



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N45 November 9, 2025

LIVING THE BEAUTIFUL GOSPEL

“Confronting What Corrupts”

Titus 1:10-16

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Authority of the Bible

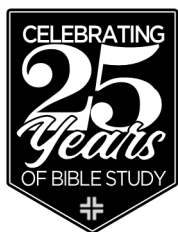
I believe the Bible is the word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17



How are false teachers to be addressed?



The importance of the Bible, the word of God, is clearly evident in Paul's letter to Titus, whom the apostle left on Crete to “put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town” (1:5). One of the things that was apparently left unfinished, apart from *appointing elders*, involved silencing *false teachers*. Titus was to “rebuke them sharply” with a view to them becoming “sound in the faith” (v. 13). And when it came to appointing elders, Paul told Titus, “an overseer . . . must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and *refute those who oppose it*” (vv. 7, 9). These two purposes—appointing elders and silencing false teachers—are clearly related. Elders are the church leaders whose responsibility it is to teach “the trustworthy message” (v. 9) and silence any “empty talkers and deceivers” (v. 10), who will inevitably disrupt the church family. Put differently, it might be said that elders are to use the scriptures to teach, rebuke, correct, and train in righteousness, so that their fellow congregants may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Here are a few examples of ancient doctrinal heresies that elders need to look out for today:

Arianism: This heresy proposes that Jesus was a created being rather than eternally God. Think Jehovah's Witnesses.

Modalism: This doctrine wrongly suggests that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three distinct persons but different “modes” or “manifestations” of one singular divine person. Water that can be a liquid, solid, or gas used to illustrate the Trinity, resembles this ancient error.

Pelagianism: This heresy teaches that humans are not born with a sinful nature and can choose to do good and be saved through their own efforts, without needing God's grace. The modern idea that “good people go to heaven” is a form of Pelagianism.

Universalism: This ancient idea, which denies eternal punishment, is experiencing a modern

revival. It is the belief that everyone will be saved in the end, regardless of their faith.

Here are a few examples of how these ancient heresies have infiltrated the theological thinking of contemporary evangelicals based on the State of Theology survey released by Ligonier Ministries and Lifeway Research. *Christianity Today* reports: “It's clear that US evangelicals (defined by belief and church affiliation) share some core faith convictions. Well over 90 percent agree that God is perfect, God exists in three persons, Jesus' bodily resurrection is real, and people are made righteous not through works but through faith in him. But in *some areas*, even evangelicals responded with significant misunderstandings and were not far off from the trends in society overall” (christianitytoday.com/2022/09/state-of-theology-evangelical-heresy-report-ligonier-survey/).

“Some areas” include the following:

1) *Jesus isn't the only way to God*—suggesting *universalism*. More than half—56 percent—of evangelical respondents affirmed that “God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam.” It indicates a bent toward *universalism*—believing there are ways to bypass Jesus in our approach to and acceptance by God.

2) *Jesus was created by God*—a form of *Arianism*. A surprising 73 percent agreed with the statement that “Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God.”

3) *Jesus is not God*—another expression of *Arianism*. Given the above beliefs on Jesus as a created being, it's not too surprising that 43 percent affirmed that “Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God.”

4) *The Holy Spirit is not a personal being*. He is an impersonal spiritual force for good. And . . .

5) *Humans are not sinful by nature*—similar to *Pelagianism*. Humans might be capable of committing individual sins, but they do not have sinful natures. Humans are born essentially good and may be able to save themselves.



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Titus 1:10-16

10 For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. 11 They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach – and that for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of Crete's own prophets has said it: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." 13 This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith 14 and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth. 15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

Read another translation

10 For there are many rebellious people, idle talkers, and deceivers, especially those with Jewish connections, 11 who must be silenced because they mislead whole families by teaching for dishonest gain what ought not to be taught. 12 A certain one of them, in fact, one of their own prophets, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 Such testimony is true. For this reason rebuke them sharply that they may be healthy in the faith 14 and not pay attention to Jewish myths and commands of people who reject the truth. 15 All is pure to those who are pure. But to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They profess to know God but with their deeds they deny him, since they are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good deed. (NET)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box "For" indicating *reason* in v. 10.
- Circle "rebellious people" in v. 10.
- Circle "meaningless talk" in v. 10.
- Circle "deception" in v. 10.
- Underline "circumcision group" in v. 10.
- Circle "silenced" in v. 11.
- Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 11.
- Circle "households" in v. 11.
- Bracket "one of Crete's own prophets" in v. 12.
- Box "Therefore" indicating *result* in v. 13.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose/result* in v. 13.
- Circle "the faith" in v. 13.
- Circle "Jewish myths" and "human commands" in v. 14.
- Circle "pure" (3x) in v. 15.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 15, 16.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. “For” indicates *reason*. Describe the relationship between the paragraph beginning with verse 10 and the previous paragraph.
 2. Paul refers to people he calls “the circumcision group” (v. 10). What does that tell you about them?
 3. Summarize his description of this “circumcision group.”
 4. *What* “must” be done about them? And *who* do you think must do it?
 5. *Why* must *this* be done?
 6. *What* was this “circumcision group” teaching (cf. v. 14), and *why* were they teaching it?
 7. Given the Cretans’ character (v. 12), a sharp rebuke was called for (v. 13). With a view to *what* outcome?
 8. Explain the meaning of verse 15.
 9. Explain the *contrast* in 16.
 10. **Discussion:** *Compare and contrast* the challenge Cretan elders faced *then* with the situation elders face *today*.
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Commentary On The Text

"In the history of the early church, it appears that as the good seed of the gospel was sown and began to grow, false teachers also followed, sowing their seeds of error. This consistently resulted in discomfort, confusion, and divisions within the church. The churches on Crete were no exception. Having instructed Titus that the elders must be committed to sound doctrine, Paul indicated that their ability to 'refute those who oppose it' (1:9) must be demonstrated on Crete: 'For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group'" (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, vol. 34, 288).

The *particulars* of the situation Titus faced (i.e., entire households were being disrupted) and the *reason* behind that disruption (i.e., the circumcision group was teaching things they ought not to teach), a situation that the elders whom Titus would appoint also had to face may have been unique to first-century Crete. However, the same *type* of situation exists today. Individual congregations, entire denominations, and the body of Christ at large continue to be troubled by those who enrich themselves by teaching what they "ought not to teach" (v. 11). So elders must be "able to teach" (1Ti 3:2) and must "hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught," in order to spread "sound doctrine" and "refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:9). "For," as Paul explains, "there are many rebellious people full of meaningless talk and deception," who "are disrupting whole households" (v. 11).

The heresy *then* was apparently coming from "the circumcision group," who were most likely a group of ethnic Jewish Christians. About them one commentator writes: "They are (1) 'rebellious,' refusing to subordinate themselves to any authority, rejecting the demands of the gospel on them; (2) 'mere talkers,' men fluent and impressive in speech that accomplishes nothing constructive; (3) 'deceivers,' men whose glib tongues exercise a fascination over the minds of their dupes and lead them astray" (D. Edmond Hiebert, "Titus," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, 432).

As far as the content of their teaching is concerned, Paul writes that it includes "Jewish myths" and "merely human commands" (v. 14). The same author above explains: "These myths seemingly were speculative and fanciful inventions drawn from the OT records such as are found in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings of Judaism . . . These

commands were evidently Jewish-Gnostic ritual observances that the false teacher sought to make binding on Christians (cf. 1 Tim 4:3-6)" (Hiebert, 433). To make matters worse, this group of heretics was in it for the money (v. 11).

The heresy or *heresies now* are different but equally hurtful (see p. 1). "Progressive Christianity" is just one modern example. In a nutshell, *Progressive Christianity* differs from historic or orthodox Christianity primarily in its view of scriptural authority, the nature of Jesus, and the focus on social issues, emphasizing a modern, humanistic interpretation of the faith over traditional, supernatural doctrines. While historic Christianity holds the Bible as the inerrant word of God and views Jesus as the divine Son of God, Progressive Christianity interprets the Bible as a guiding document, sees Jesus as a moral example, and prioritizes social justice, often redefining core doctrines like original sin and the atonement.

"Antinomian Christianity" is another. In a nutshell, *Antinomian Christianity* is a belief system asserting that Christians are freed by divine grace from the need to obey God's moral law, allowing them to live as they please without consequence, a view rejected by most Christian traditions as it was in the early church and the Protestant Reformation by figures like Paul and Martin Luther. While modern interpretations differ, the core idea of "against-the-law" remains, leading to controversies regarding the role of faith, obedience, and the fruits of salvation in a believer's life. If that weren't enough, suffice it to say that attempts to wed Christianity to one political party or one political, conservative or liberal, is polarizing and neither biblical nor helpful.

After commenting on the nature of Cretans, Paul tells Titus what to do. He is to sharply rebuke the circumcision group and reject their instruction regarding Jewish ascetic practices. According to verse 15, "'To the pure [clean], all things are pure [clean].'" "The pure" are those persons who are pure by virtue of their faith alone. . . . To those who are pure, all things are pure in the sense that ceremonial cleanliness is totally unnecessary and of no value. This basic truth reflects Jesus' teaching in Mark 7:1-23, and it was impressed upon Peter in Acts 10:9-15; 11:1-18" (Lea and Griffin, 292). Paul then closes with a scathing condemnation of the circumcision group (vv. 15b-16).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 10 *For*

“‘For’ introduces the justification for the requirement that elders must be able to expound and defend the truth (v.9). This is essential because of the false teachers described in vv.10-13a. Verses 13b, 14 state the necessary action, while vv. 15, 16 present the evidence condemning these errorists” (D. Edmond Hiebert, “Titus,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, 432).

v. 10 *rebellious people*

Cf. “insubordinate” (NKJV); “people who don’t respect authority” (CEV). “Against the word of God and against Paul and Titus as the Lord’s authoritative ministers” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Titus 1:10). Paul’s use of the term *anypotaktoi* (*rebellious, insubordinate*) suggests that the false teaching was coming from within the ranks of those professing Christian faith on Crete. Their rebelliousness was against the truth of the gospel (cf. v. 14)” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., 1, 2 *Timothy, Titus*, NAC, vol. 34, 288).

v. 10 *meaningless talk*

Cf. “empty talkers” (ESV); “idle talkers” (NET). Their words were only human opinion. “Vain talkers (*matailogoi*) are those whose talk does not accomplish anything. It is useless and futile” (Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles*, 223).

v. 10 *deception*

Cf. “idle talkers and deceivers” (NET). “Since what they taught was error, they were therefore ‘deceivers’” (Lea and Griffin, 288). “Mind-deceivers (*phrenapatai*) is the characterization of these errorists from the aspect of their result or at least their purpose” (Kent, 223)—“they deceive the heart and mind” (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 315).

v. 10 *circumcision group*

I.e., Jewish Christians. “These troublemakers . . . belonged to the ‘circumcision group,’ like the people of Gal 2:12, believing that, for salvation or sanctification or both, it was necessary to be circumcised and to keep the Jewish ceremonial law” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Titus 1:10). “In this context the false teachers would be solely limited to Jewish converts, i.e., ‘the circumcision’ group (cf. Eph 2:11)” (Lea and Griffin, 288).

v. 11 *silenced*

“Paul demanded that these men ‘be silenced.’ ‘Must’ (*dei*) present this as a moral necessity for the welfare of the churches. ‘Silenced’ translates a rare verb meaning ‘to close the

mouth by means of a muzzle or gag’ . . . The term also includes silencing them by a logical refutation of their views, making further dissemination impossible” (D. Edmond Hiebert, “Titus,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, 432).

v. 11 *households*

“The term ‘households’ may refer specifically to actual family units [most commentators]; however, the term probably refers to house-churches where most Christian instruction was conducted” (Lea and Griffin, 289).

v. 12 *one of Crete’s* . . .

“The Cretan poet that Paul quoted was Epimenides, who lived in the sixth century B.C., and was regarded by his contemporaries as a ‘prophet,’ a great religious reformer, and a predictor, as well as a poet. Another Cretan poet, Callimachus (305-240 B.C.), also called the Cretans liars . . . This line, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beast [*sic*], lazy gluttons,’ from one of Epimenides’ writings, had received wide acceptance in the Greek world as being true” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Titus,” 2025 ed., 20-21, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/titus.pdf). “The Greek world of that day also concurred since the verb ‘to cretize’ (*kretizein*) was used to express *lying* or *cheating*” (Lea and Griffin, 290).

v. 13 *the faith*

“‘The faith’ denotes the truth embodied in the gospel they have personally accepted. Their personal spiritual health will be impaired if they feed on unhealthy doctrine” (Hiebert, 433)—“not faith as a personal experience” (Lea and Griffin, 291).

v. 15 *pure*

Cf. “Everything is clean to those who are clean” (ISV, NOG, NABRE); “All is pure to those who are pure” (NET). “Paul reminded his readers that to the ‘pure’ in heart ‘all things,’ including foods, ‘are pure’ (ceremonially pure, clean as opposed to unclean; cf. Matt. 15:11; Mark 7:15, 19-20; Luke 11:39-41)” (Constable, 22). “The ‘pure’ are those persons who are pure by virtue of their faith alone . . . To those who are pure, all things are pure in the sense that ceremonial cleanliness is totally unnecessary and of no value” (Lea and Griffin, 292).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

Elders are to be on guard against errant teaching so that they can rebuke, condemn, and correct those who mislead believers by teaching false doctrine.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

Remember when your children were preschoolers and they would try to cross the street to chase a ball or toy? Your loud and firm, “NO!” would stop them in their tracks, maybe even frighten them a bit. It was supposed to. Kids need to know when they are crossing hard boundaries, especially when their safety is involved. In this type of situation, you’re not going to try to reason with them or gently call them with a sweet, sing-song voice. You’re going to firmly stop them and steer them away from the dangerous terrain they’re entering. This is what Paul is encouraging in this passage; this is rebuking. Paul had advised Titus to place good, strong, godly men as leaders of the church who would firmly rebuke false teachers who were leading people astray. When people veer off the path, heading away from righteousness, good leaders will rebuke them in a way that leads them back toward the Lord. Rebuking is corrective in nature, not vindictive or punitive. It’s meant to firmly point out the danger they are about to experience and show them the way toward safety, healing, and truth—the way of God. When our kids are heading down a slippery slope that will pull them from their faith, our job is to lead them to the Lord. There’s a time for general dialogue and a time for intentional and deliberate rebuking. Just as you wouldn’t let your three-year-old chase a ball into the street, you wouldn’t let your child veer from living out biblical truth. Sometimes we must rebuke. Stay strong, parents. We’re praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Titus 1:10-16.

1. What are rebellious people filled with?
2. What are rebellious people busy doing?
3. What does Paul say to do to these people? Why?

What Do You Think?

What does “rebuke” mean? Can it be both sharp and gentle?

What Do You Do?

Play a game of Red Light/Green Light with your family. How often do you try to take a few extra steps during “red light”? What happens if you continue in disobedience?

CORE COMPETENCY: Authority of the Bible

I believe the Bible is God’s book that tells me what to believe and do.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Chronicles 29:11

“Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.”

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week’s verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.