

Truth
ADORNED

Pursuing Life's Deeper Purpose

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Truth Adorned: Pursuing Life's Deeper Purpose

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A Purpose for Life

“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness” (Titus 1:1).

IT WAS THE FALL AFTER I graduated college and probably the busiest time of my life. I often worked extra hours at my full-time job. Most of my evenings were invested in a local ministry, requiring extra time and effort. I tried to attend extra church functions and events as they were scheduled. In my free time, studies for my master’s classes left me overwhelmed and tired. Life had quickly become an endless cycle of “catch up” and going through the motions. Even though I knew it was the season God had placed me in, I was losing sight of a higher mission and purpose.

Perhaps you’ve been there too. Whether we’re wrapped up in the never-ending demands of motherhood, going back to school, or advancing a career, our purpose as Christian women can get lost in the everyday chaos. As believers we’ve been called to a deeper purpose—one with great meaning and significant impact. Our mission as believers allows us to fall deeper in love with the gospel and pursue godliness, regardless of our circumstances or culture.

Back to the Basics

Read Titus 1:1–4. Purpose is exactly how Paul began the

book of Titus. As he neared the end of his life, he wrote to equip a young man, Titus, to instruct the believers in a difficult ministry setting. Paul had mentored Titus and was now entrusting him with the responsibility to organize the churches on the island of Crete. These churches were made up of new believers, still young in the faith, who had been saved out of their sinful lifestyle. They were still vulnerable to false teachers; some were even heading back to their old customs.

Paul used this letter to Titus to address these issues, instructing him to direct the Cretan believers back to the basics of sound doctrine. The church needed to remember the solid foundation of the gospel, while the individual members needed to grow in Christlike character, influence, and good works.

This was no easy task for the churches on Crete, who were surrounded by the sinful Cretan culture. Thankfully, Paul's purpose in writing was great enough to transcend these obstacles. He gives his purpose and vision in the first four verses of Titus.

1. Think about your average week. What things take up the most of your time? What do you prioritize or accomplish each week?

2. Jot down some phrases or sentences that could describe your current life goals, purpose, or vision.

Committed to God

3. Read Titus 1:1. Paul describes himself as a servant and apostle. Use a Bible dictionary or commentary to look up what these terms mean.

The words “servant” (or “bondservant”) and “apostle” describe Paul’s commitment to God’s mastery and authority. A servant or slave is to completely surrender his will to the will of his master. Since Paul was so devoted to God, by default he was also devoted to God’s mission. Because of this deep commitment, Paul’s life was focused on the spiritual growth of God’s people, from salvation to spiritual maturity. This meant prioritizing the clear preaching of the gospel as the foundation for the Christian life.

Paul was called to this priority as a bond servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, but all believers can work toward this Christ-centered goal. Let’s look at a few key phrases in Titus 1:1 that explain more about this purpose.

Knowledge of the truth

4. What truth was Paul speaking about in Titus 1:1?

5. Read the following verses and share about how truth results in Christians’ sanctification, or being made pure and holy.
Acts 20:32

1 Peter 2:1–2

Truth according to godliness

Knowledge and action are intricately tied together. Knowing the truth should result in godliness for the genuine Christian. You cannot obey God if you do not know what He wants you to do, and you cannot study God’s Word without the command to obedience.

6. Read 1 Timothy 6:3–5 and 2 Peter 1:3 and think about the word *godliness*. How would you define it?

True spiritual growth can only happen when our minds are focused on the truth found in God's Word. As we study the Bible, we grow in our knowledge of God and His will. This should result in a life of godliness—a life that is set apart from the lifestyle of unbelievers.

A godless culture

If any culture was opposed to godliness, it was the Cretan culture. Even Crete's own philosophers described Cretans as "liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12). The new Christians living in Crete were having trouble leaving their former sinful lifestyle. Paul wrote to show that even Christians in this difficult environment could "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior" (Titus 2:10). Not only were they commanded to be different, but they needed to make a godly Christian lifestyle attractive.

7. In what ways would godliness stand out in today's culture?
8. What would godliness look like in your world? (Think of your circle of friends, your job, your neighborhood, etc.)

Driven by Hope

9. Read Titus 1:2; 2:13; 3:7. Something else drove Paul. What was that, and who promised it?

When life gets tough, what keeps us going? In most cases, it is hope. Because of God's character, this promise of eternal life

is reliable. God is trustworthy and proved to be faithful; we can have complete confidence in God and His Word.

The hope of eternal life—derived from the gospel—was the foundation for Paul’s apostolic service. No matter how Paul suffered or was persecuted, he always had this hope.

According to Ephesians 1:11–12, believers are chosen by God and have an inheritance in Heaven. We have the same hope as Paul. The hope of eternal life is a comfort and guarantee for the born-again Christian!

10. (a) How should the hope of eternal life motivate believers?

(b) How does it motivate you in your life circumstances?

A God-Given Message

11. Read Titus 1:3. Our hope of eternal life is based on something that Paul describes in verse 3. What is it, and what does he say about it?

The gospel

12. Look up the following verses. What is the gospel message, and what responsibility do believers have toward it?

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

Acts 26:15–18; 1 Corinthians 9:16–17

Matthew 28:19–20

Manifested in the Word

God manifested, or revealed, the life-giving, hope-filled message of the gospel to us through His Word. The Bible is the only way to true salvation. All that we need to be saved, to live a godly life, and to minister is found in the Word. Paul was entrusted with this beautiful truth. The purpose of his ministry was to proclaim the gospel message.

13. What else do we learn about Paul's commitment to God and responsibility to the gospel from the following verses?
1 Corinthians 9:16–17

Galatians 1:6–10

Colossians 1:25

The Man for the Job

14. Read Titus 1:4. In this verse Paul addresses the recipient of the letter, Titus. What can we know about Titus from this verse?

15. Read the following verses. What do we know of Titus from these other places that mention him?
2 Corinthians 7:5–7

2 Corinthians 8:16–17

2 Corinthians 8:23

Titus, a Greek, was a close friend and companion of Paul. He is only mentioned in Pauline Epistles. It is not certain whether Paul led him to the Lord, but in any case, Paul played a discipleship role in Titus's life. Titus was sent as Paul's advocate to the Corinthian church twice, implying his maturity and spiritual leadership. He was, therefore, someone who could be entrusted with the task of teaching and leading the churches on Crete.

Paul's greeting to Titus is centered in the grace and peace found in the gospel, the bond that united the two men.

Application

In these opening words to Titus, Paul's heart and purpose are clear. He was called to share the gospel and build up the church. Paul's focus is important when we consider the message of the book of Titus. In the following chapters, Paul will discuss organization of the church, false teachers, character traits of Christians, and more. These important elements to a believer's sanctification need a Biblical, gospel foundation. Without that, the book of Titus would simply be legalistic, pointless words.

Instead, Paul reminds Titus that with a gospel foundation and Biblical purpose, the immature believers of Crete could grow spiritually and adorn the true doctrine of God. If this was a possibility even within the sinful culture of Crete, how much more are we Christians today called to adorn the doctrine of God within our culture?

16. Review how you answered questions 1 and 2 at the beginning of this lesson. Based on how you spend your time and arrange your priorities, what does your life currently revolve around? Do you have a gospel-centered life purpose? Is your mission Christ focused?

17. Paul mentions commitment, knowledge of truth, hope, and a gospel focus. Whether you have been saved for years or are a new believer, in what area do you need to grow in order to develop a godly focus?