

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Ministry 2
Week 5 – Epistles Inductive Study, Part 1

What is an epistle?

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- **An “occasional document” –**

Good question to ask: What occasion prompted the writing of this letter?

Studying the Epistles

The basic unit of study in the epistles is _____.

Epistle Overview

What are we trying to learn?

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1. Paragraph titles: Read the book all the way through, writing down titles for each paragraph. This reveals the general thought development of the book. Titles should meet the following requirements:

- **The titles should be short.** Typically shorter than a sentence. Long titles obscure the flow of thought in the book.
- **The titles should cover most of the significant content in the paragraph.** Keep revising your title until it covers as much content in the paragraph as possible without being too long.
- **Decide how you will determine where the paragraph divisions belong.**

Paragraph divisions are not inspired and vary from translation to translation. In group study, in order to avoid chaos, we suggest that everyone use the same version of the Bible. You may find that there are better ways to divide some paragraphs. Feel free to discuss where the divisions should be and why.

2. Information about the author, audience, and 3rd parties: The author is the person who wrote the letter. The audience is the individual or group of people that the letter is written to. Key third parties are PEOPLE (not God, angels, Satan, etc.) that the author mentions more than once in his letter. These can be groups (e.g. false teachers) or individuals (e.g. Euodia and Syntyche in Phil. 4; Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1 Timothy 1).

Draw three or more columns on a sheet of paper – one for the author, one for the audience, and one or more for key third parties. Read through the book again and record your observations about each person or group in the appropriate column. Each observation should be referenced with the chapter and verse. If you have a hunch but aren't sure if it's right, write it down anyhow and mark your observation with an asterisk. Be thorough—every bit of information matters.

3. Summary of the historical situation: When you are finished filling out each column, draw on the observations you have made and write a one paragraph summary of each person or group in your chart. Observations marked with an asterisk should be stated tentatively (e.g. "Paul may have..."). Now you have a better understanding of what was happening to the author and his audience when the letter was written. This will help you more accurately interpret the details of the paragraph you are about to study.

4. Major themes: Look closely at your paragraph titles, skim the letter again, and review your observations. Do you see any repeated ideas, words, and themes?

5. Author's purpose for writing the letter: Record your conclusions about the author's reason(s) for writing the book.

Philemon Overview

1. Paragraph titles

Vs. 1-3:

Vs. 4-7:

Vs. 8-16:

Vs. 17-20:

V. 21:

Vs. 22-24:

V. 25:

2. Information about the author, audience and 3rd parties

- Author:
- Audience:
- 3rd parties:

	Author: Paul	Audience: Philemon	3rd Party: Onesimus
vs. 1-3:	v. 1:	v. 1: v. 2:	
vs. 4-7:	v. 4: v. 7:	vs. 5, 7:	
vs. 8-16:	v. 8 v. 9: vs. 9, 10, 13: v. 10: v. 12: vs. 11,13: v. 14:	v. 11: v. 14: v. 16:	v. 10: v. 11: v. 12: v. 13: v. 15: v. 16:
vs. 17-20:	v. 17: v. 19:	v. 17: v. 18: v. 19:	v. 18:

v. 21:		v. 21:	
v. 22-24:	v. 22: v. 23:	v. 22:	
v. 25:			

3. Summary of the historical situation

Paul	Philemon	Onesimus
<p>Paul is a Christian leader, now imprisoned for his faith in Christ. While imprisoned, he has converted Onesimus, who is a slave owned by Philemon, a fellow Christian worker who Paul knows and respects. He has sent Onesimus back to Philemon with this letter, hoping that Philemon will forgive Onesimus and be reconciled to him. Though imprisoned, Paul has financial means. He hopes to be released soon and visit Philemon.</p>	<p>Philemon is a wealthy Christian worker who owns slaves & hosts a church in his house. He has a reputation as a loving and faithful Christian worker. He owns Onesimus, who has evidently run away, possibly with Philemon's money or goods. Philemon was converted (directly or indirectly) by Paul and recognizes Paul's leadership</p>	<p>Onesimus is a slave owned by Philemon. He evidently ran away, possibly stealing Philemon's money or goods. As a runaway, he somehow made contact with Paul who led him to Christ. As a result of his conversion, he has been transformed from "useless" to a "useful" person. He has been very helpful to Paul. He is evidently the courier of this letter.</p>

4. Major themes

Theme	References
<p>Authority to order vs. appeal to the truth</p>	<p>vs. 8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21—Paul has the authority to order Philemon to accept Onesimus, but appeals to Philemon to do the right thing.</p>
<p>From useless slave to useful brother in Christ</p>	<p>vs. 11, 13, 15, 16—Onesimus is now useful as a Christian.</p>

5. Author's purpose for writing the letter

To persuade Philemon to forgive Onesimus and accept him back as a brother and fellow-worker.

Titus: Inductive Overview

1. Paragraph Titles

1:1-4:
 1:5-9:
 1:10-16:
 2:1-15:
 3:1-11:
 3:12-15:

2. Information about the author, audience and 3rd parties

Author: Paul	Audience: Titus	3rd Party #1: Cretan churches	3rd Party #2: false teachers/rebellious men
1:1 – A bond-servant of God, and an apostle 1:3 – Message was given to him by God 1:4 – Has affection for Titus. 1:5 – Was previously with Titus in Crete.* Left Titus there to "set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city."	1:4 – Was younger than Paul or led to Christ by Paul. 1:5 – Was left in Crete to set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city. Implies that he is a seasoned worker.* Under Paul's authority.	1:5 – Multiple churches in various cities. In a chaotic state ("set in order what remains").*	1:10 – Rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers. Some are Jewish. 1:11 – Upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach. Motivated by monetary gain. 1:13 – Teaching things that are not sound. 1:14 – Into to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. 1:15 – Mind and conscience is defiled. 1:16 – They profess to know God, but by their deeds are evil.

Author: Paul	Audience: Titus	3 rd Party #1: Cretan churches	3 rd Party #2: false teachers/rebellious men
	2:6,7 – Probably a young man.* 2:15 – May be having difficulty asserting his authority or he’s in an extremely difficult situation.*	2:2-10 – There are a variety of people in the church including older men, older women, younger wives and husbands, children, and bondslaves. Maybe no slaveowners.* 2:5,9,15; 3:1 Calls to respect or submit to various authorities suggest that the Cretans are unruly and have a problem with authority.*	2:8 – The “opponent” is prone to accusing Paul and Titus.*
3:3 – Recognizes his own sinful past in context of God's grace. 3:12,13 – Plans to stay the winter in Nicapolis. Surrounded by a team of people who carry letters and assist with his ministry. Zenas and Apollos probably carried this letter to Titus. Plans to send Artemas or Tychicus to Titus. Wants Titus to visit him. 3:15 – Has others with him that greet Titus.		3:1 – “Remind them” means they’ve been taught before to submit. 3:14 – “Our people must learn to...” implies that they may have been slow to take action to help others in need.	<div data-bbox="846 730 1377 1129" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>3:9-11 – May refer to the false teachers mentioned in 1:10-16 (compare 3:9 with 1:14 and 3:11 with 1:16), or to people inside the churches or both.* They are into foolish controversies, genealogies, strife and disputes about the Law that are unprofitable and worthless. They are factious, perverted, sinful and condemn themselves.</p> </div>

3. Summary of the historical situation

Paul – Paul is God's servant and an apostle. God entrusted him with proclaiming his word. Paul probably led Titus to Christ and worked with him to start churches in Crete. He left Titus there to set the churches in order. He wants Titus to meet opposition, speak the truth with confidence, and urge the Cretans to engage in good deeds. Paul has freedom of mobility—he plans to spend the winter in Nicapolis. He is currently in contact with Artemas and Tychicus and plans to send them to Titus. Paul is also with other believers who know Titus. Zenas and Apollos carried this letter to Titus.

Titus – Titus knows Paul and was led to the Lord by him. Paul left Titus in Crete to set in order what remained of the churches on that island. He was under Paul's authority and a seasoned Christian worker. Titus may have had difficulty asserting his authority—Paul urged him to oppose people in the church who were leading others astray. Titus was a young man, but nevertheless a seasoned Christian worker

Cretan Churches – There were churches in multiple cities on Crete that lacked defined, competent leadership. The churches were relatively new and were in disorder. The churches were made up of a wide range of people - young and old, slave and free. They were opposed and adversely influenced by false teachers and rebellious men. They seemed to have an issue with respecting Titus and other authorities. Some of them were factious and others were lazy.

Rebellious Men – The churches on Crete were plagued by rebellious men who were empty talkers and deceivers. Some of them were from the Jewish party of the circumcision. They taught falsehoods that upset families in the Cretan churches and often did so for monetary gain. They were caught up in Jewish myths and human tradition. Their mind and conscience was defiled and they didn't know God. Instead, they were inclined to form factions. They often engaged in foolish controversies that were of no benefit to anyone.

4. Major themes

Themes	References
	1:1,2,9-11; 2:1,8,10;3:9
	1:6-8,15,16; 2:2-10,14; 3:1,2,8,14
	1:5 – Paul directs Titus to appoint elders to set the churches in order. 2:5 – Younger women subject to their husbands 2:9 – Bondslaves subject to their own masters 2:15 – Titus should speak, exhort, reprove with all authority 3:1 – Christians subject to rulers, to authorities

5. Author's purpose for writing the letter

Paragraph Study

1. Main point

The main point is the heart of your paragraph. It is the action the author is trying to get his readers to take, or the main truth he is trying to communicate. There are several clues in a paragraph that tip readers off to the presence of main point.

Clues:

- Imperative statements (commands).
- Words that signal transition or conclusion: thus, so, therefore.
- Overarching, controlling idea.
- Independent clauses expressing a complete thought.

Ask this question to zero in on the main point: **WHAT** does the author want his readers to do? If there is no clear command, you can ask **WHAT** main truth is the author trying to communicate?

2. HOW and WHY

After you have identified the main point, ask the following questions:

HOW should the main point be carried out?

WHY should the main point be carried out?

When the main point of a paragraph is a truth, not a command (e.g. Eph. 2:1-3, 4-10), these questions may be helpful: HOW is this main point illustrated or explained? WHY is the main point true?

3. Language

Use a concordance and an expository dictionary to study the meaning of confusing words and phrases.

4. Historical references

Are there any references to locations (e.g. “Crete” in Titus 1), cultural customs (e.g. “head coverings” in 1 Cor. 11), or other historical references (e.g. “diving wall” in Eph. 2)? What do these historical references mean? It may be useful to consult a good commentary for historical information.

5. Related Old Testament passages

Sometimes your paragraph will directly quote or allude to a passage or event in the Old Testament. Take note when this happens and use the cross references in a study Bible to learn what you can about the Old Testament passage or event in question.

6. Theology

What truths about the nature of God, sin, man, Satan, salvation, the church, or the Christian life

(leadership, service, suffering, etc.) does this paragraph teach?

7. Relationship to the overall letter

Review the main theme(s) and the author's purpose for writing the book from your epistle overview. How is the main point of your paragraph related to the main theme(s) and the author's purpose for writing?

8. Application

The questions below will clarify how you and the people around you should respond to the author's main point.

WHO was the author originally commanding to act on the main point of this paragraph (an individual, the church, enemies of the gospel)?

WHO most needs to act on the main point today?

WHERE (in what situations/settings) should they act on the main point?

What values in our culture might make someone reluctant to act on the main point?

What are the consequences of failing to act on the main point?

What would happen if someone acted on the main point, but ignored HOW they should do it, or WHY they should do it?

What are the benefits of acting on the main point?

If the main point is a truth instead of a command, try these questions:

When (in what situations/settings) is it important to remember this truth?

What cultural values today make it difficult for people to accept this truth?

What will happen if we ignore this truth?

What are the benefits of knowing this truth?

Practice finding the main point

"Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest." - Mark Twain

Main point:

Supporting points:

Why?

Why?

(James 5:7-8) Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

Main point:

Supporting points:

How?

How?

Why?

(Colossians 4:2-4) Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; 3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; 4 in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

Main point:

Supporting points:

How?

How?

Why?

(2 Tim 1:5-7) For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. 6 For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

Main point:

Supporting points:

Why?

Why?

Paragraph Study: Titus 1:5-9

1. Main point

WHAT does the author want his reader(s) to do?

2. HOW and WHY

HOW should the main point be carried out?

WHY should the main point be carried out?

3. Language

4. Historical references

5. Old Testament passages

6. Theology

7. Relationship to the overall letter

8. Application

WHO was the author originally commanding to act on the main point of this paragraph (an individual, the church, enemies of the gospel)?

WHO most needs to act on the main point today? Who else does it apply to?

What values in our culture might make someone reluctant to act on the main point?

What are the consequences of failing to act on the main point?

What would happen if someone acted on the main point, but ignored HOW they should do it, or WHY they should do it?

What are the benefits of acting on the main point?

Why might God be calling your attention to this passage at this time in your life?

Memory Verses

None this week. There will be a quiz next week.

Assignment

Do a paragraph study on Titus 1:10-16 based on the method above. Write your answers on the assignment sheet we have provided. This assignment must be turned in at the beginning of our next lecture. For your benefit, this assignment must be turned in to complete this course.