

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

The Epistles

What is an epistle?

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- An “occasional document” –

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

Key themes in the New Testament Epistles; Key New Testament Epistles – see handout

Inductive Study

Inductive Bible Study: utilizing the _____ of the text (details) to arrive at the author’s _____ (generals).

Our goal:

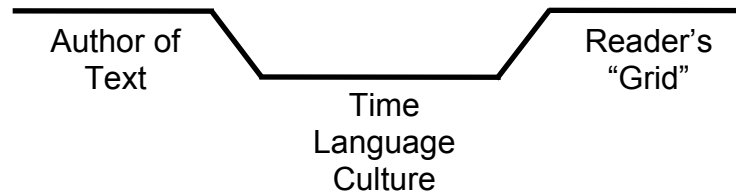
(1 Cor. 2:16) For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

Inductive Overview of an Epistle

What are we trying to learn?

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Why is an inductive overview important?



How to do an inductive overview of an Epistle

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 the important 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 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 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.

Philemon: Inductive Overview

1. Paragraph titles

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

Paragraph Titles	Author: Paul	Audience: Philemon	3rd Party: Onesimus
vs 1-3:	vs 1: prisoner; w/ Timothy	vs 1: Christian worker vs 2: accompanied by Apphia (wife?) & Archippus; has house church (wealthy?)	
vs 4-7:	vs 4: prays for Philemon vs 7: is encouraged & comforted by Ph's ministry	vs 5,7: faithful to Christ & loving to Christians	
vs 8-16:	vs 8: has authority* vs 9: aged vs 9,10,13: imprisoned for the cause of Christ vs 10: converted O. while imprisoned vs 10 ("child"), 12 ("my heart"), 16 ("beloved brother"): loves O. vs 12: sent O. back to Philemon vs 11,13: has been helped by O. vs 14: respects Ph.'s decision about O.	vs 11: was dissatisfied with O.'s performance for him vs 14: has authority to decide O's fate vs 16: owns O. as a slave; wealthy*	vs 10: was with Paul when he was imprisoned & converted by Paul in that setting vs 11: was useless to pH, but has become useful to Paul & pH (implies substantial growth) vs 12: has been sent to pH by Paul vs 13: has ministered to Paul vs 15: was parted from pH for a while vs 16: Ph.'s slave; now a Christian; Ph.'s brother "in the flesh" (???) vs 18: wronged/stolen from pH*
vs 17-20:	vs 17: views Ph. as a partner vs 19: has financial means*; led pH to Christ	vs 17: partner of Paul vs 18: was wronged financially by O.* vs 19: converted by Paul*	
vs 21:		vs 21: has been responsive to Paul's leadership in the past; takes initiative to do what is right*	
vs 22-24:	vs 22: hopes to be released soon; plans to visit Philemon vs 23: accompanied by many people; Epaphras is imprisoned with him—others aren't	vs 22: praying for Paul's release*; has lodging means	
vs 25:			

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>

3. Major themes

Theme	References
	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.
	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.

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
<p>1:1 – A bond-servant of God, and an apostle</p> <p>1:3 – Message was given to him by God</p> <p>1:4 – Has affection for Titus.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>1:11 – Upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach. Motivated by monetary gain.</p> <p>1:13 – Teaching things that are not sound.</p> <p>1:14 – Into to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.</p> <p>1:15 – Mind and conscience is defiled.</p> <p>1:16 – They profess to know God, but by their deeds are evil.</p>
	<p>2:6,7 – Probably a young man.*</p> <p>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.*</p> <p>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>

Author: Paul	Audience: Titus	3rd Party #1: Cretan churches	3rd Party #2: false teachers/rebellious men
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<p>3:3 – Recognizes his own sinful past in context of God's grace.</p> <p>3:12,13 – Plans to stay the winter in Nicapolis.</p> <p>Surrounded by a team of people who carry letters and assist with his ministry.</p> <p>Zenas and Apollos probably carried this letter to Titus.</p> <p>Plans to send Artemas or Tychicus to Titus.</p> <p>Wants Titus to visit him.</p> <p>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>3:14 – “Our people must learn to...” implies that they may have been slow to take action to help others in need.</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>

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. This may have been due to being a young man. Paul urged him to oppose people in the church who were leading others astray.

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
	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

4. Why was the letter written?

How to do an inductive paragraph study

1. Internal Structure

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

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

2. Surrounding Context

What role does this paragraph play in the overall argument of the book or this section of the book?

3. Content

a. Words: Identify and define unfamiliar words connected to the main or supporting points. Note words that have historical significance (e.g. Cretan) and find out what they mean.

b. Theology: State the theological meaning of the main and supporting points. What do they teach about God, man, sin, salvation, the church, ministry, etc.?

c. Parallel passages: What other passages have a main point similar to the one in this passage?

d. References to the Old Testament: Does this passage allude to or directly quote the Old Testament? If so, describe the passage, person, or event being referred to.

4. Application

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

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

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) 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:

Supporting points:

Why?

Why?

Paragraph Study: Titus 1:5-9

1. Internal Structure

a. Main point – state the central point of the paragraph:

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?

2. Surrounding Context

What role does this paragraph play in relationship to the overall argument of the book or of this section of the book?

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)

e.g. Titus

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

3. Content

a. Words: Identify and define unfamiliar words connected to the main or supporting points. Note words that have historical significance (e.g. Cretan) and find out what they mean.

Elder (presbuteros)/ Overseer (episkopos):

Above reproach (anegkletos)

b. Theology: State the theological meaning of the main and supporting points. What do they teach about God, man, sin, salvation, the church, ministry, etc.?

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

Theological meaning:

Supporting points:

- Those who are above reproach in family matters (v. 6).
- Those who are above reproach as God's steward who handle the word correctly (vs. 7-9). m

Theological meaning:

c. Parallel passages: What other passages might bear on your interpretation?

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

d. References to the Old Testament: Does this passage allude to or directly quote the Old Testament? If so, describe the passage, person, or event being referred to.

3. Application

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

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?

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.**