once again, Paul minces no words as he reveals to us how to expose the bad. In other words, he details precisely how we are to handle false teaching. Indeed the remainder of the chapter focuses on this single practical lesson.

First, we learn how false teaching is *disseminated*. Already at work, false teachers come from within the congregation itself. They are already attending the church’s worship services and functions and may even be deeply embedded within the church structure, subverting “whole houses.” Their *method* is to “subvert,” a term meaning to “overthrow.” By being “unruly” and speaking “vain” talk, they deceive weak believers through their crafty ways.

Moreover, their *message* is one of perversion, contorting the Word of God making Old Testament law into New Testament law. Specifically, they pride themselves in “circumcision,” adding to the Gospel of faith (cp. Acts 15:1, 11). Tragically, their motives are for “filthy lucre’s sake.” Greed for money by peddling the Word of God is an unfortunate reality in our culture today. So-called “faith-healers” suck the life out of weak believers by skimming them for their hard-earned cash.

Next, the Apostle teaches us how false teaching is *directed*. He writes, “One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth” (vv. 12-14). They ultimately



peddle evil; they traffic in lies. Laziness characterizes their lifestyle. Paul says the Gospel comes to expose such false and harmful teachers.

Third, Paul teaches us how false teaching is *detected*. He closes his opening correspondence to Titus with these words, “Unto the pure all things *are* pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (vv. 15-16). Putting doctrine to the test will expose whether it is sound teaching or sickly teaching. Its character will surface. “Purity” is always revealed when put to the fire.

Further, the works false teachers perform will remain a dead give-away concerning their empty faith. Bold talk and sensational antics fall flat before genuine acts of love. Some teachers may have a charismatic personality and therefore are able to persuade others to follow their error. However, authentic love can never be mimicked.

### Golden Greek Nugget

Among the many traits for which Titus was to search in potential Christian leaders, Paul insisted the candidate must “not [be] given to filthy lucre” (v. 7). The single Greek term translated as a five word phrase in English is *aischrokerdes* which comes from two other Greek words meaning “shameful” and “gain” respectfully. The idea addresses a person who anticipates with excitement making money even if his or her profit degrades moral character. Money becomes the end in itself while moral principle collapses.

### Wrap Up

*In this study, Paul makes a second effort in explaining to two young bishops what was required for Christian leaders. Every sphere of the potential pastor must be affected by the Gospel of Christ. From his vertical relationship to God to his horizontal relationship to the congregation, the Christian leader must place God first and foremost in his life.*

