

**Xenos Christian Fellowship  
Christian Ministry Light Unit 2  
Using Your Bible  
Week 3 – Epistles Inductive Study**

Editors' note:

- *Italics (lower case or ALL CAPS) show what students should write in their student outline.*
- **Bold (including bold italics and bold ALL CAPS) shows what appears in the student outline.**
- Regular text is used for lecture notes; ALL CAPS are used for emphasis.

Instructor's note: Let students keep their homework and turn it in during break. They'll need to refer to their work during the first part of the lecture.

## The Epistles

### What is an epistle?

- *A letter* – written from one party to another
  - When we read an epistle, we're reading someone else's mail!
  - Written by Apostles (e.g. Paul, Peter, John) to churches (Ephesus – Ephesians, Colossae – Colossians) or individuals (Timothy, Titus, Philemon)
- **An “occasional document”** – *a document written to address the specific situation, questions & needs of an individual or group.*

Letter writing is usually prompted by a specific *occasion* – circumstances arising in the lives of the recipients or the author. The epistles often contain clues that help us understand what prompted the author to write his letter.

e.g. Paul's letter to the Galatians was prompted by the damaging effect of false teaching on the churches of Galatia. People in these churches were being led into doctrinal error by Judaizers who were insisting that certain Jewish practices were still binding on Christians. See 1:6,7 and 5:7-10.

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

Knowing the occasion helps the reader understand features of an epistle that may not make sense in isolation.

e.g. The strong language in Galatians (“I fear for you that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.”) only makes sense when we understand the circumstances surrounding the letter.

## Key themes in the New Testament Epistles; Key New Testament Epistles

No time to cover this material in class. Refer students to *The Theological Themes of the New Testament* handout.

### Inductive Study

Inductive Bible study methods can help you to accurately interpret a passage of scripture. These methods should be used as a regular part of your personal study in the Word. Understanding how to perform an inductive study is essential for developing sound teachings. Knowledge gained through inductive study gives you depth and credibility as a speaker and helps ensure that your interpretation is correct.

We want to give you a simple approach to inductive study that can be used with the Epistles and easily explained to someone you are trying to disciple. As we study this, think through how you can help the people you influence accurately read the Bible for themselves. What are you going to do to ensure that after they move on from your care, they can understand the Bible on their own?

With practice, you can become very skilled at using and inductive study methods and teaching them to others.

Why do we use the word “inductive?” Inductive reasoning is “the act or process of reasoning from a part to a whole, from particulars to generals, or from the individual to the universal.”<sup>1</sup>

We will take the same approach to studying the Epistles.

**Inductive Bible Study** is utilizing the details of the text (particulars) to arrive at the author’s intended meaning (generals).

Instructors: manage your students’ expectations regarding their interpretive skills. Inductive study is a skill that takes time to develop. Your first attempt at interpreting a passage may miss the mark. Nevertheless, if you hone your inductive skills, more often than not, you’ll correctly interpret the passage.

**Our goal:** In his book, *3 Crucial Questions About the Bible*, Grant Osborne compares interpreting the Bible to salvaging buried treasure. Like raising a sunken wreck, he says extracting the truth requires “care and precision.” It’s hard work, but the payoff is worth it.

**(1 Cor. 2:16) For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have *the mind of Christ*.**

This is what we’re after “*the mind of Christ*” - to hear God speak to us through his word.

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<sup>1</sup> *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, © 1996, 1998.  
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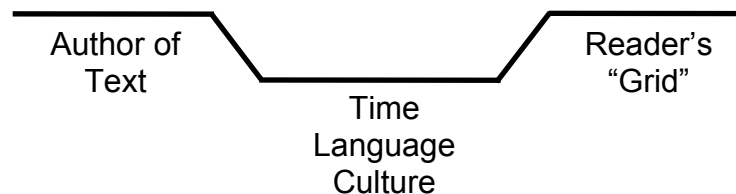
## Inductive Overview of an Epistle

**What are we trying to learn?** An inductive overview will help you grasp the big picture. You will learn about...

- *the flow of thought in the book.*
- *the historical setting* – the life situation of the author and his audience AND the occasion for writing the letter.
- *the general theme(s) of the letter.*
- *why the letter was written.*

The overview will not provide deeper insight into a particular doctrine, nor will it reveal how to apply an individual passage to your own life. But it will give you the background needed to understand individual passages. We'll learn how to do a paragraph study next week, which will help us get into the meaning and application of a particular text.

**Why is an inductive overview important?** Remember, to bridge the gap below, we have to first identify what the passage meant to the original audience. An inductive overview *will put us in a better position to see how the original recipients would have understood the letter.*



## How to do an inductive overview of an Epistle

Instructors: These instructions are on the back of the handout titled *Inductive Paragraph Study Worksheet*.

**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.** No sentences are allowed. Long titles obscure the flow of thought in the book. A phrase of a few words is the maximum length.
- **The titles should cover all of the significant content in the paragraph.** If there is subject matter that is not covered in your title, you need revision.
- **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 will find that there are often better ways to divide paragraphs. Feel free to discuss where the divisions should be and why.

**2. Information about the author, audience, and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 its right, write it down anyhow and mark your observation with an asterisk. Be thorough – every bit of information matters.

When you are finished, 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 **summary of the historical situation**.

**3. 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?

**4. Why was the letter written?** Record your conclusions about the author's reason(s) for writing the book.

Paragraph study (later tonight)

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the inductive study method for Epistles and we'll cover it later in this lecture. Your handout includes instructions for the overview and paragraph so you understand the continuity between the two.

Instructors: Students were asked to perform an inductive overview of Philemon and Titus for their assignment. So you should be able to quickly move through the next two sections.

### Philemon: Inductive Overview

#### 1. Paragraph titles

Do this with the class.

#### 2. Information about the author, audience and 3<sup>rd</sup> parties

- AUTHOR (who wrote the letter): PAUL
- AUDIENCE (who the letter is written to): PHILEMON (also to Apphia and Archippus... but primarily to Philemon).
- 3<sup>RD</sup> PARTIES (people who are mentioned in the letter): The primary 3<sup>rd</sup> party in this book is a slave named ONESIMUS.

Paragraph Titles	Author: Paul	Audience: Philemon	3 <sup>rd</sup> Party: Onesimus
vs. 1-3: greeting	vs. 1: prisoner; with Timothy	vs. 1: Christian worker vs. 2: accompanied by Apphia (wife?) & Archippus; has house church	

		(wealthy?)	
<b>vs. 4-7:</b> Paul's gratitude & prayer for Philemon	<b>vs. 4:</b> prays for Philemon <b>vs. 7:</b> is encouraged & comforted by Philemon's ministry	<b>vs. 5,7:</b> faithful to Christ & loving to Christians	
<b>vs. 8-16:</b> Paul's plea for Onesimus	<b>vs. 8:</b> has authority* <b>vs. 9:</b> aged <b>vs. 9,10,13:</b> imprisoned for the cause of Christ <b>vs. 10:</b> converted Onesimus while imprisoned <b>vs. 10</b> ("child"), 12 ("my heart"), 16 ("beloved brother"): loves Onesimus <b>vs. 12:</b> sent Onesimus back to Philemon <b>vs. 11,13:</b> has been helped by Onesimus <b>vs. 14:</b> respects Philemon's decision about Onesimus	<b>vs. 11:</b> was dissatisfied with Onesimus' performance for him <b>vs. 14:</b> has authority to decide Onesimus' fate <b>vs. 16:</b> owns Onesimus as a slave; wealthy*	<b>vs. 10:</b> was with Paul when he was imprisoned & converted by Paul in that setting <b>vs. 11:</b> was useless to pH, but has become useful to Paul & Philemon (implies substantial growth) <b>vs. 12:</b> has been sent to Philemon by Paul <b>vs. 13:</b> has ministered to Paul <b>vs. 15:</b> was parted from pH for a while <b>vs. 16:</b> Philemon's slave; now a Christian; Philemon's brother "in the flesh" (???) <b>vs. 18:</b> wronged/stolen from Philemon*
<b>vs. 17-20:</b> Paul will do anything to restore Onesimus	<b>vs. 17:</b> views Philemon as a partner <b>vs. 19:</b> has financial means*; led Philemon to Christ	<b>vs. 17:</b> partner of Paul <b>vs. 18:</b> was wronged financially by Onesimus* <b>vs. 19:</b> converted by Paul*	
<b>vs. 21:</b> Paul's confidence in Philemon's response		<b>vs. 21:</b> has been responsive to Paul's leadership in the past; takes initiative to do what is right*	
<b>vs. 22-24:</b> practical considerations	<b>vs. 22:</b> hopes to be released soon; plans to visit Philemon <b>vs. 23:</b> accompanied by many people; Epaphras is imprisoned with him—others aren't	<b>vs. 22:</b> praying for Paul's release*; has lodging means	
<b>vs. 25:</b> farewell			

### Summary of the historical situation

<b>Paul</b>	<b>Philemon</b>	<b>Onesimus</b>
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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.

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

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.

### 3. Major themes

Theme	References
Authority to order vs. appeal to the truth	v. 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.
From useless slave to useful brother in Christ	v. 11, 13, 15, 16 - Onesimus is now useful as a Christian

### 4. Why was the letter written?

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

Now let's review your overview of Titus.

## Titus: Inductive Overview

### 1. Paragraph Titles

1:1-4 *Greeting*

1:5-9 *Set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city*

1:10-16 *Silence/reprove the rebellious men/false teachers*

2:1-15 *Call for action consistent with sound doctrine motivated by grace*

3:1-11 *Remind them to engage in good deeds motivated by grace*

3:12-15 *Farewell*

## 2. Information about the author, audience and 3<sup>rd</sup> parties

<b>Author:</b> Paul	<b>Audience:</b> Titus	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Party #1:</b> Cretan churches	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Party #2:</b> false teachers/rebellious men
<p>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.”</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>1:5 – Multiple churches in various cities. In a chaotic state (“set in order what remains”).*</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>2:6,7 – Probably a young man.*            2:15 – May be having difficulty asserting his authority or he’s in an extremely difficult situation.*</p>	<p>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.*</p>	<p>2:8 – The “opponent” is prone to accusing Paul and Titus.*</p>

<p>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.</p>	<p>3:1 – “Remind them” means they’ve been taught before to submit.</p>	<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>	<p>3:14 – “Our people must learn to...” implies that they may have been slow to take action to help others in need.</p>
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### 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 Nicopolis. He is currently in contact with Artemas and Tychicus and plans to send them to Titus. Paul is also with others 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 we’re leading others astray. Titus was a young man but 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

### 3. Major themes

Themes	References
Importance of sound doctrine	1:1,2,9-11; 2:1,8,10;3:9
Importance of personal integrity	1:6-8,15,16; 2:2-10,14; 3:1,2,8,14
Importance of Authority relationships	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

### 4. Why was the letter written?

*To encourage and instruct Titus to “set in order what remains” in the churches of Crete.*

### Inductive Study: Paragraph Study

Now that we're armed with a fuller understanding of the book as a whole, we're ready to take a closer look at specific paragraphs in Titus. These instructions are on the back of the handout titled *Inductive Paragraph Study Worksheet*.

#### 1. **Structure** – understand the author's thought development.

##### a. **Main point** – state the central point of the paragraph.

###### **Hints:**

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

Note to instructors: Use examples to explain the difference between independent and dependent clauses and indicative and imperative statements.

**b. Supporting points** – **Supporting points are the bases for the main point and explain HOW and WHY the main point is true or should be acted upon. Supporting points also illustrate what is meant by the main point. List supporting points as individual summary phrases. Note the verse number where each supporting point is located.**

###### **Hints:**

- **Indicative statements**

- **Connective words:** since, because, if, for
- **Dependent clauses**
- **Illustrations, examples, Old Testament quotes**
- **Statements that emphasize results or outcomes**

c. **Literary/theological context** – What role does this paragraph play in the overall argument of the book or this section of the book?

**2. Theology** – understand the *content* of the paragraph.

a. **Identify and define unfamiliar, historically significant, and key words; note use of Old Testament passages.**

b. **State the theological meaning of the main and supporting points. What do they teach about God, man, sin, salvation, the church, ministry, etc.? How does the theology of the supporting points support or illustrate the main point?**

c. **What other passages might bear on your interpretation? Only consider passages that address the main point of the paragraph.**

**3. Application** – understand *what to do* based on the meaning of the paragraph.

a. **How is the argument of the paragraph intended to affect the original audience in terms of actions, attitudes, convictions? Application should center on the main point, not on supporting points.**

b. **How is the argument of this passage relevant to me/my group/our culture? Use questions like these to explore how the passage applies to your home church.**

- **Why do people in your home group need to act on the main point?**
- **What will happen to your group if people don't act on the main point?**
- **What might prevent someone (cultural pressure, peer pressure, lack of belief/faith, lack of eternal perspective, etc.) from acting on the main point?**
- **What could go wrong if we implement the main point, but ignore the supporting points?**

**Practice identifying main and supporting points**

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

**Main point:** *Always do right.*

**Supporting points:**

**Why?** *This will gratify some people.*

**Why?** *This will astonish the rest.*

**(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:** *Be patient. (v. 7)*

**Supporting points:**

**How?** *Until the Lord comes.*

**How?** *Like a farmer waiting for his crops to come in.*

**Why?** *Because the Lord's coming is near.*

**(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:** *Devote yourselves to prayer (v. 2).*

**Supporting points:**

**How?** *Keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. (v. 2)*

**How?** *Praying that God may open up a door for the word. (v. 3)*

**Why?** *So that I may make it clear. (v. 4)*

**(2 Tim 1:5-7) I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."**

**Main point:** *Kindle afresh the gift of God within you (v. 6).* Notice that the main point is not at the beginning of the paragraph.

**Supporting points:**

**Why?** *Because Paul is reminded of Timothy's sincere faith, as well as that of his grandmother and mother. (Vs. 5)*

**Why?** *Because God did not give us a spirit of timidity... (v. 7)*

Notice that Paul also gives us more information about the gift he is referring to. Which gift? The one that is in you through the laying on of my hands. (Vs. 6)

### **Paragraph Study: Titus 1:5-9**

Instructors: You may want to cover this section using the paragraph study worksheet handouts instead of the student outline.

#### **1. Structure – understand the author's thought development.**

Use the LANGUAGE OF THE TEXT when you write down the main and supporting points, not your own paraphrase. You should also cite the verses where the main and supporting points occur.

##### **a. Main point – state the central point of the paragraph**

*Set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city. (1:5)*

**b. Supporting points—list the bases of for the main point as individual summary phrases with verse number for each. Ask: Why is the main point true? Why or how should we obey the main point?**

*How? What kind of elders? Those who are above reproach in family matters (1:6).*

*The husband of one wife  
Having children who believe  
Not accused of dissipation or rebellion.*

*How? What kind of elders? Those who are above reproach as God's steward (1:7-9).*

*Not self-willed  
Not quick-tempered  
Not addicted to wine  
Not pugnacious  
Not fond of sordid gain  
Hospitable  
Loving what is good  
Sensible  
Just  
Devout  
Self-controlled  
Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to:  
Exhort in sound doctrine  
Refute those who contradict.*

**c. Literary/theological context – what role does this paragraph play in relationship to the overall argument of the book or of this section of the book?**

Take some time to review all of your paragraph titles. Is there a discernable argument that the author is making? You may find it helpful to consult an outline of the book in a commentary or a study Bible. Is this paragraph part of a larger argument? If so, what role in the argument does your paragraph play?

**e.g. Romans 1-5**

- I. Introduction (1:1-15)
  - A. Greeting (1:1-7)
  - B. Paul and the Church at Rome (1:8-15)
- II. Theme: The Gospel is the power of God for salvation (1:16, 17)
- III. The plight of mankind (1:18-3:20)
  - A. Non-Jews are guilty (1:18-32)
  - B. How people become guilty (2:1-16)
  - C. Jews are guilty (2:17-3:8)
  - D. Everyone is guilty and worthy of judgment (3:9-20)
- IV. God's solution – justification by faith (3:21-5:21)
  - A. How people are justified (3:21-31)
  - B. Examples of justification by faith from the Old Testament (4:1-25)
    - 1. The case of Abraham & David (4:1-8)**
    - 2. The promise to Abraham – apart from circumcision (4:9-12)
    - 3. The promise to Abraham – apart from the law (4:13-17)
    - 4. Abraham's faith is the standard for every believer (4:18-25)
  - D. The benefits of being justified (5:1-11)
  - E. How Jesus' death can counter the effects of Adam's sin (5:12-21)

Why does Paul bring up Abraham and David in Romans 4:1-8? Paul is arguing that Jew and Gentile alike are guilty before God and can only be accepted by him on the basis of faith. This paragraph shows how David and Abraham (two pillars in Jewish history) were not justified by keeping the Law but because of their faith. Citing their example supports Paul's larger argument.

Understanding the role your paragraph plays in the overall argument of the book will help you develop a burden for your teaching. Learning how to do this takes practice, but it is well worth the effort.

e.g. Titus

Paragraph Titles	Outline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greeting (1:1-4)</li> <li>• Set in order what remains &amp; appoint elders in every city. (1:5-9)</li> <li>• Silence/reprove the rebellious men/false teachers. (1:10-16)</li> <li>• Call for action consistent with sound doctrine motivated by grace. (2:1-15)</li> <li>• Remind them to engage in good deeds motivated by grace (3:1-11)</li> <li>• Farewell (3:12-15)</li> </ul>	<p>I. Greeting</p> <p>II. Set in order what remains.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">A. Appoint elders in every city.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">B. Silence/reprove the rebellious men/false teachers.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">C. Call for action consistent with sound doctrine motivated by grace.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">D. Remind them to engage in good deeds motivated by grace.</p> <p>III. Farewell</p>

Seen this way, 1:5-9 contains the main command of the book (set in order what remains) and the first of several ways to do that (appoint elders in every city).

## 2. Theology – understand the content of the paragraph.

### a. Identify and define unfamiliar, historically significant, and key words; note use of Old Testament passages.

Remember to limit the words you study to (1) words in the main and supporting points; (2) words you do not understand.

*ELDER (presbuteros); OVERSEER (episkopos)*

- *Used synonymously.*
- *Refer to the same office/leadership role in the church.*
- *“Elder” points to their relative spiritual maturity (who he is)*
- *“Overseer” points to their function (what he does).*

*ABOVE REPROACH – (anegkletos) not to be called to account; unreprouvable.*

**b. State the theological meaning of the main and supporting points. What do they teach about God, man, sin, salvation, the church, ministry, etc.? How does the theology of the supporting points support or illustrate the main point?**

**Main point: Set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city.**

**Theological meaning:** The main point is a statement about how the church should be. *The church should be in good order with established leadership.*

**Supporting points:** These focus on the KIND of people who should be appointed to lead:

- **Those who are above reproach in family matters (v. 6).**
- **Those who are above reproach as God's steward (vs. 7-9), with an emphasis on handling the word correctly (v. 9).**

**Theological meaning:** *Church leaders must have unimpeachable/exemplary character and sound working knowledge of scripture.*

**c. What other passages might bear on your interpretation?**

**Focus on passages that address the topic of the main point.**

*1 Timothy 3 explains how to select elders/overseers.*

**3. Application – understand *what to do* based on the meaning of the paragraph.**

**a. How is the argument of the paragraph intended to affect the original audience in terms of actions, attitudes, convictions?**

Don't be creative here. Reflect on the historical situation and state in YOUR OWN WORDS what the author was trying to get his audience to do or what truth he was trying to communicate. Your application should encompass the main and supporting points.

*Paul wanted Titus to select elders for the local churches that had the character qualities and knowledge to lead well.*

**b. How is the argument of this passage relevant to me/my group?**

**Ask: What would happen in our home church if this command wasn't obeyed or if this truth was ignored? What is at stake? Where do we see this truth or command being ignored and what are the consequences? Where is this command being obeyed and what are the results? Are their conditions today that differ from the audience's situation that effect the application of the main point?**

*In the church today, we find many elderships consisting of those who have been successful in the world, but have very little knowledge of doctrine (and in many cases, lacking character). As a result, churches may take a wrong turn in their ministry. As our network of house churches grows and spheres*

*multiply, we will need to recognize leaders who meet the criteria that Titus has outlined in this passage.*

*Character is a strong emphasis in the passage. Our training of leaders needs to attend to their character, not just their knowledge base. That said, our leaders must be able to “exhort in sound doctrine” and “refute those who contradict.” This means we need to continue to offer quality training in Xenos to equip our future leaders. This includes knowledge of the Bible AND of opposing world views so that our leaders will be able to exhort and refute.*

*Since these qualities are a profile of spiritual maturity, I should strive to gain them in myself, regardless of my role in the church. Am I striving for these qualities in my own life? Am I helping younger Christians work toward maturity as defined in this passage?*

### **Memory Verses**

None this week.

### **Assignment**

**Do a paragraph study on Titus 1:10-16 based on the method above. 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.**