"Jesus is gentle, but He is not weak. He loves the sinner but is absolutely intolerant of sin. He is not a negotiator. He is Lord. It is this bristling truth that invites intolerance toward Christians. Jesus did not say, "Do your own thing. . .all roads lead to God." That would have made Jesus "politically correct," but Jesus is not politically correct. He is Lord."
Franklin Graham

First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia
PRAYER STUDY #480
TITUS PART ONE

They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.
Titus 1:16

GENRE: A personal letter or epistle

AUTHOR: The Apostle Paul

PEOPLE:

1. Titus: a Grecian convert and sharer in the work of the Lord, whom Paul loved and appreciated and trusted (2nd Corinthians 7:6 & 13, Galatians 2:1 & 3, 2nd Corinthians 2:12 & 14). While Luke does not mention Titus in the book of Acts, doubtless he was part of the "*certain others*" mentioned in Acts 15:2. Titus had been an emissary to the troubled church at Corinth, and Paul left him at Crete to head the church there, as an overseer. He also had at one time been in charge of collecting money for the poor in Jerusalem.
2. The Cretans: The Cretans were known all over the known world and the Roman empire as liars. They were said to be a drunken, insolent, untrustworthy, lying and gluttonous people. A Greek historian of the day wrote: "The Gretans, on account of their innate avarice, live in a perpetual state of private quarrel and public feud and civil strife…and you will hardly find anywhere characters more tricky and deceitful than

those of Crete." They are the only people in the world among whom there was no stigma attached to lying and cheating and conning people out of any sort of gain whatever. Yet Paul told Timothy to *"Go and convert them."*

SETTING: This letter is written around AD 63-65, perhaps when Paul was in Corinth, after being released from house arrest in Rome (61-63 AD) and after leaving Titus in Crete. He sent this letter to Titus in Crete, a Mediterranean Island 156 miles long and 30 miles wide. The letter probably was carried by Zenas, a Christian lawyer skilled in Jewish law, and Apollos, an educated Alexandrian Jew who was an orator and who became an apostle and one of Paul's closest friends. (Apparently there was a second Roman imprisonment in 66 & 67 AD, and Titus returns to and was with Paul during part of this second time in prison-2nd Timothy 4:10.)

PLOT SUMMARY: Paul is writing a personal letter to Titus, a Greek whom some believe was Luke's brother and whom most believe Paul led to Christ from heathenism (Galatians 2:3, Titus 1:4). When Paul was released from prison, Titus had accompanied him to a visit to Crete. Paul left Titus there to set the church in proper order, to ordain elders, and to be the authority of the Christian Church there.

THEME: Church Order and the Church as an organization are the general themes. The book deals with the qualification of elders and the need for sound doctrine. It warns against false teaching and promotes respect between young and old and free and slave.

Titus 1 Amplified Bible (AMP)

Salutation

1 *Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle (special messenger, personally chosen representative) of Jesus Christ, for the faith of God's*

chosen ones and [to lead and encourage them to recognize and pursue] the knowledge of the truth which leads to godliness, **2** *based on the hope and divine guarantee of eternal life, [the life] which God, who is ever truthful and without deceit, promised before the ages of time began,* **3** *and at the appointed time has made known His word and revealed it as His message, through preaching, which was entrusted to me according to the command of God our Savior—*
4 *To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace [inner calm and spiritual well-being] from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.*

We have talked much of the *doulas* or bond slave. Paul usually calls himself a bond-servant of Christ. Here he identifies himself as a bond-servant of God and an apostle. If a man cannot be a slave of Christ, he cannot really be an apostle. Paul asserts his apostleship here because he is going to give instructions to the organized church on Crete and wants them to know he has this authority from God. He states his purpose in life in these verses. He is called to both lead people to Christ and to lead them to sanctification. Those who are sanctified are separated from the world and unto God and walk in the knowledge of the Word. Paul has been called to preach that Word. His calling came from God our Savior or Jesus and began at the Damascus Road experience.

Paul refers to Titus as “my true child”, indicating that Paul himself had led Titus to Christ.

Qualifications of Elders

5 *For this reason I left you behind in Crete, so that*
you would set right what remains unfinished, and
appoint elders in every city as I directed you,
6 *namely, a man of unquestionable integrity, the*
husband of one wife, having children who believe,
not accused of being immoral or rebellious. **7** *For the*
overseer, as God's steward, must be blameless, not
self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine,
not violent, not greedy for dishonest gain [but
financially ethical]. **8** *And he must be hospitable [to*
believers, as well as strangers], a lover of what is
good, sensible (upright), fair, devout, self-disciplined
[above reproach—whether in public or in private].
9 *He must hold firmly to the trustworthy word [of*
God] as it was taught to him, so that he will be able
both to give accurate instruction in sound [reliable,
error-free] doctrine and to refute those who
contradict [it by explaining their error].
10 *For there are many rebellious men who are empty*
talkers [just windbags] and deceivers; especially
those of the circumcision [those Jews who insist that
Gentile believers must be circumcised and keep the
Law in order to be saved]. **11** *They must be silenced,*
because they are upsetting whole families by
teaching things they should not teach for the
purpose of dishonest financial gain. **12** *One of them*
[Epimenides, a Cretan], a prophet of their own, said,
"Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
13 *This description is true. So rebuke them sharply so*
that they will be sound in the faith and free from
doctrinal error, **14** *not paying attention to Jewish*
myths and the commandments and rules of men who
turn their backs on the truth. **15** *To the pure, all*
things are pure; but to the corrupt and unbelieving,

nothing is pure; both their mind and their conscience are corrupted. ***16*** *They profess to know God [to recognize and be acquainted with Him], but by their actions they deny and disown Him. They are detestable and disobedient and worthless for good work of any kind.*

There were believers in Crete who felt that, if they had received Christ, they could do whatever they wanted because of the grace of God. Paul felt that the way to combat false teaching was to offer true teaching. He left his friend Titus in Crete to bring order to the church and to ordain elders.

Paul gives the qualifications for elders (bishop, pastor, elder, shepherd, and Presbyter are often interchangeable in scripture, although we do differential between them) in the church:

a. An elder should have a reputation in the Church as a blameless man of integrity.
b. He must be the husband of one wife (no polygamists) and the father of children who believe in Jesus and are not rebellious or immoral, i.e. he must have taught his own family in the faith.
c. Elders must blameless as a servant of God and not be self-willed. Self-willed men obstinately maintain their own opinion, assert their own rights and opinions, and are conceited and arrogant and intolerant of others.
d. Elders must not be quick-tempered.
e. Elders must not be given to drunkenness or outrageous conduct.

f. Elders must not be violent and ready to start fights. In the early Church there were overzealous bishops who disciplined erring member by beating them up. But this admonition also included people who were violent in words and browbeat people. This was a “no-no!”
g. Elders must not be seekers of gain in disgraceful ways and “in it” just for the money. This describes people who do not care how they make money as long as they make it.
h. They must be hospitable and welcome strangers. At this time in history, inns were very expensive, dirty, and immoral. Christian travelers sought to find Christian homes to stay in. Elders must be unselfish, welcome others, and see the good in people.
i. Elders must have the personal qualities of goodness, sober-mindedness, justness, in working with others, giving other people respect and giving God reverence. They must be holy in conduct and must be self-controlled.
j. Elders must teach the Word which they have been taught. They must encourage others, lifting them up instead of tearing them down. At the same time they must bring conviction to people and gently rebuke them in such a way that they can see the error of their ways.

Paul next contrast the elders with false teachers:

a. They are insubordinate, gossiping and deceiving others. In other words they do not submit to spiritual authority.

b. They are hirelings in it for personal gain whether it be money or reputation or attention.
c. They must be rebuked and corrected.
d. They go by myths or false interpretations of the Old Testament or what men say instead of what the Word says. False teaching and deviant behavior often go together.

Verse 15 refers to those who attempt to find salvation outside of faith in the Cross of Christ. Paul is speaking of legalism and the eating of meats, saying that a special diet will make no difference in our relationship to Christ. Salvation by Law can only defile. It cannot save. When people walk in impurity and have a dirty mind, they repulse those who are walking in purity.

Verse 16 refers to those who try to earn their salvation by works and at the same time deny the finished work of Christ.

Barclay writes of these last two verses: "The ultimate test of life is usefulness, and those who are a bad influence and who have a contaminating effect are of no use to God or to other people. Instead of helping God's work in the world, they hinder it; and uselessness always invites disaster."