

Christians are quite serious in believing that when they gather together for worship and work, God is present and sovereign, really present and absolutely sovereign. God creates and guides, God saves and heals, God corrects and blesses, God calls and judges. With such comprehensive and personal leadership from God, what is the place of human leadership?

Quite obviously, it has to be second place. It must not elbow its way to the front, it must not bossily take over. Ego-centered, ego-prominent leadership betrays the Master.

The best leadership in spiritual communities formed in the name of Jesus, the Messiah, is inconspicuous, not calling attention to itself but not sacrificing anything in the way of conviction and firmness either.

In his letters to two young associates—Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete—we see Paul encouraging and guiding the development of just such leadership. What he had learned so thoroughly himself, he was now passing on, and showing them, in turn, how to develop a similar leadership in local congregations.

This is essential reading because ill-directed and badly formed spiritual leadership causes much damage in souls. Paul in both his life and his letters shows us how to do it right.

For more introductory material on Titus, visit <https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-titus/>

Read Titus 3

Opening

- In what situation do you least exhibit your faith: In a checkout line? In a fender bender? After a tough exam? At the company picnic? In athletics? Other?

Digging in —Discovering the Word

- Why do you think Paul again stresses “doing good”? What about human nature makes such reminders necessary (v.3)?
- What do verses 4-7 say about God’s character? His work in us?
- How does a true understanding of these verses promote humility? Gratitude? A life of service? Have you seen this happen in your life?
- What is going on with the people in verses 9-11 (see 2 Timothy 2:25-26; 3:1-5)? How do Paul’s instructions reflect both “tough love” and uncompromising righteousness? What similar situations are occurring in today’s church?
- What is the trustworthy saying that Paul refers to in v8? Why do you think Paul wants Titus to remind the church of this saying? How does this saying influence the people to “devote themselves to doing what is good.”?

Connecting the Dots — Applying the Word

- Does verse 3 paint an accurate picture of you in the past? To what degree? Were these characteristics an obvious part of your life, or more of an underlying reality?
- In doing good, what motivates you? A) call of duty? B) fear of judgement? C) Hope of Christ’s return? D) Gratitude for what God has done? E) Desire to make peace in your relationships? F) Needs of others?
- What does a life devoted to doing what is good look like? What “good” do you do at home? At church? In your city, state, nation? (Or are you “up to no good”?)
- Rate yourself on a scale from 1-10 on “devoted to doing what is good”. How would you recognize a 1.0 move in your life? A 0.5 move? A 0.1 move?
- Over the past year, where have you sensed growth in leading a “productive” life for God (see v.14)?

(adapted from the Serendipity Bible and The Invitation by Eugene Peterson)